



# Orpington Ojays Swimming Club

## Guide to being in a competitive squad

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## Club Aims

The Club's aim is for all swimmers to enjoy their training while improving their PB's across all events/distances and working towards County qualification and beyond. To support this, swimmers should compete regularly throughout the year, not just train, so they gain vital race experience and can track their progress.

## What it means to be in a competitive squad

Being in a competitive squad means that you are no longer learning to swim, you are now learning to RACE! Your coach will teach you skills and help to hone your technique. They help you achieve this through a series of drills, and training exercises such as sprint work and distance training.

## Expectations of being in a competitive squad

Being in a competitive squad requires a high level of commitment, dedication, and hard work.

Here are some of the expectations the coaches will have during your time at Orpington Ojays:

1. **Attendance:** Competitive swimming requires consistent practice and attendance. You will be expected to attend all training sessions and competitions. Missing practices can significantly impact your performance and progress.
2. **Punctuality:** Arriving on time is crucial, as it allows you to get prepared and warm-up before the session. Latecomers can disrupt the flow of training and may even miss crucial instructions.
3. **Discipline:** Competitive swimming requires a great deal of self-discipline. You will be expected to follow the rules and guidelines set by the coach, including proper technique and form, as well as adhering to the squad's training plan.
4. **Physical fitness:** Competitive swimming is a demanding sport that requires high levels of physical fitness. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an important too.
5. **Mental toughness:** Competitive swimming can be mentally challenging, and you will be expected to develop resilience and the ability to push through tough training sessions and competitions.
6. **Teamwork:** Although swimming is an individual sport, being part of a squad



Think of being in a squad like being on a football team, footballers train as part of a football team to play a match. Swimmers train as part of a squad to compete at galas.



## Benefits on education of being a competitive swimmer

Swimming competitively has many benefits on your education.

**Time Management:** Competitive swimming demands a significant time commitment, with regular training sessions and competitions. This helps swimmers develop strong time management skills, which often translate into improved academic performance.

**Discipline:** Success in swimming requires dedication and consistent effort. This discipline fosters a strong work ethic and self-control, enabling swimmers to stay focused and motivated in their studies and other areas of life.

**Physical Health:** Swimming is an excellent form of exercise that promotes overall physical fitness. Regular physical activity has been shown to boost cognitive function, which can positively impact academic achievement.

**Mental Wellbeing:** Swimming can also support mental health by reducing stress and improving mood. A more relaxed and positive mindset helps swimmers concentrate better on their studies.

**Goal Setting:** Competitive swimming revolves around setting and achieving goals. This experience equips swimmers with valuable goal-setting skills that can be applied to both academic and personal pursuits.

## Progression

At Orpington Ojays, we offer a structured pathway of squads to support swimmers as they develop after Learn2Swim. The competitive swimming journey begins in our development squads (Tadpoles 1-4) where swimming skills are further developed prior to full-on competitive training. Swimmers move into Youth Development or Bronze (depending on age), then into Chrome, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Elite swimmers who are competing at County, Regional and National levels move into Top Squad. Adult swimmers are also able to swim in Masters, where there are both fitness and competitive streams

Progression through the squads depends on each swimmer's ability to meet the criteria for the next level and the demands of training and competition standards within the current squad. Coaches consider multiple factors such as maturity, ability, attendance and participation in competitions. Leading a lane can be a natural part of development for some swimmers, but it is not a requirement or a marker of who is progressing. Training is about improving skills, not competing with teammates. Squad selections are made holistically by the coaching team and will be communicated through our Membership Secretary.



## Squad etiquette

Swimmers are expected to follow proper lane etiquette to ensure a respectful and productive training environment. Remember, we're all here for the same purpose: to train, improve, and become faster.

- **Respect Others:** Be considerate of fellow swimmers at all times.
- **Passing:** If someone touches your feet, it's good etiquette to move aside at the next wall and let them pass. Swimming over the top of another swimmer is never acceptable.
- **Training vs. Competing:** Training sessions are not competitions. While there may be times when coaches ask swimmers to race, drills and distance sets are for technique and endurance—not racing your squad mates.
- **Spacing:** Always leave at least **5 seconds** between swimmers when starting a set. This spacing allows everyone to train effectively without crowding or swimming on top of each other.
- **Speed Order:** Coaches will arrange swimmers by speed for different strokes to keep the lane flowing smoothly

## Kit

Below is a list of what your swimmer will need for training sessions and competitions.

### For training:

#### Training Kit Essentials

**See individual squad guidance – Tadpoles and above**

- Club Hat (*compulsory*)
- Goggles
- Plastic Water Bottle – Recommended: *1L per hour of training*
- Kickboard
- Pull Buoy
- Fins
- Hand Paddles
- Swimming Snorkel
- Ankle Band
- Parachute
- Mesh Bag for storing kit
- Rucksack for clothes
- Heart Rate Monitor (*Top Squad only*)

#### **Additional for Chrome Squad and above**

- Exercise Mat





- Resistance Band for land-based strength and conditioning

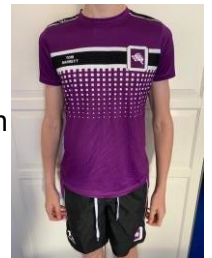
### For competitions:

