

Volunteering at Galas!



It's a condition of Swim Clubs Entries to Swim Ulster & Swim Ireland Galas that clubs provide volunteers to assist in the running of the gala. The roles are varied: programme selling; timekeeping; stroke and turn judges; marshalling; recorder etc.

It's therefore a **condition of entry** with Banbridge Amateur Swimming Club that if a swimmer participates in Aqua, PTL or enters any open gala they agree to provide a volunteer for at least **one FULL session** in one of the required roles (detailed below). 'Being available for poolside duty, gala duty and/or any other specified duties, as and when required.'

Inevitably the number of swimmers entered in galas throughout the year grows, so too does our club requirement to fill gala volunteer positions. Remember the more parents that play their part in volunteering at galas, **the less frequently** each person will be required to volunteer.

The expectation is that if you have a swimmer entered in a particular gala then you will be available to fill a volunteer role if required.

Detailed below are the various duties involved in running a gala from Swim Ulster, most of these duties do not need specific training and anyone willing to volunteer will be given help. However, if you would like training please inform our Club Secretary.

Timekeeper	Timekeeper: Reports to gala secretary >30 minutes before session and then to allocated lane 10 minutes before session. Familiarises him/herself with watch before start. Starts stopwatch at start of race and at end of race stops watch and presses back-up button and records all times taken in his/her lane.
Gala Secretary	Gala Secretary: Should report at start of warm up. Tasks: to ensure that volunteers report and enter name legibly on attendance sheet and to keep announcer informed on those failing to report. Job ends when gala starts.
Programmes	Programmes: Should report at start of warm up. Sell programmes/ start sheets and deliver money and unsold items to Meet manager
Announcer	Announcer: Should report at start of warm up. Needs to be a good sight reader and comfortable tackling unfamiliar names. Main tasks: announcing event and heat number; telling swimmers to report to marshal; announcing results/ finalists award winners.
Marshal	Marshal: Reports to gala secretary >30 minutes before session. Collects clipboard, pen, start sheets >10 minutes before session. 2 marshals. One signs in swimmers as they report. One seats swimmers in each heat in lane order and delivers them to the start at soon as the previous heat has begun. Reports to referee when swimmers fail to report.
Starter	Starter: Shares with the referee joint control of the start. Ideally SI Level 2 qualified but unqualified volunteers can carry out the role with support if necessary.
Stroke Judge	Stroke Judge: Reports at least 40 minutes before start. Is assigned working position by referee. Must observe the technique of swimmers in his/her side of the pool (i.e. 3 , 4 or 5 lanes depending on pool size) and report to referee breaches of rules including turns. Referee makes final decision on disqualification.
Turn Judge	Turn Judge: Reports at least 40 minutes before start. Is assigned working position by referee. Must observe the technique of swimmers in his/her assigned lanes (ideally only 1) at one end of the pool from 5m out to first stroke on surface after turn and report

	to referee breaches of rules including turns. Referee makes final decision on disqualification.
Timing	Timing: Should be comfortable working with computers and under pressure of time. Should have attended training. May be required to use Aries or Colorado systems, setting distance for each event, overriding false touches and clearing system after each race.
Recorder	Recorder: Reports with other volunteers but job starts on completion of first event. Compares electronic results with timekeeper results and alerts referee when there is a discrepancy of >0.5 seconds. Usually one recorder reads out electronic time per swimmer, the other compares and both then mark off that swimmer on both records.
Computer	Computer: Should be comfortable working with computers and under pressure of time. Should have attended training. Working with HyTel computer system, ensuring accuracy of results and bringing questionable results to attention of referee.
Chief Timekeeper	Chief Timekeeper: Reports >30 minutes before session. Distributes stopwatches, pens, clipboards, timekeeper recording sheets to each lane. Starts 2 watches at start of each race as spare timepieces should a timekeeper's watch fail. May be asked to take the time first finisher in each race. Collects timekeeper recording sheets after each event (i.e when all heats in an event have been completed).
Results	Results: Reports with other volunteers but job starts on completion of first event. Delivers 3 copies of results: 1 to awards table, 1 posted for access by swimmers (poolside), 1 for access by parents (gallery).
Meet Manager	Meet Manager: Carries the responsibility to set up the gala; have programmes printed; install timing pads and wiring if necessary; ensure that all stationery, water are provided; manage volunteers.
Referee	Referee: Reports before start of warm up. Must be a qualified and experienced official (Swim Ireland Level 2) who is the final arbiter on all decisions including fairness of start, officials time of each swimmer, conduct of all other officials.
Reserves	Reserves: May be called on when necessary.

Parents Information when requested to work on Poolside @ Gala's

Poolside Appearance: white top (preferable), clean, flat soled shoes, change of clothes in case you get wet!

Poolside tends to be noisy, wet & very warm environments. Ideally bring lightweight clothes with you to change into in the changing cubicles provided (then when you have finished your duties you can go home in dry clothes!) Footwear should have a flat, clean sole (beware that flip-flops can be slippery on poolside). Wearing a white top shows that you are part of the gala team.

Behaviour Poolside: Be professional and impartial at **ALL** Times

Most parents' first gala job is timekeeper. When doing this job your duty is to be a gala-team player by helping each swimmer in your lane.

- Check that s/he is the correct swimmer for your lane by matching with your timing sheet.
- If your swimmer is not ready because of a mishap (e.g. broken goggles) alert the referee

- Count the number of lengths. If the swimmer miscounts you can wave him/her to go on.
- Time the race and record both timekeepers' times

To do your job properly you must put aside all allegiances to family and club. It is inappropriate to shout encouragement to a swimmer you know. It is also inappropriate to watch a swimmer who is not in your lane (by doing so you may fail in the job you were appointed to do).

By carrying out your duties impartially you help the gala team to present a professional appearance.

If you feel unable to set aside your loyalty to your child you may arrange for a club colleague to take over your duties for the race your child is in leaving you free to return to the spectator area and support him/her.

Knowledge Poolside To increase your knowledge refer to the volunteer roles in the table above

The **Referee** is the person who blows the whistle at the start of each race. S/he is usually the most knowledgeable official & will be happy to answer any queries you have if you are unsure of your role.

To further increase your knowledge you may take a Swim Ireland Officials Course. Level 1 gives valuable background information about how galas are run. Level 2 covers stroke rules in depth. Courses are inexpensive; both can be delivered in one day. There is no formal examination. The qualification is completed by working sessions at Ulster and Irish galas for Level 1 as Timekeeper and for Level 2 as Turn Judge.

Enjoyment Poolside is usually more interesting and enjoyable than spectating !

Working with swimmers is fulfilling & on poolside you will meet a wide range of interesting characters from many different clubs from around the province and beyond.