



Colne Road, Halstead, Essex CO9 2HR  
e-mail: [info@halsteadsc.co.uk](mailto:info@halsteadsc.co.uk) [www.halsteadsc.co.uk](http://www.halsteadsc.co.uk)

## **A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING**

### **History of HASC**

**The club when first founded was known as Halstead Amateur Swimming Club. The Amateur was dropped 7 years ago.**

HASC was started early in 1965 at the old swimming pool in Parsonage Street. The founder members were Maisie Randall and Johnny Newport. Our President, Gordon Finch, became involved in 1973 and has been with the club ever since. The swimming pool was built as a dye tank for the Coutaulds factory in 1914 and later given to the people of Halstead as a Public Bath. We fought for many years to get a new pool and finally moved to our present home in 2004.

Many of our swimmers after progressing through the various squads continue to support the club by becoming coaches and officials. Roger our Head Coach is a good example of this! Roger joined HSC at the age of 8 as a keen swimmer.

### **Mission Statement from Swim England**

“Every Swimmer must have the opportunity to swim in an appropriate, quality competition to enable them to achieve their true potential”.

### **Introduction to HSC**

HSC is affiliated to the Swim England East Region. The Club holds a Constitution; this is a set of rules based on a model constitution from Swim England. The current HSC constitution was updated and approved at the AGM, held in Jan 2019. A copy of the constitution can be found for reference on the Club notice board and on the website.

HSC is a swimming club which aims to provide training and competitions for swimmers from the age of 6 upwards. Currently we have 3 squads; swimmers progress through the squads as their ability and stamina improve.

The club website is a valuable source of information and should be checked on a regular basis [www.halsteadsc.co.uk](http://www.halsteadsc.co.uk)

We also have a Facebook page which is kept up to date with club news, messages and coaching comments.



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## **Different types of Swimming Galas/Competitions**

### **Galas**

Children can take part in competitions from the age of 9. HSC enters annually into 2 National leagues, 2 County leagues and various trophy competitions. We also have representation at the Essex Championships and Regional Championships. The National Arena league is a licensed competition – which means swimmers times can count towards Essex Age Group Championships.

### **How does a team Gala work?**

Team selection is made by Roger the Head Coach, team lists are displayed on the notice board and on the website. You will also receive a notification via text message alerting you of a team selection. We expect swimmers to confirm their availability at least 1 week prior to the gala.

Galas are generally either Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon. A gala normally lasts approximately 2 hours. Depending on the location/distance a coach may be provided, swimmers and parents are advised to use the coach; this is for the safety of the swimmers and allows your Head Coach (Roger) to know that he has a full team before leaving for the gala. The cost of the coach is £3.00 for swimmers and £6.50 for parents.

We expect swimmers to be at the venue at least 15 minutes before warm up so that a register can be taken. A full team must be present before the team sheet can be submitted to the league/host club. Swimmers are expected to wear a club hat. The event in which the swimmer competes in is chosen by Roger.

HSC has a tradition - all swimmers are expected to stay to the end of the gala to support their team members showing true team spirit! All swimmers are expected to stay on poolside for the entirety of the gala to congratulate the winning club and the other participating clubs.

### **Club Championships**

HSC holds its annual Club Championships every September/October and this is open to everyone that has been a member of the club for at least 3 months. The Club Championships gives everyone a chance to compete, including the under 9s. This is a FUN event and we would like to encourage every swimmer to take part. Age of competition will be the age at date of the last round of competition. We then hold a presentation evening to celebrate the success of all our swimmers.

### **Inter Club Penguin Gala**

Twice a year we hold a full club inter house gala. Each swimmer is appointed into one of the 5 penguin teams and will remain in that penguin family. This is a great fun event; swimmers interact together - a real team building event! Check out the swim club gallery on the website to see some of the action captured on camera!



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## **Open Galas/Licensed Meets**

Open meets are where the swimmer swims for themselves; the entry is still made through the club but paid for by the individual. Details of open meets will be displayed on the website and club noticeboard. It is then up to the swimmer and of course their parents to enter if they wish. If you are unsure of what events to enter, speak to your coach. Entry is on average £5.50 per event. When the entries are confirmed you will be notified by text and acceptance files will be placed on the website/noticeboard.

Most open meets are split into 2 sessions with a separate warm up for each session. Generally open meets are ranked in the order of a swimmer's entry time. The event is then swum in heats irrespective of age. We suggest that swimmers arrive at least 15 minutes before warming up or earlier if the meet club advise so. Swimmers need to sign in against each event that they are swimming.

Trophies/medals are awarded for anywhere between the top 3 and top 6 in each age group.

## **Open Meet Licensing**

The issue of a license means that swimmers, coaches and parents can assume that the meet is a "quality competition" which complies with a standard set of requirements. The level of the meet will identify the purpose of the competition.

Level 1 is aimed at National qualifiers and swimmers close to National qualification looking for opportunities to achieve National qualifying times. Qualifying times will be just below the national times.

Level 2 is aimed at Regional qualifiers and swimmers close to Regional qualification. Qualifying times and upper limit times will be provided.

Level 3 is aimed at Club swimmers who seek County Qualifying times. Upper limit times will be set at an appropriate level.

Level 4 is for Club swimmers and those beginning to enter individual competition. Club Championships are licensed at level 4. This level of meet enables swimmers to qualify for the Essex Age Group Championship.

National qualifying times will be accepted from meets licensed at levels 1 and 2. Regional qualifying times will be accepted from meets licensed at level 1, 2 and 3. Essex County championships have qualifying times but no upper limits.