- Club hat (and a spare). Some swimmers wear 2 hats while racing to stop hats falling off. A spare is recommended as hats can rip.
- Racing Goggles (plus a spare set) The big ones often used during training are not suitable to race in as their large profile makes them prone to falling off when racing. Goggles should also be worn under the hat when racing to try and eliminate movement.
- Plenty of water in a plastic or metal bottle (no glass on poolside) Remember it is very hot poolside and swimmers will lose a lot of fluid just standing around.
- Club kit – purple club top and black shorts – plus warm clothes for between/after races
- Towels x 2
- Resistance band
- Foam Roller (Optional)
- Skipping rope (to keep warm between races)
- Snacks for race energy and food for longer galas

### Club Kit - Where to buy

Club kit can be bought at any stage from Learn2Swim, however when a swimmer reaches Bronze/Youth Development squads all kit is compulsory. Please ensure your swimmer has a club kit top at the minimum, although there is a large selection available via our supplier Zeon:

<http://www.zeonshop.co.uk/oosc>



### Different types of swimming competitions

As a swimmer progresses, they will aim for and attend higher-level events. Some events are open meets, which means the swimmer can choose whether to take part and which event to swim in. Others are league galas. For those competitions there will be a team chosen by the coaches and the coaches will decide who is swimming in which race. These are very much a team event and are a lot of fun.

Other events follow a swimmer's development path, and the information below shows how they progress.

All of these competitions are inclusive for swimmers with a current national or international classification for physical, visually/hearing impaired or intellectual disability S1-S15



## Open Galas

These competitions are usually divided into a morning and afternoon sessions (and occasionally an evening session) with a start time for their warmup commencing.

There will be coaches and team managers poolside, but we ask parents to stay and cheer on team Ojays. Once your swimmer has competed in all the events they have entered, they can leave the venue. Making sure that they inform the Team Managers that they are going.

As a club we will attend a number of open galas each year, not all of these will be suitable for every swimmer, but the general rule would be is if you can go, go. If you are unsure if you can enter, please speak to or email your coach.

All galas have conditions of entry regarding qualifying times. Open meets generally fall into three categories.

**Upper qualifying times:** Swimmers **cannot be faster** than a certain time for each stroke in their age group.

**Lower qualifying times:** Swimmers **cannot be slower** than a certain time for each event in their age group.

**No qualifying times:** Swimmers do not need a qualifying time for this event to enter. And can enter with a NT (No Time).

## League events

These galas are run as team events. Swimmers are specifically selected for the competition, and if your swimmers is invited you should respond on Team Unify as soon as possible. Once a swimmer accepts their place, it's important they turn up to the event, we do not take replacement swimmers. If they fall ill, please make sure you contact the club as early as possible, do not leave it to see how they are, we need be able to take another swimmer and need enough time to do this.



When your swimmer arrives at the venue, they should make themselves known to the Team Managers who will let them know which races they'll be swimming. Parents, please stay and cheer on the team.

All swimmers must stay to the end of all league events as they are team competitions. There are always other Ojays team mates to support and/or learn from. We always finish with a raucous Ojays cheer to celebrate the swimmers' performance.

As a club we compete in the following leagues:





### Kent Junior League (KJL)

KJL is a league for clubs that come under Kent Swimming and is for swimmers aged 9-13. This is a team event, with the team chosen by the Head Coach before the event.

There are 3 rounds, each held in different pools across the county. In the first 2 rounds every finishing time is compared and you are competing against all teams, not just the teams at the same pool. It is a licensed level 4 event with times submitted to the rankings database.

### Tudor League

The Tudor League is league run for local clubs; we compete against Erith, Bexley, Greenwich, Dartford, Tonbridge, White Oak and Edenbridge. The League is held over 6 Rounds between January and September at a local pool with clubs taking turns to 'host' the events. It is a licensed level 4 event with times submitted to the rankings database. Time penalties apply in each group, so swimmers selected cannot be faster than these times.

### National Arena Swimming League (NASL)

The Arena League is a national competition that takes place in October, November and December each year. The Arena league works on similar principles to football leagues, with different divisions. Our club competes in the South Region, and the level of competition is very high. The top clubs from the league are then invited to compete for the League Trophy, this is usually in March of the following year. This is a licensed level 3 league with times submitted to the rankings database.

### Tadpoles Galas

These are held twice a year in the summer and around Christmas. Times are recorded on the club system for all 25m and 50m events. Swimmers may be invited to attend league galas based on legal 50m times set at these galas. A trophy is awarded to the best boy and girl swimmer who competed at both galas.

### Club Championships

As a club we organise a series of internal galas which offer valuable racing opportunities throughout the club from all squads. It is compulsory for all competitive swimmers to attend Club Championships.

Spread throughout the year Club Champs is made up of a series of licensed competitive galas, which cover all the swimming distances. They form our club championship programme which culminates with our Sprint's gala held in December. Club Championships are licensed to Level 4.

### Erith & District Swimming Club and Orpington Ojays Spring Meet

Every year at the beginning of March we hold a joint open gala with EDSC at Crook Log Leisure Centre Bexleyheath. This event should be attended by every swimmer across all squads in club (unless their PB's are outside the qualifying times). This is a fun event with a fabulous team atmosphere, with all 50m, 100m and 200m strokes offered. It brings valuable funds into the club.



