



DISS OTTERS

A local swimming club at the heart of the community



DOSC Competition Guide

DOSC is a competitive swimming club and actively encourages members to enter galas regularly. Galas are a fun and social experience and help develop team spirit within the club. Swimming is one of the most competitive sports in the UK. Please try to bear in mind you child's age, experience, and stage of physical development as these will all have a big impact on performance.

In the younger age groups the difference in times can be significant. Focusing on enjoying the experience, improving your technique and skills in competition, and aiming for personal best times is far more productive than worrying about medals.

As you settle into training and progress through the age groups the gaps tend to narrow and hard work and effort are rewarded. Progression through the club takes into account attendance and attitude at training and galas.

Types of Swimming Competition

League galas are team events where the whole team competes against other clubs, gaining points for each race. League galas are usually made up of individual races and team/relay races for the different age groups.

Open Meets are advertised by the club and are licenced meets for anyone who is eligible to take part. These events are individual races with the fastest swimmers gaining medals/trophies.

Long Course or Short Course?

Details of what 'course' a meet is will be on the meet information pack – usually described as LC or SC. Short course meets are swum in a 25m pool (same as Diss leisure centre) and long course meets are swum in a 50m pool. Most meets are swum short course whilst long course meets are targeted towards regional and national standards of competition.

What are licensed meets?

Licensed meets are swimming galas that comply with a standard set of Swim England licensing requirements. All times achieved at licensed meets are official and get

published on a rankings database. The level of the meet can be used to identify the purpose of the competition:

Level 4 is for those beginning to enter individual competitions. These competitions are generally hosted by a local club. Usually with upper limit/cut off times

Level 3 is again, for entry level swimmers. Entries generally have cut-off/upper limit times. Can be short course or long course. Times achieved here can be used for entry to Level 1 meets, regional and county championships

Level 2 is aimed at regional qualifiers and swimmers close to regional qualification. They require qualifying times to enter.

Level 1 is the highest level of competitive swimming aimed at National qualifiers and swimmers close to National qualification. Opportunity to achieve international qualifying times. Always long course.

Please note: For level 1, 2 and 3 meets the swimmer needs to be registered with Swim England at Category 2 membership

Qualifying times / Upper Limit Times / Cut off Times:

A qualifying time is the time that the swimmer must have already achieved in order to enter an event at the competition.

Upper limit/cut off times are times set by a competition organiser that a swimmer must be **slower than** to be able to swim at the competition.

Qualifying times or cut off times will be included in the competition meet pack so please look out for these and check before submitting an entry for your swimmer(s).

Swimmers' Entry Times:

Whenever possible DOSC records and retains the times achieved by our swimmers. This will include not only times achieved at licensed competitions, but all events we take part in (club, friendly and team events).

Which times can be used?

The meet pack for a given competition usually states whether (1) times need to have been achieved at licensed meet and appear on rankings and (2) how recently the times need to have been swum. If this is ever unclear, please ask your coach.

Generally, most L3, L4, and friendly competitions will accept club recorded times regardless of whether they appear on the rankings database. L1, L2, County, Regional, and National events will always require times to have been achieved at licensed competitions and appear on the rankings database.

Swimmers' times achieved at licensed competitions can be found here: <https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/> (simply enter the swimmer surname or membership number to locate their times)

The database is a great tool. It records every swim and provides graphs and other useful performance data. Event rankings can also be accessed on this site.

Entering swimming competitions

Open meets supported by the club will be listed on the fixtures list and available for entry on Swim Club Manager. Licensed open meets will have ranges of times that swimmers must meet to enter, these can be found on the entry packs of each open meet, uploaded onto Swim Club Manager. Be sure to check the deadlines for entries as late entries cannot be accepted- please ask your coach if you are unsure.

Team Competitions

Are competitions where swimmers are selected to compete for the club as a team against other clubs, rather than individually. Swimmers will be selected to swim certain events for the best possible team outcome. A list of selected swimmers will be advertised via email. We will aim to give as much notice as practically possible to swimmers and parents. **If you are selected to swim for the club, please make your best efforts to be available.**

What should I bring to a gala?

The following is a general guide of what to take to a competition:

- Two Towels
- Trunks/Costumes
- Goggles (including a spare set)
- X 2 DOSC Swim Hats
- T-shirt
- Warm hooded top and trousers
- Plenty of healthy snacks & drinks
- Shoes such as flip flops so you have footwear to leave the poolside if necessary – many venues do not allow swimmers to walk bare foot other than poolside and some require shoes to be worn at all times including poolside.

It is preferred that you wear DOSC team kit when representing the club – a minimum of Club hat and T-shirt is advised. Club kit can be ordered from Swim Club Manager.

Arrival at a competition

Please aim to arrive and be ready on poolside at least 15mins before the first warm up is scheduled to start.

On arrival at a gala, a swimmer should first get changed and bring everything needed with them poolside.

Look for your team / coach and sign in with your Team Manager(s). Once signed in stay with the rest of the team and sit together once you have got changed.

Warm up sessions will start at the advertised times, the Team Managers will let you know when you are required to warm up.

