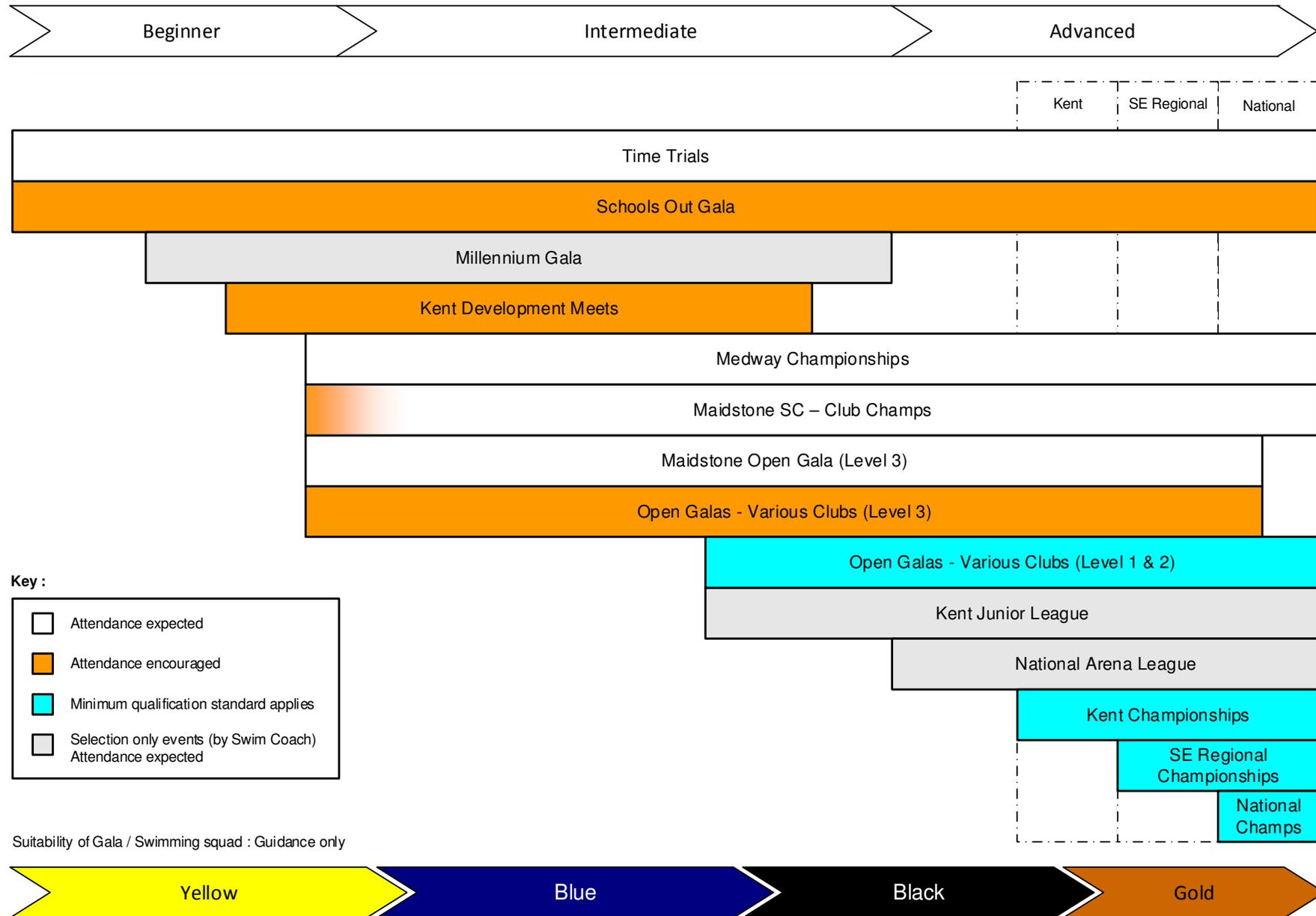


Swimming Gala Overview



Swimming Galas

A swimming Gala is a swimming competition which allows swimmers to compete both as individuals, and as representatives of their swimming club. There are lots of different types / formats but here is some general advice which swimmers who are new to competitive swimming (and their parents) may find useful.

Time trials (Boom Pool squad swimmers and above).

- ◆ The first step towards being able to take part in Galas is to attend the 'Time Trials' run by Maidstone Swimming Club which are held at Mote Park Leisure Centre.
- ◆ They are held on two consecutive Friday evenings at various different times during the year. You swim two lengths of Front Crawl and Breaststroke the first week, and then Backstroke and Butterfly the following week.
- ◆ Don't worry if you are nervous as everybody is the first time. There is also an option to just do 1 length of Butterfly for the younger swimmers and you can start in the water if you are worried about diving.
- ◆ Don't worry if you get disqualified the first few times. This is also totally normal and the reason why time trials are a great way to practice for more formal galas which you will do later. Your coach can also give you some advice if you are not sure why you were disqualified.
- ◆ Attendance is important, as they help the coaches to ensure fair selection for Galas, and movement between swim squads.

