

Competitive Swimming

Upper Deeside swimmers have the opportunity to progress with the club through a wide-ranging variety of competitions, which match both their age and swimming development. The younger and less experienced swimmers can participate in the SAS League and the local mini meets, progressing onto the wealth of Club and Area Graded Meets that take place regularly throughout the North East. An increasing number of Club swimmers are making their mark at District and National levels and have qualified to participate in the SASA North District training Squads. Whether your child is a young relatively inexperienced swimmer or a highly dedicated, talented, older swimmer who has made swimming their specialty sport, there are numerous competitions that can meet each individual's requirements. Upper Deeside swimmers participate in a great variety of Meets, as indicated below.

Swim Meets

Meets	Tadpoles	Dolphins	Killer Whales	Sharks	Top Squad	Frequency	Location
Club Night	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly	Aboyne
Club Championship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	December	Aboyne
Sprint Championship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	June	Aboyne
UDASC Challenge				✓	✓	November	Aboyne
SAS League		✓	✓	(✓)		4 per Year	Westhill
Club Meets		(✓)	✓	✓	✓	6– 8 per Year	NE venue
North District Championships				(✓)	✓	4 per Year	NE venue

As swimmers progress to National level they may be invited to compete as part of the South Aberdeenshire Swim team (SAS). Further information will be issued when appropriate.

Meet System/ Structure

The structure of competitive swimming may seem complex and confusing. Competitions, usually referred to as meets, are organised for swimmers in a variety of ways that reflect age group and different swimmers abilities (time bands). Swimmers are thereby able to enjoy the challenge and excitement of competing against other swimmers of similar abilities. For the majority of Meets swimmers compete in Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (SASA) age groups 11-12yrs, 13-14yrs, 15-16yrs and 17-18yrs. The age group of the competitor is determined either by their age on the 31st December of the current year or “age on day” of competition. Meets held for younger swimmers, aged 10 and under, are known as mini-meets and the children normally compete in single age groups 8yrs, 9yrs, 10yrs.

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- **Graded Meets**

The Graded Meet system gives the swimmer a ladder of success to work up to Championships. In Graded Meets the standard is determined by two sets of times for each of the strokes. These are referred to as entry times and medal cut-off times. For example at this year's Elgin Graded Meet the entry cut-off time for the Girls 11/12yr 100m Backstroke event was 1:39.00. Any 11/12yr old Girl with a time faster than this cannot be entered for this event. Medal cut-off times are approximately 5% faster. Swimmers, who exceed this time on the day, would gain "Too Fast" certificates rather than medals.

- **Championship and Open Meets**

Championship and Open Meets are for the fastest swimmers with the fastest competing in the Scottish Age Group Championships. The North District Age Group Championships are held every year, in February and April, and are for children aged 11 and upwards. Normally to compete in these Meets a swimmer will have to achieve particular times for the different disciplines and distances. If the swimmer has not achieved or surpassed the consideration time they will be ineligible to compete. In all cases a swimmer cannot be too fast to compete. Swimmers entry times have to have been achieved at an **Accredited Event**, within the last twelve months prior to the meet. (To run an accredited Meet the meet organisers have to comply with a set of SASA regulations. One of the key criteria is that a full suite of qualified Technical Officials is present at the event. Nearly all events that Upper Deeside participates in are accredited events and as a Club we are expected to supply our share of technical officials (you the parents). At all North District Events all competing clubs must supply a specified number of officials per session, and are heavily fined if they don't comply.

Meet Entries

The club keeps a record for each swimmer of their current best time (**Personal Best - PB**) for each of the different disciplines (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley (IM)) and for a variety of distances (25,50,100,200,400,800/1500m). Swimmers initially gain these times at **Club Performance Nights**, which all swimmers are encouraged to attend.

- **Selection for Meets**

On receipt of the details of a Meet, the Meet Secretary will identify all those swimmers who fulfil the particular requirements of that competition, age group and entry cut-off times. A note is then posted on the notice board at the Centre and individual notes given to each swimmer who has achieved a **Consideration Time** for a particular event.

Your coach will help you decide which events you should enter and you should then return your **Meet Acceptance Slip** to your coach or the Meet Secretary before the cut-off day. Where possible you will be given full details of the meet and session timings.

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The Meet Secretary then sends off entry forms and time cards for each swimmer. A list of **Entered Swims** is posted on the notice board.

Whether or not our entries are accepted depends on the decision of the meet organisers.

The Club is informed one/two weeks prior to the meet, which entries have been **rejected** and whether some swimmers have been given **reserve** swims. This information will again be posted on the notice board and where time permits a copy will be sent home with the swimmer. It is quite common for the first three reserves to get their swims. **If you are unsure of anything ask your coach, talk to the meet secretary and check the notice board.**

If for any reason you have to withdraw from the meet please let your coach and/or the Meet Secretary know. The club has to post all withdrawals prior to the start of each session. This ensures efficient running of the meet, cuts out empty lanes and allows reserves to swim (which could be you). At District events a late withdrawal could mean a fine, which the swimmer has to pay.

- **Entry Fees**

Race Fees other than for relay races are paid by the parents, and as your child becomes involved in meets you will be asked to open a **'Race Fee Account'**, with the Treasurer. Race fees are approximately £3.50 per event. Relay fees are paid by the club. Once entries are submitted they have to be paid for, unless rejected by the organisers. Please note the organisers do not refund race fees if a swimmer withdraws either prior to the meet or on the day of the meet. The organisers only give refunds for rejected swims and to reserves not offered a swim on the day.

Meet Session Times

Club Meets are more commonly run over one day, consisting of three two hour sessions plus a one hour warm-up prior to the start of each session. The common starting time for the first warm up is 8:00am with the Meet finishing about 8:00pm. Be sure to check the Session start times before travelling and arrive in plenty of time for the warm-up. Please note it is possible for the Meet Organisers and the Referee to alter the start/ warm up times of the second and subsequent sessions.

Travel to Meet

It is not feasible for the Club to run buses to most competitions and therefore travel to and from a Meet is your responsibility. Many families share lifts. Swimmers, officials, coaches and supporters will all be travelling. The **entered swims** list on the notice board will tell you who else is planning to attend. The Club does run a bus to all SAS League Meets.