

Swan Leisure Swim Club

First Gala - Parent's How-To Guide/Checklist

Introduction

Welcome to Competitive swimming in Ireland.

Galas are friendly, structured, and full of learning opportunities. They help swimmers develop confidence, discipline, resilience and team spirit. This guide explains how they work, what parents and swimmers can expect, and how to prepare for and make the most of each event.

A gala is a swimming competition licensed by Swim Ireland or Swim Leinster, where swimmers race others of similar age and ability. Galas in Ireland range from Level 1 to Level 5. Development Squad will mostly attend Level 1.

The running of swimming galas rely on all parents to help out – before and during the gala. We're all volunteers – be prepared to help and do your bit - every step of the way.

Pre-Gala Preparation – Keep informed and plan the day:

Join the **Gala WhatsApp group** as soon as the link is circulated by your squad Rep – this is very important – this is how you will be kept in the loop on all communications relating to the gala.

Know the Details

- **Confirm the date, time, and location** of the gala.
- **Check the event schedule** and race entries (heats, strokes, distances).
- **Understand parking and venue rules** (e.g., food policies, seating).

Plan for the Day

- **Arrive early** to allow time for warm-up and orientation – expect a noisy and chaotic venue.
 - Plan to be at the venue at least 20 minutes before the warm-up is scheduled to begin
 - Give yourself time to find the Swan area of the viewing gallery (if you're first, claim a congregation space for Swan)
 - Kids need time to do land warm-ups and get ready and be on the pool deck on time.
- **Do not skip warm-ups:** There will usually be a warm-up scheduled before each of the morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is not scheduled to swim until later in the morning / afternoon, don't be tempted to skip the warm up! It's a really important opportunity for the kids to practice diving off blocks and to get

used to the layout of the venue and the feel of the pool (which may be different to the Swan Leisure pool in terms of depth / and number of lanes).

Support Emotionally

- **Talk positively** about the gala to reduce nerves.
 - Remind them it's about **doing their best**, it's not about winning.
 - Encourage children to **support each other** – relay events are especially important to take part in when given the opportunity – apart from the fun, these are great opportunities for team support.
 - **Stay nearby** - Ensure your child knows where you'll be during the event. Stay nearby but give space for team bonding and coach interaction. Parents should never leave a gala venue when their child is taking part.
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Pre-Gala Preparation – What to pack

In the run-up to the gala review the following checklist and ensure you have everything packed/organised the night before:

Essential Swim Gear

- **Swimsuit(s)** – Bring at least two in case one gets lost or damaged.
- **Goggles** – Bring a spare pair just in case lost or damaged.
- **Club Swim cap** – Mandatory for races; bring a spare in case lost or damaged.
- **Towel(s)** – One for drying off and another as a backup.
- **Flip-flops or pool shoes** – Mandatory for walking around the pool area.

Clothing

- **Club uniform** – if you have it e.g., t-shirt, hoodie, shorts – wearing uniform on the day is important, swimmers are representing the Club.
- **Warm clothes** – Hoodie, sweatpants, or a robe to stay warm between races – it can be very cold once out of the water.
- **Dry change of clothes** – To change into after the gala (pack extra underwear and socks, something always gets dropped in a puddle or sat on!)

Food & Hydration

- **The day before** – Ideally eat a balance of carbohydrates (pasta, rice, potatoes, bread) and lean proteins (chicken, fish, lentils) – avoid gas producing foods like beans.
- **Water bottle** – Ensure your child stays hydrated throughout the day – a little drop of Miwadi is OK for sugar/to encourage hydration.
- **Healthy snacks between races** – Bananas, granola bars, sandwiches, nuts, etc.
- **Lunch** – If the gala is long, pack a nutritious meal.

Other Essentials

- **Sharpie Pen and Highlighter** – (explanation below!).

- **Entertainment** – a book, game, tablet, earphones, charger - something to keep kids occupied if it's a long day.
- **Plastic bags** – For wet clothes and towels
- **Medication** – If needed (e.g., inhalers, allergy meds)

On the day – Heats and Heat Sheets explained:

Events & Heats

- Each stroke and distance will have a different **Event number**, and boys/girls will swim in different events. Before the gala, the **Meet Entry Report** will have been circulated on the WhatsApp Group, so use this to check the event number your child is competing in.
- Swimmers will be grouped into **Heats** based on their Age and PB (personal best time). If this is your child's first time competing in a specific event stroke/distance their time will be shown as NT (No Time).
- Typically, Level 1-3 events are **Heat Only** events – there are no finals.

