

Gala Grading and Licensing

A number of people have been asking me what all the different Gala grades and licenses mean. The level of gala entered is indicative of a swimmers current standard of swimming.

Here's a brief guide taken from the ASA website.

Usually you'll see a gala listed as Licensed with a level from 1 to 4 or Not licensed. Unlicensed Galas may be designated as A, B or C grade, though in practice A grade unlicensed meets no longer occur. Galas may remain un-licensed, and not designated. In which case any swimmer of any standard can enter them.

Graded Swimming Tables

The ASA Graded Swimming Times tables were introduced in its present form in 1980 in order to provide incentive to ALL of the swimmers in the sport. It does this by creating the means to compare performances across the many available events and across all age groups.

Graded Swimming gives all swimmers the means to measure their own personal progress, and also to compete in open competitions against swimmers of similar ability.

The system has four Grades which are AAA, AA A and B. Everyone below B grade is automatically a C grade. For a given time, for each of the standard events and for each sex there is a corresponding Grade.

AAA Grade is approximately the same level as the National Championships qualifying times, AA grade is about Regional standard, A is about County standard, and B is good club swimmer standard, C is all of the rest.

A set of tables has been developed which cater for both sexes, for all Age groups and for all events. To determine the grade of a swim is simply a matter of comparing your latest time against the times in the table for your sex, age group and event.

Use of the tables allows a swimmer to compare performances on all of the possible events, which often produces surprising results, in that it can highlight much earlier in a swimmers career special ability in the longer or tougher events which are not often competed for at the younger ages.

Licensed Meets

Meets do not have to be licensed, but where they are specific ASA guidelines must be followed. Licensed Meets are graded Level 1-4. Electronic timing must be used on level 1-3 meets. Results from these are submitted to the ASA for the National Rankings database.

Level One Meets: are intended for qualifying for National Championships.

Minimum entry times apply equivalent to the ASA "A" Grade qualifying times.

Pools must be either 25m or 50m long

Level Two Meets: are intended for qualifying for Regional Championships, though swimmers who achieve a National Qualifying Time at a level two meet may use that time for entry into National Championships.

Qualifying Times and Upper Limit times apply. Upper qualifying time for these meets should not be faster than the National qualifying time for the respective age group.

Pool must be 25m or 50m long.

Level Three Meets: are intended for qualifying for County Qualifiers, though swimmers who achieve a Regional Qualifying Time at a level two meet may use that time for entry into their Regional Championships.

Qualifying Times and Upper Limit times apply.

Pool must be 25m, 33m or 50m long.

These galas are aimed at B/C Grade swimmers

Level Four Meets:

In the future a time, entry to a County Championship may have to be achieved at licensed meet, level 4 being the lowest of these.

Qualifying Times apply. Upper Limit times usually apply.

Pools must be at least 25m long

These galas are aimed at Club and B/C Grade swimmers

More details can be found on the ASA Website www.britishswimming.org under Swimming Calendar and Competition information

A. Butt March 2007