A warm up session gives swimmers the opportunity to do approximately 10mins of continuous swimming followed by 5mins of diving and sprinting. In busy meets the warm ups are usually separated into boys and girls and age groups – see meet information for warm up times.

It is advisable to wear poolside clothes after warm up and between races. This will keep your muscles warm, ready for your race.

The Team Manager will tell you which events you are swimming in. **DO NOT** leave the poolside area without letting the Team Manager know. Always be ready to start your race as no one will wait for you if you aren't there or have forgotten your goggles. Remember you are part of a team, so cheer on your team-mates when they swim and always create a good impression as you are representing DOSC.

Due to child welfare regulations, under no circumstances are parents to come onto poolside, unless sanctioned to do so.

Diving off the blocks

The rules of swimming **DO NOT** insist that swimmers dive off blocks. They can dive from the pool bank/deck or start in the water if they wish. Inexperienced swimmers may not want to dive off blocks and the coach will support them in an appropriate start.

Going Home

You should never leave the gala without first checking with your coach/team manager if it is ok.

Parents' guide to surviving Open Meets

You will need to make sure you have planned the day or weekend. Getting to the event can be tricky and sometimes involves a very early start. Pack plenty of food to get through the day as you will be at the event for a long time.

Parking can also be somewhat difficult but if you arrive in plenty of time this isn't usually an issue.

Once you have ensured that your swimmer is poolside with everything they need. Take your seats and enjoy the competition! Most meets will have an area for parents to watch the gala. There is usually a spectator entrance fee and programmes will often be available to purchase. So, make sure you have some money with you. Your child will often be seated in another part of the pool with parents restricted from the swimmer area.

The swimmers all try to cheer each other on and parents are encouraged to cheer for the children as loud as they like to spur them on during races! At DOSC we all try to sit together as it helps keep up the team atmosphere. Above all, despite all the trials of getting to an open meet they are good fun and if lots of children are there, they all enjoy each other's company and entertain themselves through the day.

The main reason for entering these competitions is to achieve qualifying times that will allow a swimmer entry into county, regional and national competitions. It also allows the coaches and teachers to see progress and to further improve a swimmer's technique. Entering a variety of these competitions will increase a swimmer's confidence in a live setting and hopefully help you see continued progression by swimming faster times at each competition and improved individualised feedback.

Galas can be stressful for younger swimmers and all swimmers are encouraged to do their best and to focus on doing PB's (Personal Bests). It is not realistic for **EVERY** child to win a medal every time and not realistic for each swimmer to improve on every swim every time.

The primary aspect of competitions is to gain experience in various events, distances and as the swimmers develop, to try different race tactics, etc. Generally, the coach will keep it simple with younger athletes. They will focus on one or two key points, get them to do their **best and enjoy themselves**. Parents should be there to support their child in their attempt rather than 'critique' the swim – that is the coach role.

FAQ's

How much does it cost to take part in swimming competitions?

Team events and friendly galas are often club funded or free to take part in. Licensed meets typically cost between £4-6 per race

How do I find out about competitions the club is entering?

Competitions will be advertised by the club via email, our group Facebook page, club noticeboard, and website. If you are concerned that you are not receiving information, please contact us.

Is my child ready for competitions and which events should they enter?

The best person to provide advice on this is your child's coach. The best time to have a chat is before or after training or to contact the coach directly via email.

What is a disqualification (DQ) and why did it happen?

Most swimmers get disqualified numerous times during competitive swimming. This can occur for a variety of technical reasons and is very easily done! Although this can be frustrating it should be considered as one of the learning curves in swimming! Disqualification can occur for reasons such as moving on the blocks, incorrect stroke technique and when turning at the end of the pool to name just a few. A reason will always be provided by meet officials. Swimmers or parents should not be concerned about this as coaches will explain and seek to remedy any mistakes made in training.

My child is worried about an upcoming competition, what should I do?

Competitions particularly the first few your child enters can be a daunting experience for both swimmers and parents. There are plenty of experienced DOSC parents and swimmers at the club attending competitions. You can always ask them for advice/help and they will be happy to answer any of your questions or point you in the direction of someone who can! The important thing to remember is that swimming is very much an individual sport. The focus should be on self-improvement over time, and everyone has to start somewhere! First time competitors need only be concerned with recording their first set of times and seek to improve on these gradually through training and technical improvement.

What are County, Regional, and National Championships?

County Championships: (Jan – Feb) Annual competition for all competitive swimmers in Norfolk. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times should enter.

Regional Championships: (May-June) Annual competition for all competitive swimmers from clubs in the East region. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times should enter.

National Championships: Winter Nationals are swum Short Course in December. British Championships is swum in April every year and will often double up as Olympic or World trials. Summer Nationals are swum at the end of July and beginning of August. There are 2 championships – British Nationals and English Nationals. Swimmers with the top 24 ranked times in their age group at the end of the qualifying window will be invited to the British Summer Championships. The next top 20 ranked English swimmers in their age group will then be invited to the English Summer Championships.

We hope you have found this guide a useful reference for understanding competitive swimming!

Should you have any further questions or queries please contact your child's coach