



January 2008

Dear Swimmers, Parents and Coaches,

A provisional fixture list for 2008 is now posted on the club website at <http://www.clissoldswimmingclub.org.uk/fixturelist>. This is a first draft and there are likely to be amendments and revisions as the year progresses, but please start by putting all relevant dates in your diaries now! The calendar is online at <http://tinyurl.com/3533g>. If you are a mac user you can subscribe automatically here. **The fixture list will be updated as changes occur. Please consult it regularly.** Results sheets and gala reports will also be posted on the website after each gala.

We have tried to include a range of different events which are appropriate for swimmers of various age groups and ability levels. **This means that not every swimmer can expect to swim in every gala** – some swimmers will be too old or too young, too fast or not yet fast enough for some galas – **but all swimmers who train reasonably regularly and who are in Squads or Elementary can expect to be selected for some galas during the course of the year.** Swimmers will usually be selected for galas on the basis of the times they have achieved at recent events (time trials, galas and meets). The minimum age for swimming in a competitive gala is usually 9.

The proposed programme includes some meets (where swimmers enter as individuals) and a number of galas (where the club enters as a team). For those who are relatively new to the club, a brief description of meets and galas is given below.

Meets: swimmers enter these events as individuals; therefore we can enter as many or as few swimmers as we like for each event and we do not have to enter a swimmer for every event. Some meets have qualifying times for entry; others are “graded” (see below). Races are generally seeded, with swimmers of similar speeds being put in the same heat, although medals are usually awarded within specific age groups. There is usually an entry fee for meets, to be paid by the swimmer/parents. Entry forms have to be completed and sent off in advance. We will give you plenty of notice of the closing date for entries for each meet, but it is your responsibility to get your form and entry fees in on time.

Galas: these are team events where we enter one swimmer for each race in the gala and the points they score count towards the team’s overall total. Some galas are **by age group**, where typically we would aim to enter a team of 4 girls and 4 boys in each age group, for example, U11, U13, U15 and Open. We would always aim to enter our strongest swimmers in each age group in galas of this type. We may occasionally ask swimmers from other clubs, who are also registered to swim for Clissold, to make up

our team if we do not have sufficient swimmers of the required standard in certain age groups.

Other galas (and some meets) are “**graded**”, where each event has a minimum permitted time and a swimmer swimming faster than the specified time will be upgraded. By swimming in graded galas, the swimmers will be competing against other swimmers of similar ability rather than necessarily against those in the same age group (see parents’ guidance on club website for more details). In a graded gala, we would aim to select the swimmer whose time is closest to but not faster than the specified time for each event. This means that some of our better swimmers, who will be too fast to swim their best strokes, will be asked to swim their weaker strokes in some events or may not be selected at all.

We have once again entered the **North London Graded League** this year, which is a league comprising 10 clubs, each of which competes in 6 galas during the year. For each gala, we will aim to enter a team of around 12 – 16 boys and around 12 – 16 girls of varying abilities. Obviously not everyone can expect to swim in all the North London Graded League galas, but we will do our best to ensure that most swimmers in Squads, E2 and E1+ (and some of those in E1) are given the opportunity to swim in at least one of these galas during the course of the year.

This year, we have also entered the **East London Mini League** for the first time. This is also a graded league, but is specifically for swimmers aged 9 – 13. Again, there will be 6 galas in this league during the course of the year. Most swimmers in Elementary will be asked to swim in this league, along with some of our younger Squad swimmers and some of the stronger swimmers in Improvers 3.

We are a competitive swimming club and we want to enter the best possible team we can with the swimmers we have available for each event. If you have been selected to swim, this is because you are needed. Swimmers are expected to swim in events for which they have been selected, unless they are ill or injured, or if they have a long standing prior engagement which cannot be changed. If you know in advance that you will not be available on a certain date, because you have booked a holiday or there is a family wedding or birthday or because you are involved in a school event, please let us know as far in advance as possible. In fact, if you already know that you will not be available on any of the dates in the fixture list, please tell Jenny now.

We will aim to select teams for each gala around 2 weeks prior to the event. If you are asked to compete, please reply promptly to let us know whether or not you are available to swim, so that if you are not available, we have enough time to find a replacement. Selecting teams for galas, especially graded galas, is enormously time consuming, and the job is made much more difficult if swimmers and parents fail to reply to invitations to swim.

Best wishes,

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