

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have additional questions please do send these in by email and where appropriate we will post the answers here for all.

Q. Do I have to be a good swimmer to join the club?

This depends on what age you are. We are a competitive swimming club and as you move up the squads more is expected of you.

Q. When do swimmers move between squads?

This depends on several things: Age, Maturity, Success in Competition, attitude, attendance, commitment training and at competition.

Q. Can I pay monthly?

You need to pay membership and ASA fees in one lump sum and the squad fee can be paid by monthly standing order. Any queries can be directed to the GSC Membership secretary or the Treasurer.

Q. Can I buy equipment through the club?

Yes, you can buy a variety of swim wear and accessories such as club costumes, hats, tracksuits, sweatshirts and club kit bags.

The club has affiliations with Pro-swimwear and Sportfox Arena, which means that when click on the links from this website and purchase swimming kit at normal or discount prices you will create funds for Grantham Swimming Club.

Q. What are the club colours?

Club colours are navy Blue and Yellow.

Q. What are BAGCATS?

The BAGCATs stand for the British Age Group CATegories, which introduce a points system to measure and compare swimmers' performance. The latest thinking is that swimmers at an early stage of their development should compete to win an overall category award rather than specialising in a particular event. The BAGCATs therefore define four different categories, sprint, form, distance and medley. The BAG Points are calculated from a set of age-related tables for each of the above categories as follows:

Sprint - best 50m-sprint performance (i.e. 50m back, breast, butterfly and freestyle)

Form - best form stroke performance (i.e. form strokes are those with a defined form according to ASA Law) thus best performance at 200m back, breast or butterfly)

Distance - best performance at 200m, 400m or 1500m Freestyle)

Medley - best performance at 100m, 200m or 400 Individual Medley)

To work out the BAGCAT points for an individual swimmer, you must complete at least one swim from each of the categories and the points for the best performance in each are totalled to give a single

score. A useful BAGCAT points calculator can be found on PullBouy.com

Comparative performance tables are produced for senior swimmers with the maximum score of 1000 points corresponding to the average of the world all-time top eight performances. Age correction factors are applied to provide a points calculator for each event for the age group and recognize that some events are relatively more difficult for the younger swimmers. The Age group correction factors are based totally on observations of British swimming performance levels. For each age group the reference times used are the average of the ten all time top British performances in each event.

Q. What does age on 31st December mean?

Most galas are run for swimmers of different age groups such as Under 12, Under 14, Under 16 and Open. If a gala is run on an 'age on 31st December' basis, it refers to how old the swimmer must be on the 31st December in the year of competition. It does not necessarily mean the age of the swimmer on the day of the competition. Thus under 12 on 31st December 2007, means no older than 11 on that date and so the swimmer must be born in or after 1996. Similarly, Under 11 on 31st December 2007 means no older than 10 and so the swimmer must be born in 1997 or later. Some events are 'age on the day' and this is self explanatory.

Q. What does U12, U14 U16, Open mean?

Most galas are run for swimmers of different age groups such as Under 12, Under 14, Under 16 and Open though some galas refer to 11/U (11& Under), 13/U (13&Under) 15/U (15&Under) and Open. Both mean the same thing.

Q. How do I find out what times I have achieved?

After each gala or club event, the results secretary publishes the results directly to this website. These results are only available to our registered club members.

Q. When the timing pads and an electronic scoreboard operating - why did the times on the Scoreboard not always agree with the times given in the results?

Where electronic timing (Automated Operating Equipment in the parlance of the Swimming rulebook or colloquially known as "AOE") is being used at a Meet the official time given to each swimmer will be the time recorded by the AOE provided the AOE is operating properly. The primary AOE system automatically starts the clock the moment the starting signal is given. There is no need for any of the timekeepers to push anything connected with the AOE at that point (other than start their own manual stopwatches). The primary system clock is stopped on each lane the moment the swimmer in that lane touches the timing pad. However not all systems are infallible and sometimes there is a malfunction in the pad or the system or some other reason which means that the primary system has not recorded a time – most often with young swimmers it is because they have barely touched the timing pad although there is no need to hit it particularly hard as one sometimes sees swimmers do. In case of the primary AOE does not record a time the timekeepers press a button connected to the AOE which records a "back up" electronic time as well stopping their stopwatches the moment the swimmer touches the wall.