Progression from Time Trials.

- ◆ Once you have taken part in Time trials and are comfortable in that environment you may also decide to enter other events. The options available depend upon the time of the year and more details are included in the Appendices and on the Maidstone Swimming Club website (www.maidstoneswimmingclub.org)
- ◆ The Millennium Galas are unfortunately oversubscribed, so swimmers are invited to swim, rather than formally applying, so please don't be offended if you are not asked initially. There are often additional opportunities later on in the year.
- ◆ Where Maidstone Swimming Club coaches are attending other clubs 'Open events' and will be present on the day, the Gala will be listed on the club website under the 'Swimming section' – Gala Schedule sub menu. This is the best place to keep a track of Galas which are coming up, and there is a 'Fixture list' at the bottom of this section.

Other Information :-

- ◆ Maidstone Swimming Club is a competitive swimming club, so swimmers are expected to attend galas in order to progress, but it needs a big commitment from the swimmers/parents/coaches involved.
- ◆ Please aim to be at least 5 minutes early for Gala events (warm up start times) and give as much notice as possible to the coach if you are unable to swim for any reason. For some Galas (eg Medway Championships) the club will be charged unless a swimmer is withdrawn beforehand and for others the coach will need to organise a replacement swimmer.
- ◆ Car parking can be difficult (eg Medway Park, Eltham) so it's worth planning an alternative in case the centre car park is full.
- ◆ Remember we always need helpers to assist with the events which we host, so please volunteer if you can spare the time.

Appendix A : Introductory Level Events – Suitable for New Swimmers (Boom Pool) and above with little or no previous experience.

Type of Gala	What is it?	Swimming Level	How important is it?	Where / When?	How do I enter?	How to I pay?
Time trails	<p>Chance to get an accurately timed swim in the four key strokes (Front crawl, Breaststroke, Backstroke and Butterfly)</p> <p>For the majority of swimmers this is their first step towards participating in Galas. Most children are nervous the first time and then enjoy it after that.</p> <p>It's a great chance to give it a try in a more formal environment with Judges and Timekeepers to assist you.</p>	<p>All squads (Boom pool upwards)</p> <p>All standards.</p> <p>You can start in the water if worried about diving.</p>	<p>Expected.</p> <p>Essential if you are going to enter Galas in the future.</p> <p>Remember MSC is a competitive Club.</p> <p>Helps to ensure fair Gala selection and progression between squads.</p>	<p>Mote Park</p> <p>Keep an eye on website but usually typically 3 or 4 times per year.</p> <p>Usually Friday evenings.</p>	<p>On the day.</p> <p>Just come along on the night - but make sure you arrive before the cut off time. (currently 18:45)</p>	<p>n/a.</p> <p>Included in your MSC fees.</p>
Schools out Gala.	<p>Intra club fun Gala, where swimmers from different squads are allocated into mixed ability teams.</p> <p>The idea is for the teams to be closely matched, and for everybody to have fun.</p> <p>It's also a social event and a chance to have Pizza with your friends once the swimming has finished.</p>	<p>All squads</p> <p>All standards.</p>	<p>Encouraged.</p> <p>But it does help to raise money for the club.</p>	<p>Mote Park.</p> <p>It normally takes place at the start of the summer holidays.</p> <p>Afternoon/Evening.</p>	<p>Entry in advance.</p> <p>Details on website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p> <p>Money raised goes to MSC.</p>
Millennium Galas	<p>This is a gala aimed at developing swimmers when the coaches feel that they are ready for more competitive swimming.</p> <p>A league consisting of 6 club's with each club hosting a home Gala, and are run under full Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) rules. Minimum time restrictions apply to some of the older swimmers in order to discourage clubs from simply entering their strongest swimmers.</p> <p>You are invited by your coach so you are selected rather than formally applying.</p>	<p>Typically Yellow/Blue/Black squads.</p> <p>Youngest swimmers are 8yrs.</p>	<p>Expected. (If selected)</p> <p>Please notify the clubs Millennium organiser if you are unable to attend so that they can find a replacement swimmer in good time.</p>	<p>Various pools.</p> <p>Maidstone, Dartford, Eltham, Greenwich, Larkfield and White Oak.</p> <p>Each club hosts one event.</p>	<p>Invite only.</p> <p>You will be contacted by your coach.</p>	<p>n/a.</p> <p>Included in your MSC fees.</p>

Appendix B : Intermediate Level Events – Suitable for swimmers from all squads who have some previous experience of competitive swimming