Heat Sheets

- There are issued at the start of each of the morning and afternoon sessions. Typically for Level 1 these are in hard copy ¹and only one hard copy is issued per team
- Heat Sheets list each event (e.g. U10, 50m Front Crawl) along with each heat for that event, the expected time of each heat, the swimmer in each heat, and what lane they will be swimming in (see example below).
- The Team Manager and/or the Coach will collect a copy of the Heat Sheets from the event organisers as soon as they become available. Usually this will be while the warmups are in progress – so very close to the start of the event
- The Team Manager will try to highlight all Swan swimmers on the Heat Sheets. They will then take a photo of the Heat Sheets and post them on the WhatsApp Group so all parents can identify the events in which their child is entered.
- **It is each parents responsibility to check the list for your child's events and to note the Event number, Heat number, Stroke, distance and Lane number.**

Enter the Sharpie marker!

- It's a lot to expect the (excited) kids to remember their events, so one tip is to write the **details of each event** (Stroke, distance, heat number and lane number) on your child's arm), e.g. #19 - 50BS - H3 - L4 (means event number 19, 50m back stroke, heat 3, lane 4).

¹ Some Galas will be run electronically using an App called Meet Mobile – most level 1 galas are still paper based however

- Each child needs this information for the queuing system in place for all the events.
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On the day – Line Ups explained:

- The Line-up / queuing system gets the swimmers into line by reference to the heat number and lane number in which they are to swim.
 - This queuing system on the pool deck for the event participants, which will be managed by the gala organisers and will typically start in the main hall/gathering area – make sure you know at the start of the gala where the line-ups begin.
 - Line ups will start perhaps 20 minutes before the actual race time – it's so important to watch the progress of the lineups and make sure your swimmer is in position in plenty of time for their event - if they miss the line-up, the event will go ahead without the missing swimmer.
 - This is where the sharpie information on their arm comes in handy – swimmers will check their arm several times when they are listening to the line-ups being called. It can be very noisy and easy to miss a call – so stay close if it's your swimmers first time.
 - It's a good idea to identify if there is another Swan swimmer in the same or a nearby heat so that they can go to the queuing area together ... safety and confidence in numbers!
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During the day – Little reminders:

- Enjoy the day and **be proud of your swimmer!** Regardless of where they come in their race, they will have overcome nerves and dived into a pool in front of a crowd of adults and their peers and swam their hearts out! Be proud and let them know you are proud.
 - **Support each other** - Please remind the kids to be supportive of each other (lots of cheering for each other!) and to remember they are **representing the Club!**
 - **Snacks and hydration** - It's a long morning / afternoon, though it goes by very quickly! Make sure you remind swimmers to eat **nutritious snacks** and drink **water** before and between races and to - they are so excited they can forget!
 - **Stay warm** - Make sure your swimmer dries off and stays warm between races – it's easy to get distracted and forget to stay warm.
 - **Watch the Line-Ups** – Lineups can move quickly – make sure your child does not miss their call at the start of the line up. If a child misses line ups, they will miss their event – it's easy to get distracted and miss the line up.
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Relays - Adds Fun and Excitement

Relays are often the most **energetic and exciting** events at galas. The team atmosphere, cheering, and fast-paced action make it a **memorable experience**.

- Where possible, the Swim Club will register a few relay teams and try to give every swimmer a chance to take part - this can however be restricted by number of swimmers in the eligible age / gender categories.
 - Relays will typically be the last events of the session.
 - **All parents and swimmers are encouraged to stay until the end of the relay event and take part / support the relay team – even if your child is not on the specific relay team.**
 - Relays are incredibly valuable — not just for athletic development, but also for personal growth and team bonding. Children learn to support and rely on each other, fostering team spirit and a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.
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Results:

- There will be a dedicated area in the venue where results are posted on the wall
- Results will be listed by stroke, distance, age category and gender
- Ranking of swimmers will be based on speed in each category
- Some Level 1 galas will have medals for 1,2,3 on each category – some will have wrist bands.
- The ranking of swimmers in heats does not determine the final results at the end of the event – e.g. there may be 20 heats in one stroke/distance - the final results will rank all 9-year-olds from the 20 heats, all 10-year-olds from the 20 heats, etc.
- Participating and getting a PB recorded is what's important at Level 1 - **Very few children will bring home medals so don't focus on the medals.**
- **Focus on your child's participation and praise the fact that they have taken part and supported each other and had fun on the day. Be proud of their achievement and let them know you are proud.**
- The next gala your child goes to they will be competing against their previous PB – not the swimmers in their heat.

