

Sutton and Cheam Swimming Club



SQUAD SUPPORT PACK

The Club runs three competition training squads (Top / Youth / Junior) which cater for our swimmers as they leave the Development groups and progress through to elite competition.

The pack provided here is for guidance and should be referred to when needed. It is something we would wish to add to over time and any thoughts / advice will be gratefully received and pages can be added and replaced as thought fit.

Qualifying times will be forwarded to you and we feel these should be added to your printed off pack.

If you do not have your child's current PBs please contact Helen who can supply you with them.

Please note that your child has been selected to swim in the squad allocated and should only swim with that squad unless agreed otherwise with the squad coach.

Keeping in touch:

Text is probably the best way to contact your coach to let them know of any absences.

The club endeavours to inform you of any changes by email and the rolling news on the front page of the club website. Please ensure your coach and the "Andrews" have your up to date contact details.

Helen Andrews – 07711704593

Jim Walker – 07540785180

Alec Eves – 07780606183

JUNIOR SQUAD

Training: Three sessions per week (Two minimum)

Equipment: Kit bag, containing hat, goggles, kickboard, pull buoy, fins, drinks bottle.
All equipment should be fully labelled, your child will lose equipment and it is difficult to return it if it is anonymous!

Aim of the squad:

Stroke work, understand different drills and swimming sets, learn basics of the clock. (See later). Starts, turns and relay takeovers.

It is also expected that swimmers compete for the club in interclub events in Club endorsed, supported Open Meets and the Club Championships.

On entering the squad swimmers should be aspiring to progress to youth squad. Prior to promotion swimmers may be asked to attend some youth squad sessions by way of preparation.

Progression will not be considered unless the child is undertaking all junior sessions.

Training Fees: Squad fees are applicable and payable by standing order.

YOUTH SQUAD

Training: Five sessions per week (Four minimum)

Equipment: Kit bag, containing hat, goggles, kickboard, pull buoy, fins, hand paddles and drinks bottle. **All equipment should be fully labelled**, your child will lose equipment and it is difficult to return it if it is anonymous!

Aim of the squad:

Continue to work on stroke and turns.

Read the clock and work out swim times, swimmers are learning to pace themselves. For races they need to understand different speeds they can swim at and also how to push themselves.

Building stamina.

On entering the squad swimmers should be aspiring to progress to top squad. Prior to promotion swimmers may be asked to attend some top squad sessions by way of preparation.

It is also expected that swimmers compete for the club in interclub events and in Club endorsed, supported Open Meets and the Club Championships.

Progression will not be considered unless the child is undertaking all five youth sessions.

Training Fees: Squad fees are applicable and payable by standing order.

SQUAD TRAINING

Punctuality - It is expected that swimmers arrive poolside ready to swim at the published start time for all sessions. This means having their kit bags unpacked and hat and goggles on. However it is understood that with times and location of some pools it might be difficult to arrive exactly on time. If you expect to be continually late for certain sessions please discuss this with your child's coach. Many parents put an awful lot of effort to getting to sessions on time if your child then decides to take their time, have a chat and wander on poolside late it is not worth it. Parents should make sure their child is on poolside ready to start the session before disappearing off.

Absence from sessions – Please notify your coach as soon as possible if your child will not be attending a session (by text please). If a number of children are missing due to another event (school gala for example) it may be best to cancel or merge a session with another one. We strive to give parents as much notice as possible regarding cancelled or rearranged sessions. If a coach knows that a session will not have many children they can actually change the session different numbers mean different things can be done and it is nice to be able to plan this.

Swimwear – At training sessions children can wear swimsuits / hats of their choice, obviously of an appropriate nature. Chlorine has a very nasty effect in that it destroys lycra, it is not therefore worth spending out on expensive swimwear for training save that for races.

Session Content - Sessions will contain sequences of lengths and strokes divided into separate groups, these are known as sets.

Most sessions will be written up on a white board and sets will be explained orally but they are on a board for reference or as a reminder.

When swimming, certain sets will have a rest period set i.e. 10 seconds. This is where reading the clock begins. A swimmer will be expected to look at the clock when they finish and then work out when they should set off again. E.g. 10 seconds rest before continuing.

Moving on a swimmer will be given a set time in which to complete the swim and take their rest. The simplest example is two lengths on 60 seconds. This means that every 60 seconds the swimmer will set off, the rest they get will be dependant on how long they took to swim the two lengths.

Progression from this will be for the swimmer to work out what time they did for each swim. Their coach will expect them to know their pace and be able to compare that with their PB.

Any help parents can give on learning how to use the clock is greatly appreciated, it is not the best use of a coaches time on poolside.

Rest periods are worked out by the coach in line with what they are trying to achieve from a set.

