



The Elite Swimming Training Programme of the DMasa and Doncaster's Clubs
www.dartes.co.uk

1. KEY INFORMATION

Over the course of a season, there will be a general expectation for athletes to compete at least once in every event. It is important before entering swimming meets to speak with the coaching team, as they will be able to guide you on which events would be most beneficial to enter. Remember - only a select few meets are designated to swim fast, the rest are “training meets” to gauge performance improvements and to try new skills or improve upon previous mistakes, in preparation for the bigger competitions (e.g., Yorkshire, North-Eastern and National championships).

Each session (e.g., a morning session) will begin with a warmup, and each race will be followed by a swim down. Plan your entries to allow enough time to squeeze in the swim downs (more detail on those below) – in order to retain a high standard of swimming across the weekend, swimming down properly is very important.

The objective is to perform well in each event - not to squeeze in as much as possible. Overloading, or entering too many events, will achieve nothing more than frustration, poorly skilled performances, and most importantly - no PB's.

As a rule of thumb, athletes should aim to race no more than 400m/450m per session across 2 events. When it comes to the “proper events” (800m or 1500m), it's worth limiting yourself to only that race for that session. As this is a guide, there may be occasions where it is necessary to go slightly above the recommended session distances, but this will be at the discretion of the coaching team.

For our younger athletes (under 13 y/o), focus should be on 200m events and upwards. The reason for this is that there is so many opportunities to get times on the board for 50 & 100 events at local competitions such as BML's and home champs. When available, always try to include a 400m event across a meet weekend and plan the rest of the weekend around 200m races. Any gaps left by that strategy are easily filled by 100m events. There are always opportunities to find space to squeeze in the 50m sprints regularly, but these should never be classed as a priority event.

One of the questions I'm often asked on this topic is regarding fitting in or prioritising an athlete's “favourite event” ... Pair a more favourable event with a slightly weaker one, or an event that hasn't been swam for a long time. Athletes aged 8-14 often change their favourite/best events quite often, ensure you don't become focused on one event or distance. Follow that rule and you can't go too far wrong!



The Elite Swimming Training Programme of the DMasa and Doncaster's Clubs
www.dartes.co.uk

2. WHICH COMPETITIONS TO ENTER?

There is a competition calendar on the notice board at Normanton Leisure centre and on the website through the 'Upcoming Meets' Section of the website. The meets swimmers should attend depend on age and their ability to achieve the qualifying standard for the particular meets.

- 9-14yrs Boys and 9-13yrs girls are classed as Age Group.
- 15yrs+ Boys and 14yrs+ girls are classed as Youth/Senior.

For those of you that are new to competitive swimming, meets are often classified in a few different ways, often depending on the standard of the meet:

- Level 1 Meet – a gala licensed at this level will be aimed at very competent, fast swimmers who regularly compete at County level and above. The gala will, quite often, be swum long course (i.e. in a 50m pool) and the required entry times will be challenging. Times from these meets can be used for entry into Regional and National competitions.
- Level 2 Meet – the entry times for these galas can still be quite challenging. They will always have a lower (slowest) limit for event entry times which means swimmers must be faster than the lower limit to enter the event. Some have an upper (fastest) and lower (slowest) limit for each event. This means that swimmers must be faster than the lower limit but not faster than the upper limit. They are usually swum short course (i.e. 25m pool). Times from these meets can also be used for entry into Regional and National competitions.
- Level 3 Meet – these galas are of a slightly lower level and, as such, the entry times are easier. They usually have upper and lower limits for entry times (as for Level 2 meets) but the range between the times will be broader. They are always swum short course. Times from these meets can be used for entry into County competitions and some Regional competitions, but not National competitions.
- Level 4 Meet – these galas are suitable for swimmers wishing to enter their first Open meet. Entry times will have upper and lower limits and the range between the times will be quite broad. These Licensed 4 Open Meets are aimed at swimmers who have not yet achieved County times and are a very good way to experience a busy open gala.

Most competitions run as age on day, other than Level 1 meets (age as of 31st December), which means the age of the swimmer on the last day of the swim meet defines their age group.

There are two different types of meet entry time descriptions; qualifying times and cut off times.

- Qualifying times: mean the swimmer must be faster than the noted times.
- Cut-Off times: mean the swimmer must be no faster than the designated times.

