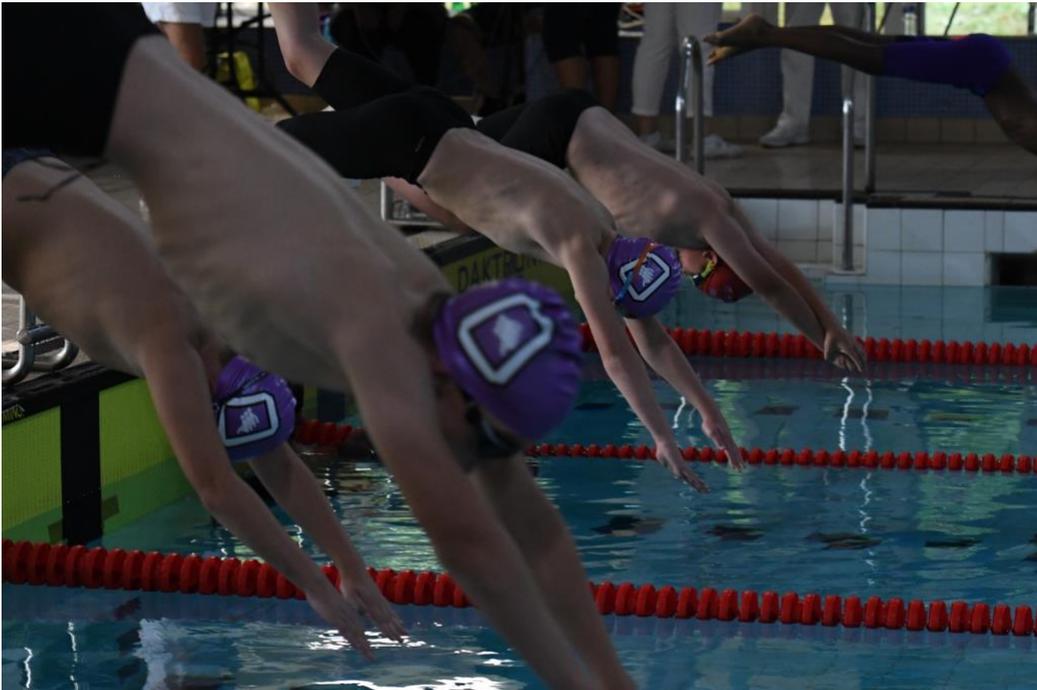


Orpington Ojays Swimming Club



Members' Guide

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Welcome to Orpington Ojays Swimming Club!



About us

We are a friendly swimming club based at the Walnuts Leisure Centre in Orpington. We run a learn-to-swim programme, and development, competitive and Masters squads.

At a county level we are part of Kent Swimming <https://www.kentswimming.org/> and our region is London Swimming <https://www.swimming.org/london/>.

We have squads for swimmers of varying abilities, along with a learn-to-swim programme for primary-school-aged children. You can find the training times for the squads and information about their goals and aims here <https://www.orpingtonojays.com/Information/Squads>. We have almost 300 swimmers in our squads from the littlest water baby in our learn-to-swim groups to the most experienced in our Masters squad.

Our history

Orpington Swimming Club was founded just after the Walnuts Leisure Centre opened in 1973, followed by Orpington Juniors Swimming Club (OJs for short). The clubs existed side by side until it became obvious there just were not enough swimmers in the area to make two swimming clubs viable. Talks began between the two clubs on how they could merge and become one. The rules and regulations of Orpington Swimming Club were used, as was the Monday night club night. OJs had just purchased a large amount of club kit in their purple, black and white colours so they became the new club's colours. The head coach of OJs, Eve Powis, became the head coach of the merged club and the club records were reset. The verbal OJs was spelled out as Ojays and added to Orpington to give us our current name of Orpington Ojays Swimming Club which was formed in September of 1998.

Orpington Ojays has continually promoted dedication, friendship, understanding and teamwork as core values in all that it does. Everyone involved with the club is part of our team.