## **Qualifying Times and Upper Limit Times**

These are times set by meet organisers for each event; this enables the promoter to control the number of entries in the meet. A qualifying time is the time that the swimmer must have already achieved to enter the competition. Upper limit times, if applicable, are when a swimmer that is faster than this time is not eligible to enter.



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Qualifying timers are set for National, Regional and most County competitions. Coaches can use these standards as a guide to indicate the level of the swimmer.

### **Halstead's Annual Open Meet and Season Sprint Starter**

The annual event takes place at the end of the Easter holiday. The club has ran extremely successful meets since 2009; running to full swim capacity. The Season Sprint Starter is a 50m dash to start the season and takes place on the first Saturday of September.

We encourage all eligible HSC Swimmers to enter. These events are great team days! We rely on volunteer help to ensure that the event runs to the professional HSC standard.

These events are critical to the financial stability of HSC

### **What to take to a gala/meet**

Parents please ensure that your child has plenty to drink and a suitable snack. All swimmers are supplied with a poolside shirt as part of the joining pack. This is to wear in between races, as it dries very quickly.

#### **Gala Checklist**

1. Swimming Hat – HSC
2. Swim wear
3. T-shirt/shorts (to wear poolside)
4. Plenty of drinks
5. Snack – carbohydrates are needed for long galas; pasta being a good option.
6. Towel
7. Shoes to wear poolside – crocs/flip flops(optional)

### **PBs**

For those who don't know PB means Personal Best. PB's are recorded on the HSC database system. All PBs are recorded and available to view on the HSC website [www.hasc.co.uk](http://www.hasc.co.uk).

PB's can be gained from galas, club championships and open meet competitions.

Swim England holds a database of all official times recorded at licensed open meets. Once the swimmer has recorded a time at a licensed meet you can go to the Swim England website to see where they are ranked at County, Regional and National level. [www.swimmingresults.org](http://www.swimmingresults.org).

It is at that point that you realise how many competitive swimmers there are!



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## **Competitive Swimming Performance Badges**

These awards, developed in conjunction with the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA) can be achieved in competition.

The awards are for each stroke at sprint, middle distance and long-distance level. You can achieve bronze, silver, gold and platinum for each stroke at each distance. Badges can be purchased at the pool from Catherine Harris.

Forms to order badges can be found on the club noticeboard and downloaded from the club website. Round badges (distance) are £3.50 and flash badges (stroke) are £1.50. Badges can be displayed on the back of the poolside shirt in an order.

Catherine will be happy to show you the correct format. Times required to achieve these awards can be found on the club notice board on a colour coded table.

Sprint distance – 25m, 50m and 100m

Middle distance – 200m and 400m

Long distance – 800m and 1500m

When you have swam in a gala/open meet a spread sheet will be displayed on the website. This will show the time and the level of award achieved.

Style award badges are available for each stroke. The idea is to encourage swimmers to achieve the correct skills in strokes, turns and finishes. These badges are linked to the style evening of the Club Championchips and then awarded during the year at the discretion of the coaches.

## **Club Kit**

New club kit will be launched shortly.

We would like to encourage all swimmers to have their own kit bag including float, pull buoy and fins. These can be purchase through a number of online swim shops such as for example ProSwimwear.

## **Swimmer of the Month**

Each month 2 swimmers are awarded Swimmer of the Month; the criteria for this can be anything from training well to achieving outstanding times at a gala/open meet. A medal is presented along with a trophy. Photographs of the swimmers will be displayed on the website. The trophy is returned each month.

## **And Finally .....**

If you have any further questions, please speak to a coach or a committee member. Sue Huggins, the Child Welfare Officer is contactable if there are any swimming concerns; she will be happy to help you.

Please remember to try and look at the club noticeboard at least once a week.



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### **Executive Committee**

Chairman – Tim Rayner

Vice Chair – Matthew Bale

Treasurer – Sian Bird

Membership Officer – Christina Southgate

### **General Committee (includes Executive Committee)**

Head Coach – Roger Duncombe

Secretary – Donna Hall

Social/Fundraising – Jeremy Southgate

Welfare Officer – Sue Huggins

Health & Safety – Martin Bell

Facilities Officer- Tom Styman – Heighton,

Website – Dave Smith

General – Karen Scott

General – Helen Reeve

### **GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS**

**BAGCATS:** British Age Group Categories of BAGCAT. Points awarded for different swims. When a swimmer competes in a BAGCAT event their time is converted into points that consider a swimmers age and sex.

**QUALIFICATION TIME** - The slowest entry time for an event that the organisers of a gala will consider.

**DQ** - Disqualified abbreviation on a result sheet.

**DNF** – Did not finish – seen on a result sheet when a swimmer does not complete an event

**ENTRY TIME** – Entry time submitted for an event.

**FLYER** – A false start or early takeover in a relay.

**HEAT DECLARED WINNER (HDW)** – When no final is swum, and the winner is declared on the times swam in all heats.

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY (IM)** – The Competitor swims all four strokes as part of one swim. In the following order Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.

**LICENSED MEET** – These are the meets that you qualify for county, regional and national events. Various levels apply.

**LONG COURSE** – 50m pool events



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**PERSONAL BESTS (PB)** – A swimmer's person best for a given event.

**SHORT COURSE** -25m pool events.

**SQUADRON RELAY** – Usually the last race of a gala. A freestyle relay consisting of one swimmer from each age group, or one swimmer of each sex from each age group.

**TIME TRIAL** – Internal event held to establish times for entry into a gala and for team selection purposes.