Locations:

Unfortunately due to the lack of pool availability in our local area we have to travel to various pools. This can be difficult for parents to get to all sessions and it can be pretty boring at times!

Many parents choose to do lift shares and it is common practice for telephone numbers and emails to be exchanged.

If a parent has a problem getting a child to a session they should let their coach know if anything can be arranged to help it will be done.

SQUAD FEES

On joining a squad you will be asked to pay a monthly squad fee and commit to setting up a standing order for the relevant amount. Our main criteria in setting squad fees is pool hire. Unfortunately we live in an area where pool hire is one of the most expensive in the country. The fees also cover many other things including coaching expenses for training sessions, galas open meets and indeed gala entry fees.

Please note that squad fees do not fully cover pool hire and coaching costs for the higher squads due to the limited number of children permitted (to gain optimum performance) in each squad. Fees have been set at a level so that attendance in these squads is not cost prohibitive.

COMPETITIONS

The Club enters competition throughout the year. This will include Interclub galas / leagues, Open Meets and Championship events (Surreys / London Regional Championships)

At all galas swimmers must wear the club hat. At open meets they may wear the costume of their choice however when swimming in a team event or interclub gala they must wear royal blue or as near to that as possible.

Club T bags or polo shirts must be worn poolside and at presentations.

Please arrive in plenty of time for the start of all events. At open meets you are usually required to sign in for each session by a set time. If you have not signed in you will not be able to swim! Also spectator space is often limited. It is much better for the children (and often the parent's sanity) if the parents sit together as a group. This is often difficult if parents arrive late.

Children are expected to behave appropriately when attending a gala and bad or unruly behaviour will not be tolerated no matter how fast a child swims, they will not be selected for a gala if they can not be trusted to behave themselves

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS:

Our Club Championships should be regarded as a local meet. The Championships are licensed and times achieved can be used to qualify for other competitions. Coaches, as with open meets will give guidance as to which events squad members should enter. The Championships are compulsory for all squad members and dates are published well in advance.

INTERCLUB GALAS

The club takes part in various galas throughout the year; the dates for these are published on the clubs website as soon as they are known. If your child is in a squad you should note these dates as your child may be picked. The club/ parents and swimmers can be disappointed if they are not available to swim. All galas have different age groups some on the date of the gala and some at other dates or even on year of birth and this will affect which age group swimmers are entitled to compete in.

We participate in two leagues namely the Rother and the Arena. In all these galas we will field our fastest/strongest possible team. The coaches select the teams and will consider not just PB's but current performance and many other factors after much discussion.

MEETS

These can include Championship events such as The Surrey County Championships or Open Meets.

County and Regional Championships are on the annual calendar well in advance.

Open meets are specifically chosen by the Head Coach and take place throughout the year. They are chosen for various reasons, including attaining qualifying times, race experience and long course pool familiarisation. We may choose a meet which may be a great deal further away on a date when one is being held locally but events are selected specifically to provide better competition for the swimmer (i.e. the standard of competition is much higher) or because there is a better selection of events at that particular meet.

The club feels it provides enough open meets for all swimmers. Unless there are exceptional circumstances swimmers should not attend open meets on their own. If a parent feels their child needs to attend a meet the club is not supporting it should only be entered after consulting the squad coach and with their guidance on event selection and entry times.

Throughout the year we do try and enter galas and meets to suit all standard of swimmers. It must be understood that these are not always available. Many galas have minimum / maximum qualifying times. If your child is not within these limits they will not be able to attend.

Your squad coach will give you advice as to which individual events your child should be swimming in.

Key Championships and Open Meets

There are three key championships each year which all swimmers should aim to compete in namely the Counties, Regional's and Nationals. The best way to look upon these is to compare them to progression through academic qualifications i.e. Counties (GCSE), Regional's (A's Levels) and Nationals (A levels). To assist us in preparing for these key events we enter in Open Meets (Mock Exams).

Counties (GCSE: 9 – 16yrs old)

Counties take place each year over a period of 4-5 weekends during Feb and March. To enter you must have achieved the qualifying time in a licensed meet, all this means is a competition that has been registered with the ASA.

Regional's (A's Levels: 10 – 16yrs old)

Regional Championships are held over 3 weekends split into two groups, Youth and Junior. Youth takes place in May over 1 weekend and juniors in June over 2 Weekends. To enter you must achieve a higher standard qualifying time than the Counties - the Regional's covers all of London area.

Nationals (A Levels: 11 – 17yrs old)

There are various National championships however the main ones again are Junior and Youth, to enter the Nationals again you must achieve a much higher standard than the Regional's. These normally take place in July over a period of 7 days.

