



Harrow & Wealdstone SC Head Coach Newsletter Swimmers/Parents March 2009

Past

Congratulations to all swimmers who firstly made county championships and secondly making finals and winning medals. I was pleased to see the beginnings of a team take place at the Counties, the following things were observed:

- Swimmers got to the pool early to do an effective warm up routine on land and in the pool
- I was impressed with the food/fuel all swimmers took in, I saw very few swimmers eating sweets and instead taking in sandwiches or fruit as was recommended in the document regarding nutrition I sent out prior to the Championships
- Swimmers did need some encouragement to turn up in team kit and wear a HWSC swim cap, however due to the delay in the kit supply, I'm sure that will improve
- Prior to swimming and now and again during the meet we need 2 leaders a girl and boy to take the whole team and do Blood-flow exercises (pre swim warm up/stretch). This must be done as a team and will serve to keep the swimmers aware and ready to race fast
- Swim down is key to getting back up and swimming fast in the next race- this must be no less than your warm up, and must be started within 5 minutes of finishing your race. Sitting or standing is not swim down- Active recovery is needed
- Some swimmers felt it would help to sit in a hot shower for quite some time. As I explained this will only serve to send your body to sleep and should be avoided when we have access to a swim down pool
- When attending a meet, it is important that swimmers do not go up into the spectator area. This will tire the legs and shows poor preparation. Before the meet swimmers should have all their kit and food on poolside with them, and should already have spoken to parents prior to the meet and during the break. Please be prepared and stick with the team
- I would like to see swimmers supporting their team mates during races more. If everyone does this then we will look like a strong team and this will start a feeling of support running through the club
- Starts, turns and finishes were good. However they can always be better! Remember starts, turns and finishes are a large portion of short course swimming. These skills should be worked on and perfected during training in every session!
- When entering a competition swimmers and parents should try to cover a range of different events. Entering a maximum of 2-3 races per session to avoid excess fatigue. Swimmers are expected to complete every event they enter, even if it is the last session and they are tired. A major goal of fast swimming is being mentally strong...

Present

Training is going well. We are still working with Harrow Leisure Centre to resolve some issues they have. Once the issues are sorted we should be starting a full land training programme. Please join me in being patient. We are always looking for more pool time and will be adding more time going forwards.

- A request from customers at John Lyon in the morning sessions- once changed please put all your bags in either one cubicle or one area of the changing room as there have been times where there is no room for anyone to get changed.



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I would like all swimmers to aim to be on poolside in the afternoon sessions 15 minutes prior to swimming, this is the start of the session and must be used to do Blood-flow and stretch.

From next Friday (3rd) the morning sessions will require that you are on poolside by 0525. Swimmers will be turned away if they arrive on poolside after 0525. **Please note there will be NO EXCEPTIONS, NO EXCUSES.**

The squad Criteria states a Minimum number of sessions for each squad. Please be aware this is the bare minimum for swimmers to do to stay in the squad. This is not the number of sessions to attend and expect miracles. If you want great performance in swimming then all sessions available to your squad should be attended for at least 45 weeks of the year.

Future

The following things are being worked on at the moment:

- Increasing pool time/space available
- Links with schools in the area (any suggestions please let us know)
- Land training –working on it
- Fundraising bag-pack at a local supermarket (when this happens please make sure you support the club!)
- Club kit- We are working on it!
- Head coach will be coming around all squads and working closely with squad coaches

Feedback

The following things are areas that all Harrow & Wealdstone swimmers can (and need to) improve:

- Breakouts (the transition between underwater streamline and your first stroke). The body should be extremely streamlined throughout. Powerful butterfly kicks should be used always in training off every wall. Swimmers at HWSC tend to breath straight away on the first stroke, this only slows you down and is poor practice- make sure you do 3 strokes then breath! The first stroke (initial “catch”) should be strong and you should be able to “grab” (hold) the water and get up to full speed as fast as possible. See this link for an example of great streamline and underwater breakout - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7cES6C6Oww>
- Swimmers need to keep moving in the lanes and never stop to let other swimmers past. All swimmers need to learn to leave 5 seconds behind on the start, and make sure that if overtaking you give the person being overtaken enough space and time to swim as normal. Standing on the bottom just serves to get in the way and looks amateur. Please make sure each repetition (ie 100, 200 or 400 etc) is completed within the turn-around time given without stopping to let the next swimmer past. Please see the information below on how to train safely and effectively:

Lane Etiquette

- Swimmers are allocated to training lanes by the coaches – accept their decisions and train accordingly.
- Remain conscious of where your team mates are in the lane.
- When coming in to turn you must cut across the lane before making your turn and push off straight – do not turn and then push off at an angle as this is dangerous for the swimmer behind you.
- Do not try to overtake someone on the outside between the flags and the wall or within the flags and the lane end - you risk turning on top of each other.
- Do not give way or stop for a faster swimmer – however be considerate to allow a faster swimmer to pass safely.



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- Faster swimmers must realise that slower swimmers are trying just as hard as they are and their set is no less important.
 - Pulling feet is forbidden.
 - Pulling lane-ropes is forbidden.
 - Do not swim on another swimmers feet – this is annoying and disrespectful to that swimmer.
 - Do not swim in the middle of the lane – this is the area to be used for passing and is also the extra space needed for the extra inches of the arms and legs of breaststrokes and flyers.
 - Remember to move to the lane edge when you complete a swim to allow other swimmers behind you to turn or finish correctly and safely.
- Turns are a major part of Fast swimming! In a 5000m session there are approx 200 turns. This is a huge opportunity to improve and perfect them. Swimmers must realise unless skills (turns, strokes etc) are practiced well (perfectly!) then in a race the great skills that will help you win will not be there! All swimmers should practice speed in and out of the wall, this will be hard to begin with but when you get to the race it will be easy! Try to swim fast 5mts in and 5mts out of walls for the entire session (every session during the week)
 - Pre Competition Workouts and Speed Development sessions: These sessions run to a plan with involves some sessions requiring only 1 hour. This would usually be a speed development session mid week (depending on the position in the cycle or a Race warm up before a competition). In future I will let parents know prior to it happening so they can arrange their drop off and pick up cover. Fridays are no different from other sessions, it all depends on the recoverability of the swimmers and the suitability of that session on that day. As for competition prep, all swimmers will fall in line with this for the following reasons:
 1. Race warm up practice and team building is crucial to build a winning (tight knit) team.
 2. These competitions are a requirement for the squad as a whole so all should enter or qualify.
 3. Sessions will be designed and run by the coach, usually by the end of the week swimmers will be tired and a decision can and will be made at any session as to the length and intensity of the workout.

All sessions no matter what the length (mts) or time taken have a place in a balanced competitive programme designed to make each swimmer reach their potential. Please understand and try to make as many sessions as you can to get the full training effect/result.

Encouragement

This is a really exciting time for Harrow & Wealdstone swimming club as swimmers and parents can be part of making the club successful over the coming months and years. Every swimmer and parent can make a difference, and I'm impressed with the desire to get better and the dedication shown thus far by parents and swimmers in my new job as Head Coach.

Good Luck and let's make an effort to be great!

Regards

Marc Spackman

Head Coach

Harrow & Wealdstone Swimming Club