## Different types of licensed meets

All licensed meets are subject to World Aquatic regulations

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook/>

They are graded in four levels:

**Level 4** meets are entry-level events in pools 25m long. This type of event is usually Club Championships and some Leagues. To compete at this level, you need only be a Club Train Swim England member

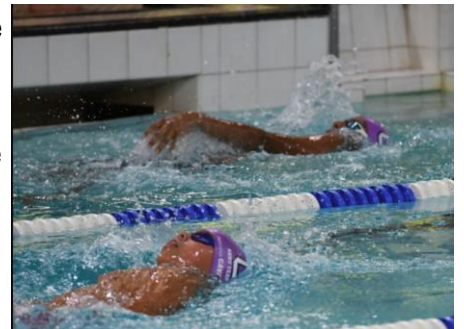
**Level 3** meets are long (50m) and short course (25m) events, these are intended to enable swimmers to achieve qualifying times for regional and county championships and other level 1 or 2 events. Arena League, and lots of open galas fall here. To compete at this level upwards, you must be a Club Compete Swim England member.

**Level 2** meets are short-course only (in a 25m pool) and include national, regional and county championships.

**Level 1** meets are always long-course (in a 50m pool) and include national, regional and county championships.

## Useful information for galas

The world of swimming competitions can be bewildering if you're a newcomer. If you've got any questions, please have a chat with the committee or any parents or older swimmer – we've all been there and we're always willing to talk you through the galas. Here are some things you need to know:



## Racing Suits

When swimmers begin their journey, there's no need to buy expensive racing kneesuits or jammers. As they progress, you might choose to invest in a racing suit, but this should only happen when they are ready.

Modern racing suits for children start at around £30 and go up from there. They are designed to reduce drag, improve body position, and give a tighter, more streamlined fit-helping swimmers move faster in the water.

These suits should be kept for competitions only, as they are delicate and costly. With good care, they last longer.

You can buy racing suits from many online retailers such as ProSwimwear, Allens of Kingsbury, SwimPath, or second-hand from eBay and the Swimming Equipment Buy and Sell UK Facebook group.



## Age groups

Swimmers' age groups in competitions are determined in **two** ways.

The competition will ask for their 'age on day' – how old they are when the competition is taking place.

Or

It will be 'age on 31<sup>st</sup> December' – how old they will be at the end of the year.

e.g. A swimmer whose 12<sup>th</sup> birthday is in November, would swim in the 12 years age group in an 'age on 31 Dec' competitions, for the whole of the calendar year

## What should I enter at a gala

Galas play a big role in the life of a competitive squad swimmer. They can be exciting and rewarding, and it's normal for children to feel nervous and for parents to find them a little overwhelming at first.

As a competitive swimmer, it's important not to limit yourself to just one or two events. For example, 50m freestyle is the most popular race at any gala and also one of the hardest to qualify for at county level. Aim to keep your approach broad. New competitive swimmers, should be working towards setting times in all 50m strokes, 100m freestyle, 100m individual medley, and another 100m stroke where you feel confident.

As you progress through the squads, the goal is to swim all events and distances. You can find the expectations for each squad on Team Unify under the squad criteria.

Don't be afraid of making mistakes; getting disqualified (DQ) is part of the learning process and helps you grow as a swimmer. Every swimmer, even Olympic champions, has been disqualified at some point in their career.

When entering competitions, a good guideline is around 2 events per session. Consider the spacing between races and their difficulty - a 200m event is much tougher than a 50m sprint. Striking a balance is key: avoid entering too few or too many events. We generally don't recommend swimming just one event at a gala. If you attend a single session, try to enter at least two races unless you're doing a long-distance event like the 1500m. If you're unsure what else to enter, speak to your coach, they'll help you choose based on your ability and development goals. Remember, what you think you can do and what your coach knows you can do may differ. Swimmers should aim to cover all strokes within their squad criteria multiple times to track progress.

There are some useful guides that can help guide you through how to enter galas that can be found here:

[Via the website](#)



[Via SportsEngine Motion app](#)

## Personal bests (PB's)

Swimmers compete against each other, but their real competition is with themselves. They are always aiming to beat their fastest time in an event and improve their personal best. The only way to see progression is by competing at galas, which is what training is fundamentally for.

Swimmers' results from all competition are recorded on the club's systems.

## Rankings Database

Once you have achieved times at a licensed event your times will appear on the rankings database. This can be accessed here <https://www.swimmingresults.org/>

This is a very useful tool to keep track of your own progress or to see how you rank against other swimmers in all strokes and distances.

To access the data for yourself you can either search by your swim England number or by your surname.

Filters can be applied so that you can search for each stroke and distance. You can also search by age, gender, County, Region, GB or Home Nation and club.

More information on how to use the rankings database can be found [here](#).

## Time Conversion

In swimming we have two pool lengths 50m and 25m. As there is less advantage to push off a wall in a 50m pool time tend to be slightly slower, so the sport has come up with a formula to convert times for each event and distance which then converts times to the different pool lengths.

For example, a swimmer has a 50m freestyle in a 25m pool of 30.94 seconds. If we are attending a long-course (50m) competition the event organisers want to know how that swimmer would perform in the longer pool, so the time is converted - this time is now 31.60 seconds.

It also works the other way, if a swimmer's PB was set in a long course pool, and we are entering a short course gala the time will need to be converted to a 25m pool time.