Our squads/training



You can find all the information you need about our squads and their training times here:
<https://www.orpingtonojays.com/Information/Squads>

If your child is absent for a session because of illness or another reason, there's no need to worry. If the absence is likely to be longer than a session or two, due to holidays or other commitments, it is courteous to let their coach know when they will be back in the pool.

Kit list



Here's a list of what your swimmer will need for training sessions and competitions.

For training:

- Hat (compulsory)
- Goggles
- Pull buoy
- Kick board
- Fins
- Hand paddles
- Skipping rope
- Water in a plastic or metal bottle (no glass on poolside)
- Mesh bag for storing kit
- Club bag or rucksack

Gold squad and above will need an exercise mat and resistance band for land training.

For competitions:

- Club hat (and a spare)
- Goggles (plus a spare set)
- Water in a plastic or metal bottle (no glass on poolside)
- Club kit – purple club top and black shorts – plus warm clothes for between/after races
- Towels x 2
- Resistance band
- Skipping rope (to keep warm between races)

Where (and when) to buy kit



We have a club shop which is run by Masters swimmer Steve Morris and can be found on our website; <https://www.orpingtonojays.com/Shop>

The club shop stocks hats, goggles, floats – everything that your swimmer will need from the list of required kit.

When a swimmer reaches bronze squad, they could start to enter galas and be selected to represent Ojays at league meetings. So please ensure your swimmer has a club top at the minimum, although there is a large selection of kit available via our supplier Zeon: <http://www.zeonshop.co.uk/oosc>

Team Unify



Team Unify is our swim-club management software and enables us to organise and manage all aspects of running a large swim club such as Orpington Ojays. It allows the club to securely administer membership details across all squads from Learn to Swim through to Masters, perform gala and event management including online sign up and look after some financial aspects of the club such as squad and competition entry fees.

It helps us keep track of volunteers, roles and certifications – after all the club cannot run without the help of its parents and helpers.

On the coaching side we use Team Unify tools to log training attendance and even the actual sets swum in each session, which are recorded against individual swimmers' data. Coaches can then run reports and monitor the progress of swimmers, their gala results and personal bests and check on time improvements.

As a parent you have access to your online account over the internet or by using a mobile application called OnDeck. You can access and manage all your important information such as contact details, ASA number, and other details such as important medical information for your swimmer.

You can check up on financial details such as club and gala fees and payments you have made to the club, access all your swimmer's historic results for the last five years and check your swimmer's current personal bests with automatic time conversions, and look up club records.

Going forward you will also be able to see and sign up for gala events online without having to look up entry times and calculate event fees.

Competitions



Galas and meets are a big part of life as an Ojay. They can be rewarding and fun, but children are sometimes nervous about competitions, and parents can find them confusing as there are lots of different types of events.

Different types of licensed meets

All licensed meets are subject to Swim England regulations <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook/> and the Swim England technical rules of racing.

They are graded in four levels:

Level 1 meets are always long course (in a 50m pool) and include national, regional and county championships.

Level 2 meets are short course only (in a 25m pool) and include national, regional and county championships.

Level 3 meets are long and short course events, intended to enable swimmers to achieve qualifying times for regional and county championships and other level 1 or 2 events.

Level 4 meets are entry-level events in pools 25m long or above.



Different types of swimming competitions



As a swimmer progresses, they will aim for and attend higher-level events. Some events are open meets, which means the swimmer can choose whether to take part and which event to swim in. Others are league galas. For those competitions there will be a team chosen by the coaches and the coaches will decide who is swimming in which race. These are very much a team event, and are a lot of fun.

Other events follow a swimmer's development path, and the information below shows how they progress.

All of these competitions are inclusive of swimmers with a current national or international classification for functional, visually impaired or intellectual disability S1-S14.

Development galas

Kent County Championships (AKA the Kents)

The English county champs take place across the country at the beginning of the year. The Kents are usually held at Crystal Palace Sports Centre or the London Aquatic Centre.

To compete in the county champs, a swimmer must achieve a qualifying time. The qualifying times are published well in advance of each year's competition so swimmers know what they're aiming for.

Age groups in the county champs are: 10/11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16+

Orpington Ojays aims to send a strong team to the Kents each year, and to compete in the relay competition which is a few weeks later.

