The Competition Pathway

Gala Types

Swimming competitions (Galas) fall into several different categories:-

* International
* British Championships (April)
* British National Summer Championships
* English/Welsh/Scottish/Irish Home Nations National Summer Events
* Regional (North East Region, referred to as NER’s)
* County (Northumberland and Durham, referred to as N & D’s)
* Open (Level 1 & 2) – Club Run Meets
* Graded (Level 3 & 4) – Club Run Meets
* Ungraded – Club run unlicensed meets – fun events such as Dolphin Galas

Gala Levels

Galas are aimed at different levels of swimmers and generally fall into 4 levels:-

1. **Level 1** Meets are long course (50m) only and also include National, Regional and County Championships. Their purpose of a Level 1 meet is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into National, Regional and County Championships (which are also Level 1).
2. **Level 2** Meets are short course (25m) only and can also include National, Regional and County Championships. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into National, Regional and County Championships in short course pool (25m).
3. **Level 3** Meets are long (50m) and short (25m) course events. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve times for entry into Regional and County Championships and other Meets at Level 1 or Level 2.
4. **Level 4** Meets are entry level events in pools 25m or greater. They are for inexperienced athletes and swimmers seeking to compete outside their club environment. If times are good athletes progress to Level 3 Meets.

**Rankings**

Swim England have a database of all current swimming times for all swimmers and a variety of search parameters can be accessed, such as stroke, distance, age. This can be viewed by visiting https://www.swimmingresults.org/12months/

**Your Gala Swimming Journey:**

**Dolphin Galas:** Entry level competition for our youngest pre-competition swimmers in Dolphin and SD3 squads. Held 3-4 times per year at West Denton Pool, swimmers get to practice their race skills over 1 length in a relaxed, fun environment against swimmers from other local swim schools.

**Junior League (Diddy):** one of the first introductions to team competition. A team will be selected to represent the club, usually based on previous performances. eg, Dolphin, Shrimp Galas and time trials; there are four age groups: 9 years, 10 years, 11 years, 12 years. Age at 31st December except for 9 years who are age at last weekend in November. There are individual races of each stroke and multiple team events. Held over 4 rounds between Jan and June with a final in Sept. More information can be found at [www.newcastleswimteam.co.uk/junior-league](http://www.newcastleswimteam.co.uk/junior-league). Junior League is a fast, short competition lasting around 2 hours.

**Level 3 and 4 Galas:** most swimming galas are licensed by Swim England at Level 3 or 4. Level 3 galas will have an upper time limit for each event which the swimmer must not have swam faster than in order to enter the competition. Normally held over 2 days by local clubs with a variety of events across both days. Some Level 3 galas produce results by individual age group but can also be combined age groups. Level 4 galas are invitational (7 clubs to be invited as well as the hosting club) or limited to one club (ie club championships) – NST hold Shrimp galas 3 to 4 times per year which fall into this category. Level 4 galas again have an upper time limit but are sometimes limited by age ie NST Shrimp galas are for ages 8 – 11 years.

**Northumberland and Durham County Championships:**  Held Jan-March each year, for swimmer in the Northumberland and Durham area only. Divided into Age Group and Junior/Open. Age Group qualifiers start at age 10 up to age 14. Qualifying times (must have swam faster than) are set and can be achieved either LC or SC and converted. Championships are a level 1 competition that is held in a Long Course (50M) pool.

**A County Teams Day** is held in March where clubs compete in team events, swimmers are selected to enter in specific age groups. County Championships have trophies for Top Club in the Junior/Open category and Age Group categories based on points for top 10 finishes as well as an overall trophy for most medals across both competitions.

**North East Regional Championships:** Divided into Age Group Competitions and Youth/Senior and Championships and held in May each year in a 50m pool. Age Group swimming is 11-14 years. Consideration times must have been achieved (ie must have swam faster than). Where consideration times are provided, entries will be accepted at the discretion of the Meet Organisers subject to meet organisation and planning. Short Course Championships in November is over 25m and incorporates Age Group and Senior/Junior

**National Events:**

British Championships in April most often doubles as a trials meet for selection for British National Teams. Summer National Events are taken as top 24 times from rankings in each event in each age group. Swim England National Summer Meet is the next top 20 fastest times in each age group and event in England. Scotland/Ireland/Wales have their own domestic national events. Swim England Short Course National event in December has qualification times that must be achieved to enter the competition.

**National Teams:** Swimmers are selected onto a National Squad at Junior, Youth and Senior levels. Selections are usually based on performances at National Events or by the achievement of a published qualifying standard.

**Major International Competitions:** (eg, Olympics, Commonwealth, World & European Championships): Separate Trials are organised for selection purposes, normally British Championships in April.