You can see your swimmers' converted times in Team Unify or the Sports Engine Motion App and there is also a separate time converter tool.



## World Aquatic points

On the rankings database you will notice that next to your times is a column called World Aquatic points.

WA points are a scoring system used in all aquatic sports. The system was created by the World Aquatics and is used to rank swimmers and determine their relative performance across different events and distances.



WA points are calculated based on a swimmer's performance in a specific race, taking into account the time they swam, the world record time for that event, and the difficulty of the event itself. The formula used to calculate WA points varies slightly depending on the event, but generally involves a combination of the swimmer's time, the world record time, and a coefficient that accounts for the event's difficulty.

The basic idea behind WA points is to provide a way to compare performances across different events and distances, allowing swimmers to see how they stack up against others in their sport. The higher the WA point score, the better the swimmer's performance is considered to be relative to other swimmers in the same event.

## Swimmer Behaviour

Swimmers are encouraged not to use their mobile phone or other technical devices while at events and they are prohibited in all changing facilities. Instead, we ask them to cheer on and support their fellow swimmers from all squads. Please refer to the [swimmer code of conduct](#) for more guidance.

## Parents' Behaviour

Parental support is really important at competitions and during training in the gallery. As a parent your conduct can have a huge impact on your swimmer. We urge you to read the [Parental Guidance document](#) and sign the [parent code of conduct](#).

## Championship Galas

As swimmers progress, they will start to aim higher than competing at open galas. The following explains the higher levels of competition that the club attends and which our swimmers are expected to aim for.

## Kent County Championships (AKA the Kent's)

County Championships take place across the country at the beginning of the year. Our county Kent's are usually held at the London Aquatic Centre in Stratford in January and February. They are a level 1 competition and are held as a long course event.





To be eligible to compete in the Kent County Championship a swimmer will only be considered for entry after achieving a qualifying times at Level 4 or above. The qualifying times are split into Male and Female and usually published around October, just after the Kent Junior Meet, and can vary significantly year to year (they are based on average times across county competitions in the previous year). Qualification times are split into **two** Consideration times and Automatic times.

**Consideration time** means a swimmer will be considered for entry to an event if they have achieved a time within this section. Having a consideration time does not mean you will be accepted.

**Automatic time** means a swimmer will be accepted for entry into a particular event.

The table below is an example of what County Qualifying times look like:

Version 0.4  
15/10/2025

Kent Swimming Championships 2026 - Qualifying Times  
Male/Open

		10/11		12		13		14		15		16		17+		
		Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	Auto	Cons.	
50 Free	SC	33.80	37.80	31.80	34.80	29.60	32.00	28.00	30.00	27.20	29.00	26.60	28.60	26.40	28.60	
	LC	34.40	38.40	32.50	35.40	30.30	32.60	28.70	30.70	28.00	29.70	27.40	29.30	27.20	29.30	
100 Free	SC	1:13.50	1:26.00	1:08.50	1:15.50	1:03.50	1:09.50	1:00.00	1:04.50	58.00	1:02.00	57.50	1:02.00	55.50	1:00.00	
	LC	1:14.60	1:27.00	1:09.70	1:16.60	1:04.80	1:10.70	1:01.40	1:05.80	59.40	1:03.30	58.90	1:03.30	57.00	1:01.40	
200 Free	SC	2:39.00	3:00.00	2:28.00	2:43.00	2:18.00	2:32.00	2:11.00	2:21.00	2:07.00	2:16.00	2:07.00	2:16.00	2:02.00	2:14.00	
	LC	2:41.20	3:01.90	2:30.30	2:45.10	2:20.50	2:34.30	2:13.60	2:23.40	2:09.70	2:18.50	2:09.70	2:18.50	2:04.80	2:16.60	
400 Free	SC	5:40.00	6:28.00	5:14.00	5:42.00	4:56.00	5:18.00	4:38.00	5:02.00	4:30.00	4:50.00	4:28.00	4:48.00	4:20.00	4:46.00	
	LC	5:44.10	6:31.60	5:18.40	5:46.10	5:00.70	5:22.40	4:43.00	5:06.60	4:35.10	4:54.80	4:33.20	4:52.80	4:25.30	4:50.90	
800 Free	SC	No Event			11:44.00		11:00.00		10:28.00		10:04.00		9:56.00		9:56.00	
	LC	No Event			11:52.20		11:08.70		10:37.10		10:13.50		10:05.60		10:05.60	
1500 Free	SC	No Event			22:08.00		20:40.00		20:00.00		19:04.00		18:52.00		18:40.00	
	LC	No Event			22:23.50		20:56.60		20:17.10		19:21.90		19:10.10		18:58.30	
50 Back	SC	40.00	44.40	37.20	40.60	34.60	37.80	33.00	35.20	32.20	34.40	32.20	34.40	32.00	34.40	
	LC	40.50	44.90	37.70	41.10	35.20	38.30	33.60	35.80	32.80	35.00	32.80	35.00	32.60	35.00	
100 Back	SC	1:24.50	1:37.00	1:19.00	1:27.00	1:12.50	1:20.50	1:10.00	1:15.00	1:07.00	1:11.50	1:06.50	1:11.50	1:04.50	1:10.00	
	LC	1:25.40	1:37.80	1:20.00	1:27.90	1:13.60	1:21.50	1:11.10	1:16.10	1:08.20	1:12.60	1:07.70	1:12.60	1:05.70	1:11.10	
200 Back	SC	2:59.00	3:21.00	2:49.00	3:02.00	2:36.00	2:52.00	2:28.00	2:40.00	2:23.00	2:33.00	2:22.00	2:32.00	2:20.00	2:32.00	
	LC	3:00.90	3:22.70	2:51.00	3:03.80	2:38.10	2:53.90	2:30.20	2:42.10	2:25.30	2:35.20	2:24.30	2:34.20	2:22.40	2:34.20	
50 Breast	SC	46.00	51.60	42.60	46.40	39.40	43.40	37.00	39.80	36.40	38.80	35.80	38.40	35.00	37.80	
	LC	46.70	52.20	43.30	47.10	40.20	44.10	37.80	40.60	37.30	39.60	36.70	39.20	35.90	38.60	
100 Breast	SC	1:39.00	1:54.50	1:31.50	1:41.50	1:24.50	1:33.00	1:19.00	1:25.50	1:18.00	1:23.50	1:15.00	1:20.50	1:13.50	1:19.50	
	LC	1:40.30	1:55.60	1:32.90	1:42.70	1:26.00	1:34.30	1:20.60	1:27.00	1:19.60	1:25.00	1:16.70	1:22.10	1:15.20	1:21.10	
200 Breast	SC	3:31.00	3:55.00	3:15.00	3:34.00	3:01.00	3:17.00	2:54.00	3:06.00	2:51.00	3:03.00	2:43.00	2:55.00	2:37.00	2:53.00	
	LC	3:33.50	3:57.20	3:17.70	3:36.50	3:03.90	3:19.70	2:57.00	3:08.80	2:54.10	3:05.90	2:46.20	2:58.00	2:40.30	2:56.00	
50 Fly	SC	39.00	44.20	36.40	39.80	33.60	36.80	31.40	34.40	30.00	32.60	29.80	32.00	29.40	31.80	
	LC	39.50	44.60	36.90	40.30	34.20	37.30	32.00	34.90	30.60	33.20	30.40	32.60	30.00	32.40	
100 Fly	SC	1:32.00	1:51.50	1:22.50	1:32.00	1:14.50	1:23.50	1:10.00	1:16.50	1:05.50	1:12.50	1:05.50	1:10.50	1:02.50	1:10.00	
	LC	1:32.80	1:52.20	1:23.40	1:32.80	1:15.50	1:24.40	1:11.10	1:17.50	1:06.60	1:13.50	1:06.60	1:11.60	1:03.70	1:11.10	
200 Fly	SC	3:41.00	4:10.00	3:11.00	3:24.00	2:50.00	3:08.00	2:44.00	2:55.00	2:28.00	2:45.00	2:28.00	2:39.00	2:28.00	2:39.00	
	LC	3:42.40	4:11.30	3:12.70	3:25.50	2:51.90	3:09.70	2:45.90	2:56.80	2:30.10	2:46.90	2:30.10	2:41.00	2:30.10	2:41.00	
200 IM	SC	3:01.00	3:26.00	2:48.00	3:05.00	2:37.00	2:54.00	2:28.00	2:41.00	2:25.00	2:35.00	2:23.00	2:34.00	2:17.00	2:31.00	
	LC	3:03.20	3:27.90	2:50.30	3:07.10	2:39.50	2:56.30	2:30.60	2:43.40	2:27.70	2:37.50	2:25.70	2:36.50	2:19.80	2:33.60	
400 IM	SC	No Event			6:16.00	6:42.00	5:40.00	6:08.00	5:20.00	5:42.00	5:14.00	5:36.00	5:14.00	5:36.00	5:02.00	5:28.00
	LC	No Event			6:20.70	6:46.40	5:45.10	6:12.80	5:25.40	5:47.10	5:19.50	5:41.20	5:19.50	5:41.20	5:07.80	5:33.30

Age groups in the county championships are: 10/11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17+ and age is as of the 31<sup>st</sup> December of year of the competition. This means swimmers qualify for the age they will be at the end of that year e.g. a swimmer who is currently 13 but is turning 14 by the end of the current year will be qualifying **as a 15-year-old** in the next county championships in January.

County qualification is an important goal for all of our swimmers, but it's worth remembering that it remains a demanding standard. Kent has around **10,000 swimmers across 50 clubs**, making it one of the largest and most competitive counties in England. Only **3–5%** of swimmers in Kent will ever achieve an accepted county qualifying time, **1–2%** will reach a final, and



just **0.5–1%** will go on to medal. At Orpington Ojays we aim for around **one-third of our competitive swimmers** to achieve at least a county consideration times.

The table below shows how many swimmers are selected for entry per age group.

	10/11	12	13	14	15	16	17+
50m events	24	24	24	24	24	19	29
100m events	20	20	20	20	20	16	24
200m events	16	16	16	16	16	14	18
400m events	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
800m events	N/A	10	10	10	10	10	10
1500m events	N/A	5	5	5	5	5	5

Orpington Ojays aims to send a strong team to the Kent's every year, we have a history of performing well at this competition, winning medals across age groups and putting swimmers into lots of finals. With some swimmers winning individual trophies for the best overall swimmer within a specific event.