3. COACH:



The Elite Swimming Training Programme of the DMasa and Doncaster's Clubs
www.dartes.co.uk

It is important before entering swimming meets to speak with the coaches, as they will be able to guide you on which events would be most beneficial to enter. The coach is knowledgeable about every swimmer's strengths/weakness and the specific target for each meet. Remember only a select few meets are designated to swim fast, the rest are "training meets" to gauge performance improvements, to try new skills, or improve upon previous mistakes, in preparation for the bigger competitions (e.g. Yorkshire, North Eastern and National championships).

4. WITHDRAWALS:

It is unfortunate, but sometimes circumstances dictate that a swimmer must be withdrawn from a meet. If this situation happens, it is important that Carol Shephard or a Doncaster DARTES SC Lead Coach is informed prior to the meet, they will advise you accordingly. Failure to do so may result in a fine to the club and/or the parents/guardians responsible (depending on the particular competition). Swimmers should be encouraged to swim every event they enter and should only be withdrawn after consultation with the coach.

5. RESERVE FINALISTS:

Swimmers who achieve reserve places in competition must inform Team Managers/Coaching staff if they do not intend on waiting to see if any current finalists withdraw. Should you final, you must swim, unless otherwise advised by the coach.

6. TEAM KIT:

Doncaster DARTES SC swimmers, if choosing to wear a cap, must wear a Doncaster DARTES swimming cap. A Doncaster DARTES T-shirt or sweatshirt should also be worn at meets to make swimmers easily identifiable. These can be purchased through Mark Kearsley who regularly submits kit orders. There are also kit bags, hoodies, bottles, and towels and more available to purchase.

7. DATES AND LOCATION:

It is important to make sure you have all the information correct before making your way to the meet:

- What the date of the meet is!
- Where the swimming meet is to be held and available parking facilities.
- Where are the coach and team members going to meet and at what time?
- Who will be on poolside to guide swimmers through the day's events?
- Check the time you are expected to be on poolside ready for warm up (usually 20mins before warm-up starts).

8. ALL SWIMMERS MUST RESPECT POOLSIDE RULES:



- Inform team managers / Coaches if you need to leave poolside for any reason during a session e.g. toilet, etc.
- Parents/Guardians should encourage swimmers to remain on poolside rather than sitting in the spectator area as it is important to build a strong team atmosphere.
- Swimmers should also be encouraged to show support to other teammates during their races.
- As a Doncaster DARTES SC representative, we expect a high level of behaviour and respect shown to rivals, other coaches, and officials.
- Have fun!

9. SWIMMERS SHOULD:

- LISTEN to instructions from the coach, who is there to help you achieve your goals/targets.
- TALK to the coach before going to the marshalling area, prior to the race.
- PREPARE your muscles before the race; this will help reduce the chance of injury.
- DISCUSS your performance with the coach after every race.

10. REMEMBER TO SWIM DOWN!

- The clubs Post race Protocol should be followed upon completion of a race, with the '200 Flush' being critical, as it gives each athlete time to reflect on the positives and improvement points that the coach can then use to provide feedback. This process helps the athlete take ownership of their performance.
- Replenishment (of energy stores) / Swim Down should be carried out as soon as possible after the race.
- It is important to swim down after your race in order to reduce the levels of lactate that builds up in the muscles. A well-structured correctly performed swim down should help the swimmer to maintain performance levels throughout the swim meet.
- Once Swim Down is complete it is important that swimmers dry themselves thoroughly and wear dry clothing to keep the muscles warm.
- Now you need to have the appropriate drinks and snacks during the time available before your next race.
- CHECK WHEN YOUR NEXT EVENT IS!

11. PARENTS MUST REMEMBER



The Elite Swimming Training Programme of the DMasa and Doncaster's Clubs
www.dartes.co.uk

Please refrain from providing technical input or performance criticism; this is counterproductive, and it is the role of the athletes coach to provide any necessary assistance on areas for improvement. Should the coaching team sense this is occurring, feedback from events will not be provided.

- It is usually a good idea to compliment your athlete on a job well done, regardless of the outcome in terms of PB's or qualifying times.
- Encourage athletes to stay on poolside with their teammates – it's great for their independence and helps encourage a good team atmosphere.