

Further Guidance on Running Essex Mini League Gala

The checklist identifies items that need to be taken care of to run a successful gala, with specific reference to the Essex Mini League. This guide aims to add more detail. Nothing stated in this guide should be construed to override anything specified in the league rules. Each club hosts one gala each year. The host club is responsible for booking the pool and providing the people required for spectator control and poolside administration. They are also responsible for providing programmes, raffle prizes and poolside paperwork. All costs incurred and all income received is the responsibility of the host club.

As soon as the fixtures are finalised, a pool should be booked. The pool must be at least 25 Metres by 5 lanes and suitable for competitive swimming. There should be facilities for spectators, preferably at least 100. The preferred start time for a gala is either 5:30pm or 6pm with a 30 minute warm-up prior to the gala (ie 5pm or 5:30pm). The actual run for a gala is obviously variable but is normally around 2 hours. Galas should not start later than 7pm. To avoid a late start it is acceptable to reduce the warm-up to a minimum of 15 minutes. **Details should be forwarded to the league secretary to update the league website.** The confirmation email to visiting clubs should also include any special requirements such as coins needed for lockers if bags not allowed on poolside or restrictions on spectator numbers or car parking.

If the host club does not have its own officials, it may be possible to source the officials from the visiting clubs, other local clubs or via the county officials secretary. The league rules require that the referees are registered officials (J2) but do accept that other positions may be filled by 'competent' people if qualified officials are not available.

The host club needs to provide chief timekeeper slips for each race (a pdf file can be downloaded), and equipment for recording the results. A preformatted Excel spreadsheet for use on the laptop can be downloaded. In extreme circumstances paper sheets for manual recording can be used.

Operation of Gala

The referee is responsible for the running of the gala but they rely on the poolside volunteers to help. When the referee is ready to start the warm-up he will ask the announcer to read the ASA safety announcement (ensure a copy is available). During the gala when the referee is ready to start an event, he will give three short blasts on his whistle. This is the indicator for the announcer to announce the event. Results of each event should normally be announced between races as soon as available. It is preferable to read the results in lane order just giving the positions (not times). If the gala time becomes extended it may become necessary to announce results during the races. The cumulative points total should be announced after every 12 races. Depending on the location of the recorder and the announcer, poolside 'runners' may be needed to transfer the results slips from the chief timekeeper to the recorders and the announcer. The recorders should transfer the time and position for each event to the results sheet. If necessary, calculate the points and cumulative total. If an ineligible (eg overage) swimmer was entered, the team is required to inform the referee prior to the race. The **time should be recorded** but no place or points recorded. If a swimmer is disqualified no time is recorded and no points awarded but the reason for disqualification should be shown if possible.

After the Gala

At the end of the gala, after the final results have been announced, a copy of the results should be made available to each team asap. This means either printing the completed spreadsheet or copying the paper either by local photocopier or use of multi-part forms. If this is not possible a copy of the results should be emailed to each team within 24 hours. A copy of the results should also be emailed to the league secretary or posted at the earliest opportunity. The chief timekeeper slips and other paperwork, should be retained by the host club for at least two weeks in case of a query being raised by the league secretary or competing club.