All swimmers who make it to Kent's can attend our annual Kent parade, where swimmers are announced for the events, they competed in and if they are lucky enough to win a medal, they wear those too. This is usually held a couple of weeks after the championships are finished.

### Swim England London Summer Championships (AKA Regionals)

Regionals take place during April and May each year and are generally at the London Aquatic Centre Stratford and are a level 1 long course event.

Age groups in Regionals are: 11/12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17+

To compete at Regionals swimmers are once again considered for events after achieving a qualifying time at level 3 or above (so club championship results cannot be used). These times are harder than Kent times as this is one step further up the competition ladder. Again, qualifying times are published ahead of the competition, so swimmers know what they are aiming for. Age is as of 31<sup>st</sup> December of the year of competition.

As a club we aim to send swimmers to this competition every year and have a history of finalists and medal winners.

### National Summer Meets (AKA Nationals)

The National Summer Meets form part of the swimming competition structure in Great Britain whereby the top 20 ranked swimmers in each event, age group and gender are invited to compete at the Aquatics GB Next Generation Championships.



The next highest ranked swimmers are invited to compete at the Home Nations Summer Championship e.g., English Nationals.

**Entry is by invitation only** and is taken from the interim rankings. The interim rankings are based on a swimmer's performance at level 1 meets during a qualification window, typically between March and May of the same calendar year. These can be viewed on the rankings database once the qualification window opens.

**Aquatic GB Next Generations Championships** age groups are:

**Male:** 13 years, 14/15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18 years, 19+ years

**Female:** 12/ 13 years, 14/15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18+ years

**Home Nation Summer Championships** age group are but may vary:

**Male:** 12/13 years, 14/15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18+ years

**Female:** 12/13 years, 14/15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18+ years

This is the highest level of competition that swimmers in the club aspire to. Swimmers can change the country of international representation if they choose, but you need to carefully consider when switching, how your swimmers can be supported poolside as Ojays coaches can only attend GB and English Nationals (which are open to every member of the club and occur in the period). Every year we aim to send swimmers from our top squads to either the GB or a Home Nation Summer National. We traditionally have strong representation across both the GB and other Home Nations Summer National meets.

### London Winter Championships (AKA Winter Regionals)

Winter Regionals are a short course competition held at the LAC but as a 25m event in November each year. It is a tough event to qualify for as there are only 2 age groups 16 & under and 17+. Again, there are qualifying times for this event, and swimmers must achieve these at level 3 to be considered. Every year Ojays send a team of swimmers to Winter Regionals.

### Aquatics GB Championships

This is the very highest level of competition that swimmers can qualify for. It is usually held in April of each year, and swimmers are considered after meeting a L1 qualification time.

Swimmers that gain entry to this event can swim alongside British Olympic athletes.

### Swim England Winter Nationals

This is a short course 25m event held in December each year. It differs from summer National as swimmers are required to swim a consideration time at Level 2 or above. It is another tough event to gain entry to as again there are only 2 age groups 16& under and 17+





## Land based strength and conditioning training

Once swimmers leave Bronze-squad and move to Chrome and above, strength and conditioning training will be added to their weekly training schedule.

Strength and conditioning training offers many benefits to young swimmers, including:

- **Improved strength:** Strength training helps young swimmers develop the necessary strength to perform at higher level. This can result in faster times and increased endurance.
- **Injury prevention:** Strength and conditioning helps swimmers avoid injuries by developing muscular balance and stability, as well as improving joint mobility and range of motion.
- **Increased power:** Power is essential for swimmers, and strength training can help develop this attribute by building explosive power and speed.
- **Enhanced technique:** Strength and conditioning training helps swimmers refine their technique and form, leading to improved efficiency in the water.

## Nutrition

Nutrition is an important part of your training programme. Eating the right types and amounts of food, as well as drinking enough fluid before, during and after each training session will help you perform better and recover faster between training sessions. It will also help to keep you healthy and reduce your chances of getting colds and other upper respiratory tract illnesses.

There is some excellent information about what the swimmers should be eating [here](#)

There is also a great cook book written by **Kate Perry** a nutritionist and parent to swimmers which is full of tips and recipes for your hungry swimmer called

Go Faster Food for your Active Family

## Snacks for galas

Competitions can last all day, and swimmers will need to keep their energy levels up. Here are some ideas for good snacks to pack to keep your swimmer on top form. While nuts are a good source of energy for swimmers, in case of allergies we ask that no one brings nuts or nut-based products to galas or training.

- Fresh fruit or snack packs of fruit in natural juice
- Vegetable crisps, crackers and bread sticks
- Breakfast cereals (lower sugar varieties such as bran flakes and cornflakes) or premixed cereal drinks
- Yoghurt, custard, rice pudding



- Fruit and grain bars
- Small bars of dark chocolate 80% + cocoa solids
- pretzels or baked crisps
- Fruit bun, tea cakes, hot cross buns
- Rice crackers, rice cakes
- Scones, pancakes
- Milk based smoothie with fruit
- Milkshakes
- Popcorn (homemade is best with no salt or butter)
- Seeds and dried fruit mix

## Presentation evening

Every new year we hold a celebration evening, usually in February. This the evening where we celebrate **all** swimmers and their successes throughout the year. Everyone matters at Ojays, from the youngest swimmer to the older more experienced National swimmer. All swimmers' journeys start somewhere, and we celebrate them **all**.

