



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

### **History of HSC**

HSC 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 Courtaulds 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 and often 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 the ASA**

“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 ASA East Region. (Amateur Swimming Association) The Club holds a Constitution; this is a set of rules based on a model constitution from the ASA. The HSC constitution was updated and approved at the AGM, held in Jan 2016. A copy of which can be found for reference on the Club notice board and also provided in the HSC Handbook.

HSC is a swimming club, which aims to provide training and competitions from swimmers from age 7/8 years through to open swimmers. Currently there are 3 squads and swimmers progress through these as their ability and stamina increases.

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).

### **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, 3 County leagues and various trophy competitions. We also have representation at the Essex Championships and Regional Championships.

#### **How Does a Team Gala Work?**

Team Selection is made by Roger Duncombe, the Head Coach, team lists are displayed on the notice board and via the website. 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.

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 a team sheet can be submitted to the league/host club.

Swimmers are expected to wear a club costume and 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 which is open to everyone that has been a member of the club for at least 3 months. This 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 the championship.

Entry forms are generally circulated in July with a closing date of the end July (before summer break)

### **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 on the club notice board. 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 e-mail or via the web.

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 swimmers entry time. The event is then swum in heats irrespective of age. We suggest that swimmers turn up at least 15 minutes before warm up. Swimmers will 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. They have qualifying times and upper limit times.

Level 3 is aimed at Club swimmers who seek County Qualifying times. They have upper limit times set at an appropriate level.

Level 4 is for Club swimmers and those beginning to enter individual competition.

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 cut off times.

### **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 in order to enter the competition.

Upper limit times if applicable are when a swimmer that is faster than this time is not eligible to enter.

Qualifying times 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 & Season Sprint Starter**

The annual event takes place in the Easter holiday. The club has to date ran 6 extremely successful open meets; running to full swim capacity. The Season Sprint starter in September is a one session 50m sprint dash to start the season.....

We encourage all eligible HSC swimmers to enter. This event is a great team day!  
We rely on volunteer help to ensure that this event runs to a professional standard.  
This event is critical to the financial stability of HASC.

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

Parents please ensure that your child has plenty to drink and a suitable snack. Most swimmers have a T-Bag (available from Paula) which they wear in between races, as this dries very quickly.

#### **Gala Checklist**

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



## **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.halsteadsc.co.uk](http://www.halsteadsc.co.uk).

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

The ASA 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 ASA website to see where they are ranked at County, Regional and National level [www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org).

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

## **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 Joanne Williams and Helena Gee on the first Friday of each month between 7-8.30pm or by printing an order from the club web and posting in box next to noticeboard..

Round badges (distance) are £3.50 and flash badges (stroke) are £2.00. Badges are displayed on the back of the T-Bag in a particular order. Jo/Helena 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. All swimmers are issued with a handbook when joining the club this table is included for personal reference along with pages to store your PBs

Sprint distance – 25m, 50m and 100m

Middle distance – 200m and 400m

Long distance – 800m and 1500m

When you have swum in a gala/open meet a spreadsheet 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 here 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 Champs and then awarded during the year at the discretion of the coaches.



## Swim Shop

Paula Harvey takes care of the HSC swim shop and is available most Fridays at the pool between 7 and 8.30pm. Alternatively an order form with prices can be downloaded from the website, [www.halsteadsc.co.uk](http://www.halsteadsc.co.uk).

Items available to purchase

1. HSC logo kit bags
2. HSC Costumes
3. HSC Racing costumes
4. HSC Racing Jammers
5. HSC T-Bag
6. HSC club hat
7. Finns
8. Kitbags

Please speak to Paula if you need any advice.

We would like to encourage all swimmers to have their own kitbag including float, pull buoy and finns.

## Club Kit

Helen Reeve is in charge of the HSC club kit and is available the first Friday of the month between 6.45 and 8pm

Items available to purchase

1. Club Polo Shirt
2. Club Hoodie
3. Club Sweatshirt
4. Club Fleece

Prices vary depending on size required; Helen will be able to assist you with this. Samples are available for children to try for size.

All items can be personalised for an extra charge of £3.00 per name. Please speak to Helen if you need any advice.

## 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 an outstanding time in a gala/open meet. A medal is presented along with a trophy; photographs of the swimmers are displayed in the glass cabinet until the next presentation dates. The trophy is returned after the month.



## **100 Club**

This annual fundraiser is organised by Karen Scott.....£12 per year per ball subscription. Monthly prizes are as follows first prize £35, second prize £10, third prize 1 hour 1:1 coaching session on a Sunday evening. Please join us -----you have to be in it to win it!!!  
Further details see Donna/Karen @ the pool.

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

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

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

## **Committee (Pictures can be found in glass cabinet next to the notice board)**

### **Executive Committee:**

President – Gordon Finch  
Chairman – Tim Rayner  
Treasurer – Sue Craig  
Secretary – Donna Hall – [dsdtdkjwhall@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dsdtdkjwhall@tiscali.co.uk) - 07759191488

### **General Committee:**

Head Coach – Roger Duncombe  
Facilities Officer - Alistair Walker  
Fundraising – Richard Jacob  
Club Champs – Barb Amerio  
Welfare Officer – Sue Huggins  
Marketing – Jodie Cartwright  
Joanne Williams  
Helen Reeve

### **Non Committee Positions**

New Swimmer Co-ordinator – Christina Southgate  
Asst Treasurer – Sian Bird

## **Glossary of Swimming Times**

### **BAGCATS**

British Age Group Categories of BAGCat points are a system of points which are awarded for different swims. When a swimmer competes in a BAGCat event, their time is converted into points that take into account a swimmer's age and sex.

A swimmer can take part in as many events in a season as they choose to, but only their highest points score in each swimming category will count towards their final BAGCat total.

For an event the overall position of a swimmer is the sum of the BEST point score in each of the 5 categories (50m events, 100m, FORM, Distance and IM being 100m for 9-11 year old and 200-400m for older swimmers).



It is therefore advisable to enter every category in the Age groups if you can achieve the qualifying times. (NB, Boys 12 and below and Girls 11 and below do not swim the 100m individual events).

**Consideration or Qualification time** – the slowest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.

**DQ or disq** – Abbreviation for disqualified on result sheets and time cards.

**DNF** – Did not finish. Seen on results sheets.....when a swimmer stops before the end of the event.

**Entry Time** – The time submitted by the club for a swimmer being entered in a gala. If entries are made well in advance, the entry time may not be the swimmers current PB.

**Form Stroke** – One of the 3 strokes having specific requirements (i.e. 200m backstroke, butterfly or breaststroke). Freestyle is not a Form but is used for distance events, such as 200/400/800/1500m depending on the swimmers age and sex.

**Flyer** – A false start or early take over in a race.

**Heat Declared Winner (HDW)** – When no final is swum and the winner is declared on the times swum in the heats.

**Individual Medley (I.M.)** — The competitor swims all four strokes in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle.

**Licensed Meets** – These are the only meets via which you can qualify for national competitions.

**Long Course** – Events held in a 50m pool.

**Lower Qualification Time (LQT)** – The slowest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.

**Medley Relay** – Four swimmers each swim a different stroke. The order is always Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.

**Personal Best (PB)** – A swimmers personal best time for a given event.

**Upper Qualification Time (UQT)** – The fastest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.

**Short Course** – Events held in a 25m pool.

**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 to galas and team selection.