

HOW IS A TEAM PICKED FOR A GALA?

This question has been posed many times by many people and this article is intended either to erase many doubts and questions or to confuse the issue even more than ever.

First of all a date for the Gala and the Pool is booked by the 'Home' team. In our case, we have to hire Riverside Baths two years in advance. The 'Home' Team then make up a programme of events and contact other Clubs who are members of the A.S.A. to see if they will take part. If they accept, then the 'Home' Team sends the programme of events to that Club.

The Programme

The programme would be 'fair' of course for all Clubs taking part, but would have a 'leaning' towards the Home Team. When making up a programme, a few things to be considered are - that the races are within A.S.A. rules, the age groups (more of that later) and the Gala must start and finish within a certain time as the Pool will only be booked for a certain period, from the doors opening at the start of the Gala, to the doors closing at the end of the Gala. As a matter of interest, at the time of writing this article, Erith S.C. are charged £9.00 per hour for a Gala at Riverside Baths.

Ages

Ages and age grouping in the programme are at the discretion of the Home Team.

A race in a programme could read '14 years and under'. This means that anyone who is 14 years of age in that year of the programme (normally the year being 1st January to 31st December) is eligible to swim in that race.

The same race in another programme could read 'under 14 years of age'. This means that anyone who has not a 14th birthday in that year of the programme (normally 1st January to 31st December) is eligible to swim in that race.

Confusing isn't it?!!! Yet there is more to come.

A programme can stipulate that the ages be 'up to the date of the Gala'. For example - the Gala is to be held on 6th June and the race is 14 years and under. Anybody who has a 15th birthday before the 6th June cannot take part in that race.

Now somebody, somewhere is going to ask 'What if my birthday is on 6th June, and I will be 15 years of age?' The answer to that (as well as a lemon) is 'No'. You could not swim in that race because the programme stipulates 'up to the date of Gala - 6th June'.

Now we have a programme of events, a date for the Gala and a Pool. The most important ingredients missing are the competitors.

Competitors

Competitors are chosen on roughly the following ideas :-
Do they want to swim in the Gala? What is their best stroke? What time do they take on 1 length (or 2 or 3 lengths)? Do they attend training sessions fairly regularly?

For example :- 14 years and under Breaststroke.

Who have we got in that age group who can swim breaststroke properly? If we have more than one swimmer, then who has got the fastest time over the same distance? Again if we have more than one, then we start looking to see if one of them is just as good, if not better, in another stroke. If not, then the 14 & Under breaststroke races will be split up between them. Supposing we do not have a good breaststroke swimmer in the 14 years age group, then we must go to the next age group down, the 13 years of age and so on. In this way a 12 years old can be swimming in a 14 year race. Mind, they must be good at it!

Another item that has to be remembered is that the Gala is under A.S.A. laws, so that competitors have to have the correct swimming style, particularly in the Breaststroke and Butterfly. We cannot include a competitor, no matter how fast they are, if they swim an incorrect stroke, e.g. breaststroke - screw leg kick or incorrect arm action. Otherwise that swimmer would be disqualified and the lost points could make all the difference to the result of the Gala.

No less important member of a Gala are the reserves, who, in some cases are just fractions of a second slower than the competitors swimming. But without these reserves, in a lot of cases, there would never be a Gala.

I have tried to show you, approximately, how the strongest team is chosen for a Gala. Now, each competitor is asked to attend. If they cannot attend (holidays, illness, etc.) then the reserves are called in to cover the gaps. If that is not enough and there is time, everybody is checked again and the list altered. If there is not time, then the competitors who have turned up at the Gala 'double up' on other strokes.

What happens if the Gala is cancelled? Nothing, just a sense of disappointment.

The reward for people involved in a Gala is watching their team doing their utmost in all the races and enjoying themselves.

D. Fitnum

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday 10th May	Inter-Club Gala at Beckenham Baths 6.30 p.m. 'A' Team. Coach leaves Riverside Baths at 5.30 p.m. with all competitors.
Saturday 21st June	Inter-Club Gala at Riverside Baths 'A' Team 7.00 p.m.
Sunday 29th June	Coach outing to JOSS BAY. Tickets 80 p each.
Saturday 12th July	Inter-Club Gala at Greenwich Baths 'A' Team 6.00 p.m.
Saturday 28th September	DANCE to be held at St. Michael's School Hall Wrotham Road, Welling. Further details later.
Saturday 8th November	ANNUAL GALA, Riverside Baths for all members of the Club.
Saturday 15th November	ANNUAL BAZAAR, St. Paul's Hall, Mill Road, Northumberland Heath 2.00 p.m.
Friday 21st November	Inter-Club Gala at Downham Baths. Coach Transport.
Saturday 13th December	Inter-Club Gala, Riverside Baths 'A' Team 7.00 p.m.

FOR SALE. Boys trunks (second hand) 26" waist. 50p.