Trophies are presented by the Head Coach to every swimmer who took part in Club Champs and to those who became Club Champions. But there are also *special* trophies too, which are awarded to swimmers for specific achievements. Below is a list of the trophies and what they are awarded for.

- Martin Fowler Trophy – Awarded to a younger swimmer who always gives his/her best in training and galas.
- Powis Trophy – Awarded to a younger swimmer who has improved and shown great promise over the year.
- Wendy Westpfel Trophy - Awarded to a master's swimmer.
- Jill Ivory Memorial Trophy – Awarded for the swimmer with most promising potential.
- Jo Mullins Trophy – Awarded to the Top Swimmer U14.
- John Daniels Trophy – Awarded for all-round excellence.
- Crofton & Guides – Girls Performance during year.
- Crofton & Guides – Boys Performance during year.
- The Head Coach Trophy – Girls, awarded by the Head coach.
- The Head Coach Trophy – Boys, awarded by the Head coach.
- The Commitment Trophy – Awarded for ongoing commitment to swimming and training.

The presentation evening is a **ticket-only** evening that will be held in a hall around the start of the year after the Championship was held.



## SportsEngine

Sports Engine (formerly known as Team Unify) is our swim-club management software and enables us to organise and manage all aspects of running our swim club. It allows the club to securely administer membership details across all squads from Learn to Swim through to Masters, perform gala and event management including online entry and sign up and to look after some financial aspects of the club such as squad and competition entry fees.

On the coaching side we use these tools to log training attendance and individual swimmers' data. Coaches can then run reports and monitor the progress of swimmers, their gala results and personal bests and check on time improvements.

As a parent you have access to your online account over the internet or by using a mobile app called Sports Engine Motion. Which you can download from your App store. You can access and manage all your important information such as contact details, SE number, and other details such as important medical information for your swimmer.

You can check up on financial details such as club and gala fees and payments you have made to the club, access all your swimmer's historic results for the last five years, check your swimmer's current personal bests with automatic time conversions, and have access to their coach swimmer review forms.

## Questions

Should you have any questions we have very a knowledgeable coaching team who's email addresses can be found on the website, just sign in and click on the Coaches and Directors tab to contact your swimmers squad coach. Alternatively, the committee can also help. We have a dedicated membership secretary for all your membership enquiries [membership@orpingtonojays.com](mailto:membership@orpingtonojays.com) and a competitions team who can help with any gala queries. [competitions@orpingtonojays.com](mailto:competitions@orpingtonojays.com). There are also dedicated What's App groups for all squads.

## Volunteering

The club is totally run by volunteers, from the committee to the people you see in white at galas, to the team managers who help swimmers' poolside at competitions. Every single person gives up their time to facilitate the smooth running of the club and the competitions we attend.

Please think about the ways in which you can get involved. Without the parents of younger swimmers getting involved the club will eventually run out of volunteers. As swimmers grow up and move on so do the parents. Do not think you don't need to do anything you do!

There are several roles that are very easy to get involved with:

**Team Manager:** These are the people who supervise swimmers' poolside and get them to their races on time. To become a TM there are a couple of online courses that you would need to attend and then the club undertakes a DBS check. Then you are good to go.



**Officials:** The people in white beside the pool. There are various levels of official, the first is Judge Level 1 (J1) To become a J1 there is an online course to attend and then you are mentored poolside by qualified J1 officials, completing a series of competencies. Once these are complete, you're given your license and away you go.

