

Aqua Swimming Club
Coach's Newsletter - 2011

Dear Aqua SC Member

A very warm welcome to all those who have joined our swimming club for the first time and welcome back to all swimmers who swam with us during 2010!

I write this letter with a feeling of great encouragement as our club continues to attract new members for the forthcoming year. As you may know it is my passion to see young children acquire the necessary skills to develop into the best swimmers they can be through the correct skill development. Each year I attend the British Swimming Coaches conference and it is an enormous privilege to listen to great coaches from around the world passing on their knowledge and experience to all those who are fortunate to be able to be included in this excellent forum. It has become very evident in the past few years that the correct swimming skills must be learnt at an early age for a swimmer to stand any chance of making it through to the elite level. Coaches and parents must look at success being 'long term'. In this respect the Aqua Swimming Club closely follows the ASA guidelines on 'Long Term Athlete Development' (LTAD). There are 5 main sections to this:

1. FUNdamentals – Childhood
2. SwimSkills – Late Childhood
3. Training to Train – Adolescence
4. Training to Compete – Early Adulthood
5. Training to Win – Adulthood

All the sessions that swimmers follow within our club incorporate a good amount of new skills that are required in the second phase of the LTAD ie SwimSkills. Swimmers who transfer from the Aqua Swimming lesson programme (after Improver 3) have already been following the National Plan for Teaching Swimming (stages 1 – 7). The swimming club members follow stages 8 – 10 for competitive swimming. An integral part of the club is to experience and train for competition. However, competition is not the 'be all and end all' but nevertheless I will be encouraging all club members to enter 'open' competitions throughout the year. Hopefully, we can get a good number of you to enter; if this is the case I will be able to accompany you to the event.

Our plan for 2011 is to work on the development of the four main swimming strokes and include starts, turns, finishes and relay take-overs. In addition, our team of teachers and coaches will explain the warm-up and cool down process, stretching, hydration and nutrition, recovery and relaxation and focusing.

One of the most important skills to learn is underwater streamlining. We will be spending a large amount of time on this particular skill because the best swimmers in the world are the best at swimming underwater – just look at Michael Phelps the multi – medal winning Olympic Champion. He is quite phenomenal to watch underwater. Just follow this link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax77_hHq9Dc

I would like all of you to start considering (if you haven't already done so) what you would like to achieve for the coming year in terms of your swimming success. Quite often it is those people who decide very early on what they see themselves achieving in terms of sporting success. You may find this quote quite amusing:

"If you think you can do it, or you think you can't do it, You are right."

With this quote in mind I truly believe that you can start setting goals for yourself right now; if you need help with this please let me know as soon as possible – it is never too early to start! Your swimming goals can be (and should be) simple ones e.g improving the distance you come up to the surface on your dive, faster turns and so on. It is much more satisfying to achieve easy goals like this rather than 'I am going to be the fastest swimmer in the whole country'. This is not a bad aim in itself but I suggest setting achievable goals one at a time!

I really do hope that you enjoy a great year of swimming with us. Please remain positive at all times in training and in competition – it all helps to create a winning attitude!

With very best wishes

Marcus Branson
Head Coach
Aqua SC