Example of a Heat Sheet

HY-TEK'S MEET MANAGER 6.0 - 6:23 PM 02/04/2022 Page 1

Leinster Future Challengers Meet April 22 - 03/04/2022

Meet Program - Session One

#1F Boys 11-12 200 SC Meter IM			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 1 Finals Starts at 09:00 AM			
1	Univer, Roshald	12 KILK	NT
2	Ryan, Evan	12 TALL	3:13.80
3	Ward, Johnny	12 SLSC-VD	3:08.96
4	Wainey, John	12 TROI-ZZ	3:12.97
5	Ramsay, Sam	12 ADSC	3:36.55
6	Friel, Hugo	12 TALL	NT
7	Fagan, Rhys	12 TALL	NT
8	Fleming, Colin	12 TALL	NT

#2 Girls 10-12 100 SC Meter Freestyle			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:05 AM			
3	Trimbis, Rebecca	12 ADSC	NT
4	Crinion, Laithe	10 SLSC-VD	NT
5	Martin, Chloe	11 COOL	NT
Heat 2 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:07 AM			
6	Friel, Elin	10 ADSC	NT
1	Spriggs, Maggie	10 SLSC-VD	NT
2	Furlong, Amelie	12 CORM	NT
3	Horan, Mirabelle	11 CORM	NT
4	Kinsella, Aoibheann	12 ASG-IR	NT
5	Kelly, Alana	12 CORM	NT
6	Hanney, Ruby	12 CURRA-LE	NT
7	Miller, Carla	12 SLSC-VD	NT
8	Grossi, Valentina	10 ADSC	NT
9	Cronin, Lily	12 ASG-IR	NT
Heat 3 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:10 AM			
0	Butler, Emelia	10 CURRA-LE	NT
1	Donnelly, Ella-Louise	11 TALL	NT
2	Toner, Niamh	12 ADSC	NT
3	Sweeney, Anna	12 DROG-LE	2:10.91
4	Guinan, Olivia	10 ASG-IR	1:51.71
5	Tuc, Ella-Marie	11 TEMP-IR	1:56.50
6	Gwal, Gerda	10 CORM	NT
7	Szczerba, Laura	11 CORM	NT
8	Maher, Sinead	12 TERE-VD	NT
9	White, Alannah	12 NAC-VD	NT
Heat 4 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:13 AM			
0	English, Aoibheann	10 TROI-ZZ	1:48.99
1	Mathieson, Isla	10 DROG-LE	1:40.94
2	Pac-Kenny, Juliette	12 WEX-IR	1:36.81
3	Manks, Imogen	12 PORT-LE	1:35.35
4	Ramsay, Sorcha	10 TROI-ZZ	1:33.82
5	King-O'Gorman, Abigail	11 COOL	1:34.00
6	Pilponynte, Urte	12 TEMP-IR	1:35.40
7	Thompson, Chloe	12 KILK	1:40.17
8	enny, Rosie	12 WEX-IR	1:48.97
9	otter, Juliet	10 TROI-ZZ	1:48.99

Heat 5 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:15 AM			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
0	Bentley, Laura	12 ASG-IR	1:29.80
1	Financesis, Olwen	12 PORT-LE	1:29.82
2	McCann, Zoe	12 ASG-IR	1:28.57
3	Nemine, Amaya	11 TEMP-IR	1:27.60
4	Aherne, Emilia	12 SLSC-VD	1:26.66
5	Rasoz, Shyne	11 ADSC	1:27.53
6	Connolly, Ruth	12 ASG-IR	1:28.06
7	Coyle, Emily	12 ADSC	1:28.78
8	Sweeney, Jessica	10 DROG-LE	1:29.78
9	McCarthy, Sinead	12 WEX-IR	1:32.17
Heat 6 of 6 Finals Starts at 09:17 AM			
0	Maher, Freya	12 TROI-ZZ	1:23.30
1	Beagon, Cara	12 TROI-ZZ	1:19.09
2	Miller Gonzalez, Cristina	12 TROI-ZZ	1:16.03
3	McKeena, Anya	12 ASG-IR	1:12.00
4	Ramsay, Eavan	12 TROI-ZZ	1:07.92
5	O'Keefe, Lucie	12 TERE-VD	1:14.98
6	Marley, Sylvie	12 SLSC-VD	1:19.34
7	Howlett, Saoirse	12 SLSC-VD	1:22.30
8	Byrne, Alexandra	12 CURRA-LE	1:24.46
9	Tighe, Chloe	12 CURRA-LE	1:24.46

#2F Girls 11 Year Olds 100 SC Meter Freestyle			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 2 Finals Starts at 09:20 AM			
3	Quinn, Rachel	11 SLSC-VD	NT
4	Gill, Kate	11 PORT-LE	1:39.08
5	Kirk, Penelope	11 TROI-ZZ	1:42.22
Heat 2 of 2 Finals Starts at 09:22 AM			
0	Nugent, Doireann	11 ASG-IR	1:34.28
1	Morris, Mary Jane	11 ASG-IR	1:33.43
2	Ramsay, Roisin	11 TROI-ZZ	1:31.41
3	Byrne, Niamh	11 SLSC-VD	1:28.43
4	Butler, Eva	11 TROI-ZZ	1:18.48
5	Micks, Lucy	11 SLSC-VD	1:24.18
6	O'Grady, Aisling	11 WEX-IR	1:28.57
7	Wilson, Robyn	11 TROI-ZZ	1:33.00
8	Mowlds, Lucy	11 TROI-ZZ	1:33.70
9	Barrett, Julia	11 WEX-IR	1:36.70