If things are working well both the primary and back up times are recorded and the referee receives a print out after each heat showing the positions of the swimmers in that heat and their primary and back up electronic times recorded. Usually the referee will only query the times on the sheet if they disagree with placings recorded by the finish judges and the referee or if there is a significant difference between the primary and back up times. In that case the referee will ask the Chief timekeeper to find out the manual time recorded by the timekeeper on the relevant lane. The referee may or may not adjust the official time recorded by the swimmer to take account of the placings recorded by judges or of the back up or manual times. Sometimes the timekeeper will mention a significant difference between the time on the scoreboard and the manual time he has recorded and again the referee may look into this and adjust the official time.

Q. What does 'Short course' mean?

Events held in a 25m pool.

Q. How do I go about becoming an Official?

Each level of technical official consists of some training, a short examination and a practical evaluation of the skills required. Examples of the examinations and other helpful material can be found on the British Swimming Web site. If you are interested, have a look at the British Swimming site and speak to other members of your club about it. Most of the officials at an event are also approachable, so why not ask them about their experiences?

Remember, the officials are all volunteers and give up their time freely so that swimmers can enjoy their competition. Without them there would be no competitions.

If you are interested in officiating please contact

Q. What is a PB?

PB stands for personal best. It is the best time an individual has achieved for a particular stroke at a given distance.

Q. My name is on a result list but has DQ by the side, what does this mean?

Unfortunately many competitive swimmers are DQ'd sometimes, this means disqualified. At the end of a pool will be time keepers, recording a final time achieved by the swimmer, by the side of the pool walking up and down are Judges. If a Judge feels that the swimmer has not touched properly performed a stroke incorrectly or false start i.e. entered the water before the starter gun/whistle this will result in a DQ.

The club results reports note cases where a swimmer has been disqualified and, where possible, includes details of the reason for disqualification. The fact of disqualification is usually indicated on results pages by annotating the result with 'DQ' or with a more specific disqualification code.

If a swimmer is disqualified then he will be given no time on the results. Any time recorded by the timekeeper will not be treated as an official time and cannot be used as a qualifying time for any event. This is a bit akin to goal in Football being disallowed for offside in that although the ball crossed the line no goal is counted in the actual score.

The disqualification codes used in results represent the best effort of the person encoding the infraction reported by the judge or other official. Sometimes this requires the use of a code which doesn't exactly match the infraction, but has been chosen as being in some sense 'near'.

The SportsSystems SQ codes are more complex than the other disqualification codes; in addition to encoding the infraction they also tell us on which length the infraction occurred and details of any appeal.

Apparently these codes have been adopted by European Swimming Writers.

The code is made up of three parts:

The disqualification reason. This can be one of T (turn), FI (finish), S (stroke), ST (start), O (takeover), FO (fouling), L (wrong lane), M (midconduct) or E (equipment). Reason S has variants SA, SH and SL for faults in arms, head and legs respectively, while reason O has variant OM for an error in stroke change.

The appeal status. This is usually blank, but may be A for appeal made and X for appeal disallowed.

The length code. This is the number of the length on which the infraction occurred, followed by "L". In theory code "1L" should be used where the length is not known, but the length code is often omitted.

A detailed graphical explanation of the SportsSystems SQ codes can be found here. Some examples of the more common SSSQ reason codes for being disqualified are listed below.

DQ ST

Moving at the Start.

Under the ASA Technical Rules of Racing (SW 4.4) any swimmer starting before the start signal has been given, shall be disqualified. If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified upon completion of the race, if the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining swimmers shall be called back and start again.

DQ T-

Did not touch simultaneous at turn or finish.