London Regional Championships (AKA Regionals)

Regionals take place during April or May and are generally at the London Aquatic Centre.

Age groups in regionals are: 11/12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17+

National Summer Meet (AKA Nationals)

The Summer Meet forms part of a swimming competition structure in Great Britain whereby the top 20 ranked swimmers in each event are invited to compete at the British Swimming Summer Championships.

The next highest ranked swimmers are invited to compete at the English Nationals. The rankings are on swimmers' performances at level 1 meets between a qualification window, typically between March and May of the same calendar year. Age groups are: 12/13, 14, 15, 16/17, and 18+

League galas

Kent Junior League

KJL is a league system for clubs that come under Kent Swimming. Swimmers aged 9-13 can take part. This is a team event, with the team being chosen by the head coach before the event. There are six rounds, each held in different pools across the county.

Tudor League

The Tudor League is small league run for local clubs; Erith & District, Bexley, Greenwich Royals, Sevenoaks, Dartford District, Tonbridge, and Eltham Stingrays. The events are held at the leisure centre in Eltham where clubs take turns to 'host' the events.

White Horse League

Another small league for local clubs across Kent, Essex and South-East London.

National Arena League

The Arena League is a national competition that takes place in October, November and December each year. Our club competes in the South region against a number of other clubs, where the level of competition is very high.

Club Championships

As a club we organise internal galas which offer valuable racing opportunities throughout the club from Tadpoles to Masters.

Our Tadpoles enjoy periodic race nights, normally within their training time, to give them a first experience of what racing is all about.

Spread throughout the year are a number of licensed competitive galas, organised to cover all swimming distances. They form our club championship programme and which finish with our festive sprints gala in December.

Every new year we hold a celebration evening. It's a social, fun, family night with dancing and games, along with the presentation of trophies to swimmers across the age groups from the club championships. We take the opportunity to use the evening to acknowledge swimmers' progress and achievements as well as rewarding our volunteers.



Useful information for galas

The world of swimming competitions can be bewildering if you're a newcomer. If you've got any questions, please have a chat with the committee or any parents or swimmers – we've all been there and we're always willing to talk through the galas. Here are some things you need to know:

Age groups

Swimmers' age groups in competitions are determined in two ways. Either the competition will ask for their 'age on day' – how old they are when the competition is taking place. Or it will be 'age at 31 Dec' – how old they will be at the end of the year. So a swimmer whose 12th birthday is in June 2021, would swim in the 12 years age group in an 'age at 31 Dec' competitions, for the whole of 2021.

Open events

These competitions are usually divided into a morning and afternoon session (and occasionally an evening session) with a time to sign in by. Swimmers need to sign in for each race they're competing in for each session.

There will be coaches and a team manager on poolside, but we would ask parents to stay and cheer on Team Ojays. Once your swimmer has competed in all the events s/he has entered, they can leave the venue.

League events

These galas are run as team events. Your swimmer will be selected for the competition and you should let the gala secretary know if they can compete as soon as possible. If your swimmer is selected and accepts their place, it's important they turn up to the event. If they're ill, or unable to swim for another reason, please let the coach know.

League events don't generally have sign-in sheets. When your swimmer arrives at the venue, they should make themselves known to the coach or the team manager who will let them know which races they'll be swimming.

All swimmers should stay to the end of league events as they are team competitions and there are always other Ojays to support and/or learn from. We always finish with a raucous Ojays cheer to celebrate the swimmers' performance.

Personal bests

Swimmers compete against each other, but their real competition is with themselves. They are always aiming to beat their fastest time in an event, and improve their personal best (PB). Swimmers' times are available on Team Unify and are also published on the ASA rankings website <https://www.swimmingresults.org/>

Behaviour at galas

Swimmers are encouraged not to use their mobile phone or other technical devices while at events and instead to cheer on and support their fellow swimmers from all squads. Please refer to the swimmer code of conduct for more guidance.

Parents' behaviour at galas

Parental support is really important at competitions, but we urge everyone to watch this video to remind us all about how to behave.

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/videos/my-magic-sports-kit/>

Please refer to the parent code of conduct for more guidance.