Open meets (Mock exams – all ages)

For the athlete to be given a fair chance of qualifying for these events we must give them race practice which takes the form of open meets(mock exams) all of these meets have a purpose and normally run over a complete weekend. Open meets are of different standards and they will have different qualifying times. The Swimmer should aim to enter every session in these meets to give them the best rehearsal for the key championships. These competitions can be very long and tedious as are the key championships; dealing with the boredom and still competing to their best is part of the preparation. Unfortunately a lot of the Championships take place over half term holidays where parents believe it is a good time for a holiday. This maybe so, but ask yourself - if you were to go away a week or two weeks before a competition your child will fail to achieve the required standard and not get the qualification to move on. I doubt very much anyone would consider a holiday just before any academic exams so try and consider that after months of hard work from the Coach and swimmer, you are willing to risk failure. We all appreciate quality family time but please try and plan it around any key events.

In making this analogy please remember school teachers are not allowed to take time off during term time!

GALA/ COMPETITION EQUIPMENT

Warm up costume - There is often a very long wait from the warm up to the race. In order to keep warm getting out of a wet suit is imperative.

Towels (at least two) – It is important to dry yourself properly before putting on clothes. There is no point in sitting in a wet T shirt for hours. The small chamois are ideal for drying off during sessions between swims. A nice dry towel at the end of a session is a good idea.

At an open meet there can be gaps between sessions, in these instances children should get out of all swim wear, get really warm and dry and enter the next session as a new gala. Children will be expected to do a warm up for each session.

Hat/goggles – I impress upon the children they must have these on them at all times or put safely in a bag. Goggles left lying around have a habit of “walking”. A spare hat and an adjusted pair of goggles should be brought, accidents do happen.

Poolside clothing – Some pools are baking hot, others are not. The minimum clothing required is T shirt, shorts and flip flops. A long day at say Crystal Palace would need tracksuit trousers, old trainers and possibly even a hoodie. There is no point in doing all the training, warming up and eating the right food if a child is freezing cold, therefore getting stiff and tired. Common sense really should prevail. Open meets can be very long days and some form of amusement can be good. Many swimmers bring ps3's or such. It has even been known, in exceptional circumstances for children to do homework! Please make sure your child does not leave items unattended.

Food - I feel it should not need to be said that drinks should be taken on board regularly.

Please choose food your children will eat! Sustenance is required throughout the day. All children attending galas will be used to eating and swimming without the suggested two hour gap, so no need to panic!

Suggested foods are:

Pasta with chicken ,ham, cheese, sweet corn added

Sandwiches, Cereal bars, Fruit (bananas or smoothie drinks), a few sweets, jelly, chocolate although please be aware pools are often hot and it will melt!

Drinks – water/ lucozade / diluted juice.

It is best to keep these with you in a cool bag; children usually find their parents when they need food.

Don't forget food and drinks for yourselves. Gala days are long and hot. Whilst some pools have nice cafeterias or are in an area where you can go out and buy from local shops, others have only a vending machine.

PARENTS

You should keep a log book of your child's PB's (personal best times). This should contain all strokes and distances, long course 50m and short course 25m. Also a list of County / Regional entry times is useful.

Your child will not always achieve a PB and indeed the older they get the harder they are to achieve. It is not unusual for a child to plateau for a while. This is when parents and coaches need to support the most and be positive.

A stop watch can give you a bit of interest during long meets – taking relay and individual split times.

Coaches need to be trusted; they have the responsibility for preparing your child for a race it can be detrimental for a parent to advise a child. Conflicting information is confusing for a child and will certainly not help achieve a best performance. In a similar vein stroke technique, advice should be left to the coach.

After a race a competitor should go directly to their coach. If a swim down pool is available a brief chat will take place and then a swim down. The coach will then run through how the swim went with splits, etc. This needs to be done whilst the swim is fresh in both the swimmer's and coach's minds. There will be plenty of time left to speak to mum and dad afterwards!

It should be impressed on swimmers that their coach must know where they are at all times. At some galas swimmers will have time to sit with their parents, at others they will not. Sitting with team mates can/should produce camaraderie and keep them focused. Where permitted swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates from the end of the lane.

At times a break from poolside and even some fresh air will be actively encouraged, this often helps calm children down who are nervous about races yet to come, again the coach will be the one to advise.

Training Cycles

In very simple terms The Head and Squad Coaches will design the training plan to prepare the swimmers in each squad to compete at their full potential at targeted events.

The schedules at each session are designed to achieve certain specific objectives but form part of a planned annual training cycle built around the Competition calendar.

Over the course of the year (the Swimming Calendar runs from September through to July) the coaches will include longer and tougher sessions to give the swimmers greater strength, endurance and fitness and shorter sessions to sharpen swimmers as key competitions approach (these sessions will include shorter swims at greater speed).

The various squads will target different competitions and the training will be designed around these but in the case of both Top and Youth Squads the Surrey County Championships, The London Region Championships and The Arena Leagues will feature strongly in the planning