In Breaststroke a common cause of disqualification is if a competitor touches the wall with just one hand during the turn. Under the ASA Technical Rules of Racing (SW 7.6) at each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level.

In Butterfly, ASA Technical Rules of Racing (SW 8.4) at each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously, at, above or below the water surface.

DQ-O

Swimmer #2 started before swimmer #1 touched.

Relay changeovers are valid when the feet of the outgoing swimmer detach from the board at least 3/100 seconds after the fingers of the incoming swimmer touch the wall. If the outgoing swimmer moves too early, their team is disqualified.

DQ-SH A 3L

Stroke - Head, Appeal made, 3rd Length

For example in Breaststroke ASA Technical Rules of Racing (SW 7.4) states that during each complete

cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water.

Other Disqualification codes of practice commonly used in swimming competitions include:
ASA DQ codes.

FINA Codes from the Federation International de Natation.

HYTK. Built into Hy-Tek meet Manager, these codes are used in many open competitions.

SportsSystems SQ codes (above) used by Beckenham SC.

Q. What does DNC or DNF mean?

A swimmers name at the bottom of a result sheet with DNC or DNF next to it, this will mean that the swimmer DNC (Did Not Compete) or DNF (Did Not Finish).

Q. Why does the official time on the results sheet differ from that recorded by the timekeeper?

At a Meet where there is no electronic timing (AOE) the only official times are those decided on by the referee having first considered the time recorded by the timekeepers. The placing recorded by the finish judges and the referee and approved by the referee take precedence over the manual times of the timekeepers and as a result it may be necessary to adjust the times to fit in with the placings. Often one will see two or more swimmers with official times which are identical but this does not (unless the result sheet specifically states) mean that the swimmers finished tied with the same time. It merely means that the manual times recorded by the timekeeper showed the swimmer who finished ahead of the other as having a slower time - so in order to make sense of the placing the difference between the times is averaged so that the faster swimmer will be placed ahead of the slower swimmer albeit with same time.

Q. Swim 21: What is it?

Swim 21 is the ASA's Club Development model - a planning tool, based on the principles of Long Term Athlete Development, enabling clubs to help athletes, teachers, coaches and administrators to achieve their full potential. It focuses particularly on the needs of athletes - striving to provide them with the best possible support and environment.

Swim 21 Accreditation is a 'Quality mark'. It recognises nationally and regionally the clubs that are committed to providing safe, effective and quality services for the benefit of their members.

Clubs work steadily towards the attainment of a series of outcomes all of which are seen as essential if the right level of support is to be provided at each stage of an athlete's development.

Click here to download an eight page book that explains everything about the swim21 accreditation process, from which swimming clubs can apply through to how to reaccredit. Or visit the ASA website for more information.

Q. Why have qualified Officials?

At the fundamental level, the officials are there to ensure that a competition between swimmers is safe and fair. Health & Safety as with all aspects of life is fundamentally important. The promoter of a swimming event has the overall responsibility for Health & Safety, but due to it's importance, all officials on pool side must also keep their eyes peeled to try to prevent any accidents occurring. Fair play is achieved by following the laws and technical rules of the various swimming bodies, which leads

to consistency not only within a single event, but also across all events in a league or championship.

Q. What types of Officials are there?

There are 5 basic levels of qualification for a technical swimming official:

Timekeeper: Competent with a stop watch and able to act as a Chief Timekeeper at an event.

Judge: Knows the laws of the various strokes and is able to place the finishing order of an event.

Starter: Nice loud clear voice with the ability to settle the swimmers and start them fairly.

Race Results: Knows how to determine the result of a race using electronic timing. Qualified to act as a Deputy Referee.

Referee: Responsible for running the event safely and fairly.

There are also other "non-technical" officials such as recorders and announcers. These do not require any particular qualification, but are still vital for the successful running of an event and include:

Announcer: Reads out safety announcements prior to gala and then announces each race and any other information as directed by the referee. Poolside Job.

Recorders: Record results of each race from slips provided by judges. Normally two recorders required, with both writing down results and cross-checking them throughout the evening. Poolside Job.