Nutrition

Nutrition is an important part of your training programme. Eating the right types and amounts of food, as well as drinking enough fluid before, during and after each training session will help you perform better and recover faster between training sessions. It will also help to keep you healthy and reduce your chances of getting colds and other upper respiratory tract illnesses.

Anita Bean March 2018

There is some excellent information about what the swimmers should be eating here:

<https://anitabean.co.uk/nutrition-young-swimmers/>

Snacks for galas

Competitions can last all day, and swimmers will need to keep their energy levels up. Here are some ideas for good snacks to pack to keep your swimmer on top form. While nuts are a good source of energy for swimmers, in case of allergies we ask that no one brings nuts or nut-based products to galas or training.

- Fresh fruit or snack packs of fruit in natural juice
- Vegetable crisps, crackers and bread sticks
- Breakfast cereals (lower sugar varieties such as bran flakes and cornflakes) or premixed cereal drinks
- Yoghurt, custard, rice pudding
- Fruit and grain bars
- Small bars of dark chocolate 80% + cocoa solids
- pretzels or baked crisps
- Fruit bun, tea cakes, hot cross buns
- Rice crackers, rice cakes
- Scones, pancakes
- Milk based smoothie with fruit
- Milkshakes
- Popcorn (homemade is best with no salt or butter)
- Seeds and dried fruit mix

Ojays online

We can be found on social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/orpingtonojays>



<https://twitter.com/OrpingtonOjays>



<https://www.instagram.com/orpingtonojayssc/>



And the club website is <https://www.orpingtonojays.com/>

We always want to hear what your swimmers have been doing and to publicise their achievements in and out of the pool. To share news please email oojcsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Volunteering

Like all clubs, Orpington Ojays can only run because of its volunteers. We expect parents to step up to play their part throughout the year – even if it's just helping out in a small way such as selling raffle tickets or baking cakes for a gala. We are hugely grateful for all the help we get. Volunteers are such a vital part of swimming that Swim England and the ASA not only acknowledge the commitment and professionalism of volunteers, they also provide training and qualifications for them.

Currently we're in more need of volunteers than ever before because of the situation with Covid-19. The regulations imposed upon us to enable training to continue will remain for the foreseeable future, and we will have to continue to need several Covid-19 liaison volunteers before the start of every training session, during the training session and at the end. If your swimmer is taking part in a training session, then please volunteer to help – we can't get the kids in the pool if we don't have support from parents.

Helping at galas

There are all sorts of jobs that need doing when the club enters or runs a gala. They don't need any special skills or knowledge – just enthusiasm and some common sense, that's all. You can find more information about each role on the website but the jobs include supervising the swimmers signing in, taking the entry fee on the door, handing out medals, giving drinks to the officials, or making sure swimmers are ready for their races at the right times. They're easy jobs, but so important, and it's always good fun to be a part of the meet.

Team managers

We need a team manager for every league event – the club can't compete without them. They stay poolside with the swimmers and take responsibility for their welfare during the gala. This includes safeguarding, making sure they're organised for each race, boosting morale and taking care of any issues that arise. It's a vital role and one that is fun and rewarding because the children are endlessly entertaining.

Swim England runs two-hour, online training courses for this role. Because it's such an important job and an easy qualification to gain, OOJSC would like everyone who volunteers to eventually have this qualification.

Officials

If you get the swimming bug, you can move into a technical role and become an official. Officials are needed at every event from the internal club champs and race nights, right through to regionals and nationals and beyond.

There are many levels starting with the J1 which involves timekeeping, and monitoring turns. The club pays for the training and mentors those who are taking the qualification. We need at least 26 people in the club who are qualified to cover the technical roles. You can find out more about the different officials on the website.

We do it for the swimmers so please join us. We are a friendly crowd and it is not as difficult as you think...we promise! If you want any more information or an informal chat about what's involved, get in touch with our volunteer co-ordinator Myra Brown on clubsecretary@orpingtonojays.com

Club committee

The club is run by a committee of volunteers. You can find out more about them here:

<https://www.orpingtonojays.com/Information/OurCommittee>