#3 Boys 12 Year Olds 50 SC Meter Butterfly			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 1 Finals Starts at 09:24 AM			
2	Guinan, Bill	12 ASG-IR	56.60
3	Florea, Alex	12 SLSC-VD	52.31
4	Slattey, John	12 SLSC-VD	43.01
5	Rasini, Carlo	12 SLSC-VD	46.89
6	Fagan, Rhys	12 TALL	55.72

#3F Boys 10-11 50 SC Meter Butterfly			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 1 Finals Starts at 09:26 AM			
1	Fenn, Donnacha	10 COOL	NT
2	Calo, James	10 SLSC-VD	54.08
3	Da Silva Da Cunha, Lorei	11 NAC-VD	44.03
4	Morgan, Ryan	11 COOL	39.47
5	Hurley, Leon	11 NAC-VD	43.77
6	MacMullan, Liam	11 TEMP-IR	52.40
7	Li, Lucas	10 TALL	NT

#4 Girls 11-12 50 SC Meter Backstroke			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 5 Finals Starts at 09:28 AM			
3	Miller, Carla	12 SLSC-VD	NT
4	Murtagh, Emmy	11 CORM	NT
5	Kelly, Alana	12 CORM	NT
6	Williams, Charissa	12 COOL	NT
Heat 2 of 5 Finals Starts at 09:30 AM			
0	Tempany, Louise	12 SLSC-VD	NT
1	Micks, Lucy	11 SLSC-VD	NT
2	Dupont Martinez, Enya	11 NAC-VD	NT
3	Horan, Mirabelle	11 CORM	NT
4	Lynch, Orla	12 ASG-IR	NT
5	Mitchell, Clara	12 SLSC-VD	NT
6	Aherne, Emilia	12 CORM	NT
7	Furlong, Amelie	12 COOL	NT
8	Erhan, Amelie	12 TROI-ZZ	NT
9	Beagon, Cara	12 TROI-ZZ	NT
Heat 3 of 5 Finals Starts at 09:33 AM			
0	Szczerba, Laura	11 CORM	58.77
1	Johnson, Chloe	11 ASG-IR	57.56
2	Carey, Amber-Lily	12 ASG-IR	55.56
3	McCarthy, Sinead	12 WEX-IR	54.60
4	Pac-Kenny, Juliette	12 WEX-IR	53.09
5	Kenny, Rosie	12 CURRA-LE	54.13
6	Breen, Clara	12 ADSC	55.26
7	Toner, Niamh	12 ASG-IR	56.16
8	Cronin, Lily	12 ASG-IR	58.75
9	Diamond, Clara	11 TEMP-IR	1:05.60
Heat 4 of 5 Finals Starts at 09:35 AM			
0	Nugent, Doireann	11 ASG-IR	52.35
1	Sweeney, Anna	12 DROG-LE	51.79
2	Donnelly, Ella-Louise	11 TALL	47.66
3	Kasoz, Shyne	11 ADSC	47.39
4	Quinn, Rachel	11 SLSC-VD	47.02
5	Pinnucane, Olwen	12 PORT-LE	47.27
6	McCloskey, Grace	12 TEMP-IR	47.69
7	Barrett, Julia	11 WEX-IR	48.24
8	Forde, Sadie	11 WEX-IR	52.11
9	Gill, Kate	11 PORT-LE	52.6
Heat 5 of 5 Finals Starts at 09:37 AM			
0	Pilponynte, Urte	12 TEMP-IR	46.6
1	Manks, Imogen	12 PORT-LE	45.9
2	Tighe, Chloe	12 CURRA-LE	45.4
3	Fearn, Lauren	12 DROG-LE	43.1
4	Maher, Freya	12 TEMP-IR	42.1
5	Coleman, Hannah	12 CURRA-LE	43.1
6	McManamon, Aisling	12 TEMP-IR	44.1
7	Martin, Chloe	11 COOL	45.1
8	Howlett, Saoirse	12 SLSC-VD	46.1
9	Morris, Mary Jane	11 ASG-IR	47.1

#4F Girls 10 Year Olds 50 SC Meter Backstroke			
Lane	Name	Age Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 2 Finals Starts at 09:40 AM			
2	Spriggs, Maggie	10 SLSC-VD	NT
3	O'Dwyer, Maria	10 ASG-IR	1.1
4	Downey, Charlotte	10 ASG-IR	1.1
5	Patchell, Lili	10 DROG-LE	1.1
6	Crinion, Laoise	10 SLSC-VD	NT