

# Getting Started in Competitive Swimming

Vicky Gibbs



# Introduction

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- Vicky Gibbs
- Been with Tawa Swimming Club since 2014
- Race Secretary/Committee Member since 2016
- Two daughters, both whom swim competitively
- Been involved with swimming clubs since 2012 – PCA and Tawa

# Do They Need Expensive Gear for a Meet?

**No.**

- In terms of swim gear, all they need are the togs that they train in, a pair of goggles (a spare pair is always useful), a cap, a towel, and a bag.
- Swimmers **do not** need to have expensive Technical Suits.



# Why Enter Swim Meets?

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- Teaches great life skills – resilience, confidence, focus, discipline
- Opportunity to try out the skills they learn in training
- Opportunity to hang out with their lane or squad mates
- Aspirational to watch the older swimmers competing
- Sense of belonging
- Overcome any fears/uncertainties
- See what your swimmer is capable of
- Some are passionate, some are enthusiastic, some have natural talent, some have a combination of some or all of these – take a chance, have a go, see what they think of racing

# Terminology

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**Meet:** A swimming competition

**Event:** A particular race at a meet

**Heat:** What breaks up groups of swimmers in an Event (seeded by times)

**Seed Time:** The fastest time a swimmer has in an event

**SC:** Short Course pool (25m pool)

**LC:** Long Course pool (50m pool)

**PB:** Personal Best

**DQ:** Disqualification

**SNZ:** Swimming New Zealand

**SW:** Swimming Wellington

**TM:** Team Manager

**QTs:** Qualifying Times

**Psych Sheets:** A preliminary list of all swimmers entered into a meet

**Program:** A final, **seeded**, list of all swimmers entered into a meet

**Pool Deck:** The area around the pool

# How to Enter Meets

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- All meets are entered via FastLane ([Swimming New Zealand Fast Lane](#)).
- This is also where you pay your annual fees/levies to SNZ and SW.
- Your swimmer must be a financial member of SNZ in order to enter meets; that means that they have paid their subs/levies.
- Make sure you click through every screen.
- It is always a good idea to go back into the Meet and double-check that (1) you have entered your swimmer, and (2) you have entered them into the correct event.
- Do not enter your swimmer into back-to-back events
- Late entries are **not** accepted at most meets. Enter a meet as early as possible.

# What Kind of Meets Can We Enter?

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This depends on how your swimmer is registered with SNZ:

- **SNZ-registered Recreational swimmer:**
  - TSC Time Trials, TSC Club Champs, Gold Coast meets, Novice Carnivals.  
*No cost to SNZ/SW for this level of membership.*
- **SNZ-registered Club swimmer:**
  - All of the above, plus National Qualifier meets and Junior Sprint Challenge.  
*Annual cost of \$97 payable via Fastlane (1 Jul to 30 June)*
- **SNZ-registered Competitive swimmer:**
  - All of the above, plus SW Junior Champs, SNZ Junior Festival, Winter Champs, Summer Champs, National meets.  
*Annual cost of \$117 (Jr) and \$147 (Sr) payable via Fastlane (1 Jul to 30 June)*

# Where Should We Start?

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- Look out for emails from me, "**Race Secretary**". I will send out regular emails with information on upcoming swim meets.
- If you are unsure if the swim meet is suitable for your swimmer feel free to email me or speak to one of our coaching team directly.
- The coaching team can also suggest what events (distance and strokes) your swimmer should enter.



# Where Should We Start? (Cont'd)

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- For new swimmers, start with **Gold Coast (“GC”) meets**. These are held at either Tawa Pool or Coastlands Aquatic Centre. We also offer **Time Trials** once a term on a Monday or Thursday.
- GC meets usually offer 25m and 50m events. **Don’t** put your new or young swimmer into 100m events straight away; we would encourage you to start with 25s and move onto 50s and then 100s. Whilst they may swim some distance at training, racing an event is very different to training that event.
- **Longevity in Swimming:** We want our swimmers to swim for life – pushing them too hard, or making them swim long distances too soon, can put them off swimming. Take it slowly.

# Where Should We Start? (Cont'd)

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- Once your swimmer gets into competing, you can compete at National Qualifier (“NQ”) meets; these are open to all clubs in the region.
- There are also Junior sprint meets, winter and summer champs (age dependent), junior festival.
- The best place to find meets is either the **Tawa Swimming Club events page** ([Upcoming Meets \(swimtawa.org.nz\)](http://swimtawa.org.nz)) or the **Swim Wellington events page** ([EVENTS | Swimming Wellington](#)).

# What to Expect at a Meet

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- Aim to be at the swim meet **at least 15 minutes before warm-up** is due to start, to give time for the swimmer to get ready, to stretch, and have a warm up swim prior to racing starting.
- The swimmer should let the Team Manager know they have arrived.
- Parents should not sit with the swimmers; the TM will look after them.
- Make sure your swimmer has water, healthy snacks, a couple of towels, a hoodie to keep them warm, and warm/dry clothing and footwear for after.
- Let the Coach talk to the swimmer about their race.

# Should We Have a Go and Enter a Meet?

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**Yes!!**

Questions...