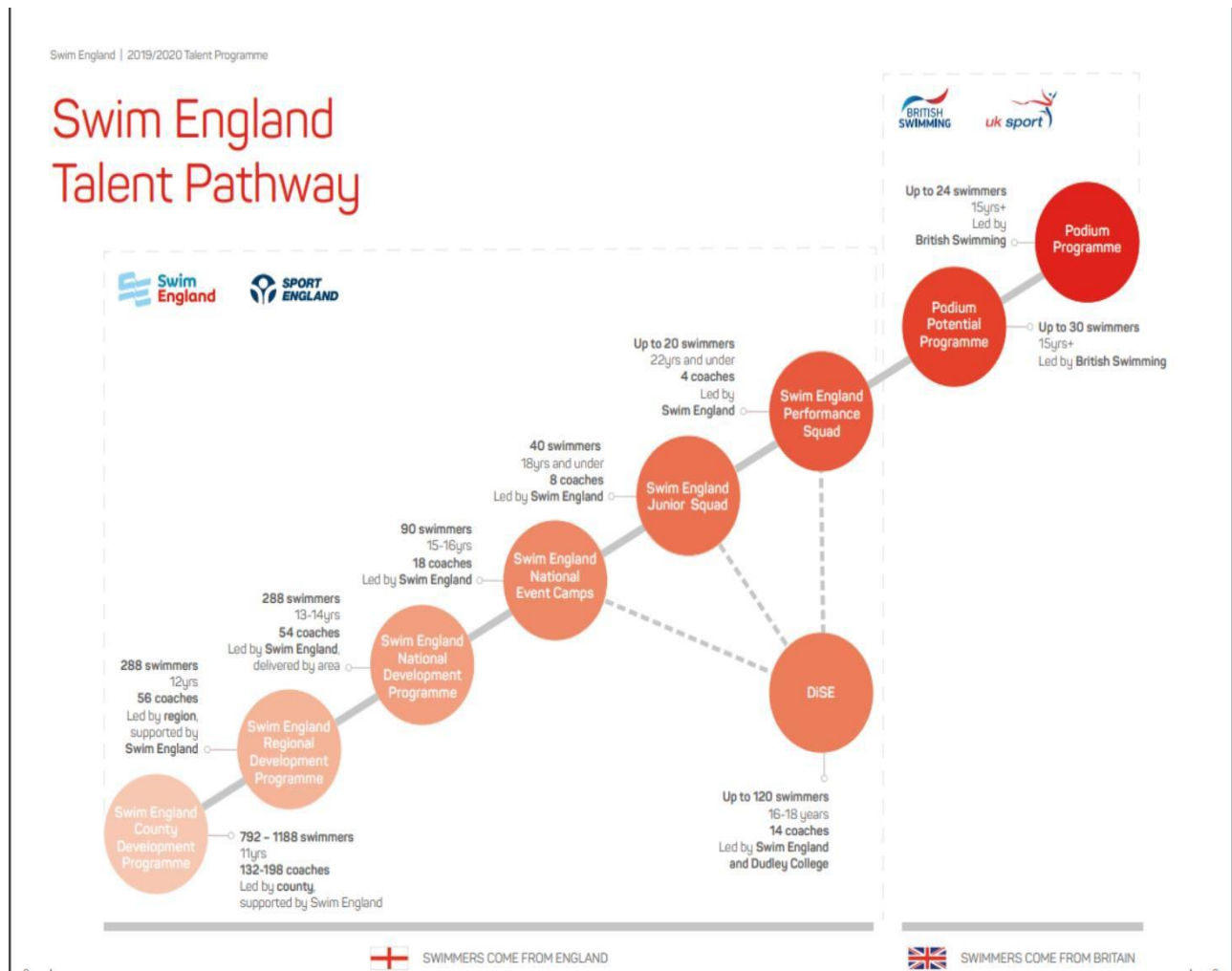
### Helping at galas like Spring Meet or Club Champs

There are all sorts of jobs that need doing when the club enters or runs a gala. They don't need any special skills or knowledge – just enthusiasm and some common sense, that's all. You can find more information about each role on the website but the jobs include supervising the swimmers signing in, taking the entry fee on the door, handing out medals, giving drinks to the officials, or making sure swimmers are ready for their races at the right times. They're easy jobs, but so important, and it's always good fun to be a part of the meet.



## Pathways

Swim England have an extensive pathway programme open to swimmers from Age 12 upwards. The following details the criteria for selection and the pathways aims.



At the club we have swimmers who have attended multiple levels of the pathway. The Pathways continue on from these three levels, as you can see in the first diagram, but these are the most common ones our swimmers aim for.

## Swim England County Development Programme (CDP)

This is the first step on the National pathway and developed along with the county for swimmers aged 12 at the end of the year of selection

The Programme aims to support swimmers and to:

- Develop fundamental movement skills and core aquatic skills to advance physical literacy
- Develop technical skills across all four competitive strokes



- Develop the characteristics in-line with the age and ‘Development’ stage of the Optimal Athlete
- Create awareness of Swim England’s culture and its associated talent programmes.
- Develop the characteristics in-line with the age and ‘Development’ stage of the Optimal Athlete Development Framework (OADF)
- Increase opportunities for the workforce delivering at this stage of the pathway, to experience and facilitate an integrated and inclusive training environment.

Selection on is based on the following criteria:

- The county may select up to 48 swimmers—24 males and 24 females. For each gender, 12 swimmers should have birthdays in the first six months of the year and 12 in the last six months.
- If a county cannot meet the minimum numbers for a gender, they may adjust accordingly by reducing the total or increasing the number of swimmers from the other gender as needed.
- The highest long or short course ranked 12-year-old male and female, in **200m Individual Medley** (It should be noted that long course times recorded during this period will be given priority when selections are being made)
- Times used for selection to the CDP must be taken from the Swim England rankings, and must be achieved between 1st January and the conclusion of the British Summer Championships. Further selections can be made from second, third ranked positions until maximum numbers are achieved. Where swimmers have an equal ranking, selections will be prioritised based upon the highest WA point score.
- Up to 6 para-swimmers per county (**nationally selected from 2 IPC events** and included within the total of 48 swimmers).

### Swim England Regional Development Programme (RDP)

This is the second step on the Swim England Talent Pathway and is developed in partnership with all of the Swim England Regions for swimmers aged 13 years at the end of year of selection.

(see above selection)

### Swim England National Age Group Development Programme (NAGDP)

This is the third step on the Swim England Talent Pathway and is managed and delivered by the England Talent Team.

14+ years of age by 31<sup>st</sup> December in the year of selection.

Up to 288 swimmers selected across six zones.

Up to 48 swimmers per zone.



## Orpington Ojays online

Our website can be found here:

[www.orpingtonojays.com](http://www.orpingtonojays.com)

or

[uk.gomotionapp.com/oosc](http://uk.gomotionapp.com/oosc)



## Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/orpingtonojays>



<https://twitter.com/OrpingtonOjays>



<https://www.instagram.com/orpingtonojayssc/>