Type of Gala	What is it?	Swimming Level	How important is it?	Where / When?	How do I enter?	How to I pay?
Kent Development Meets.	Intensive training day which covers all strokes and technical aspects such as Starts and Turns.	Typically Yellow/Blue squads. Under 12's. Must not have swum at a Kent County Championship event.	Encouraged. Just if you want to and are eligible.	Various pools Whole day.	Entry in advance. Details on MSC website.	Payment in advance. .
Medway Championships	Formal Time trials which take place on certain Saturday evenings during the year. You swim in your age group, and it focuses on a different stroke each time, including Individual Medley (combination of strokes). Open events mean you can swim longer distances (eg 400m) if you want to.	All squads All standards.	Expected.	Medway Park Saturday Late afternoon/Evening. (Currently start at 5:15) Allow the entire evening as it can be a late finish. Check car park ticket expiry times.	Entry in advance. You enter for the whole series at the beginning of the year. Details on MSC website.	Payment in advance. Notify your coach if unable to swim.
MSC Club Champs	Intra club competition for everybody who is a member of Maidstone Swimming Club. The swimmers with the best times can swim in the finals which take place at the end of the year. If you finish in the top 6 you get a medal which is awarded at the Presentation Evening.	All squads. You must be a member of MSC.	Encouraged (Boom/Yellow) Expected (Blue and above)	Mote Park September – October. Evenings during the week. (Typically Tue / Thur). Run in parallel with certain time trials.	Entry in advance. Details on MSC website.	Payment in advance.

<p>Maidstone 'Open' Gala.</p> <p>Level 3.</p>	<p>Maidstone 'home' Gala, where swimmers from other clubs are able to attend.</p> <p>Typically level 3 galas have maximum times to discourage very strong swimmers from winning multiple events.</p> <p>The minimum times will either be more generous (or non existent) in order to be more inclusive.</p> <p>Age is usually as of the day of the competition as opposed to end of the year</p> <p>This is the main opportunity for MSC to raise money for the club in order to keep the fees as low as possible.</p>	<p>All squads.</p>	<p>Expected.</p>	<p>Mote Park</p> <p>Usually an entire Saturday at the end of November.</p>	<p>Entry in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>
<p>Other clubs 'Open' Gala</p> <p>Level 3.</p>	<p>Maidstone swimmers are eligible to enter other clubs 'Open' events.</p> <p>Typically level 3 galas have maximum times to discourage very strong swimmers from winning multiple events.</p> <p>The minimum times will either be more generous (or non existent) in order to be more inclusive.</p> <p>Age is usually as of the day of the competition as opposed to end of the year.</p> <p>Eg White Oak, Gravesend & Northfleet, Hastings, Margate, Orpington Ojays.</p>	<p>Typically Blue/Black/Gold.</p>	<p>Encouraged.</p>	<p>Various locations.</p> <p>Various times during the year.</p>	<p>Entry in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>

Appendix C : Advanced Level Events – Swimmers with considerable experience of competitive swimming.

Type of Gala	What is it?	Swimming Level	How important is it?	Where / When?	How do I enter?	How to I pay?
Level 1 or 2 Opens	Typically you must have achieved a minimum qualifying time for your age group in order to enter. Note: Please track your PB swim times so that you can enter them on the entry form.	Typically Gold Squad.	Encouraged.	Various	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.
Kent Junior League.	Under 12 at end of Year	Typically Black/Gold Squad.	Expected (If Selected)	Various	Invite only. You will be contacted by your coach.	Included in your MSC fees.
National Arena League.	League consisting of :- Premier Division 1 (East / West) Division 2 (East / West) Final Gala in December determines who will be promoted / relegated.	Typically Gold Squad.	Expected (If Selected)	Various October – December.	Invite only. You will be contacted by your coach.	Included in your MSC fees.
Kent County Championships.	Swimmers who have achieved Kent qualification times at Level 4 (or above) Galas. Times are listed on the club website, see 'Swimming section' (Gala Schedule) menu.	Typically Black/Gold Squad.	Expected if Qualification standard is reached.	Major Pool in the South East.	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.
South East Regional (SER) Championships.	Swimmers who have achieved South East Regional qualification times at Level 3 (or above) Galas. Times are listed on the club website, see 'Swimming section' (Gala Schedule) menu.	Typically Gold Squad.	Expected if Qualification standard is reached.	Major Pool in the South East. Eg Crystal Palace in June.	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.
National Championships.	Swimmers who have achieved National qualification times at Level 1 or 2 Galas. Times are listed on the club website, see 'Swimming section' (Gala Schedule) menu.	Typically Gold Squad.	Expected if Qualification standard is reached.	Major Pool in the UK. Eg Ponds Forge (Sheffield) in July.	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.