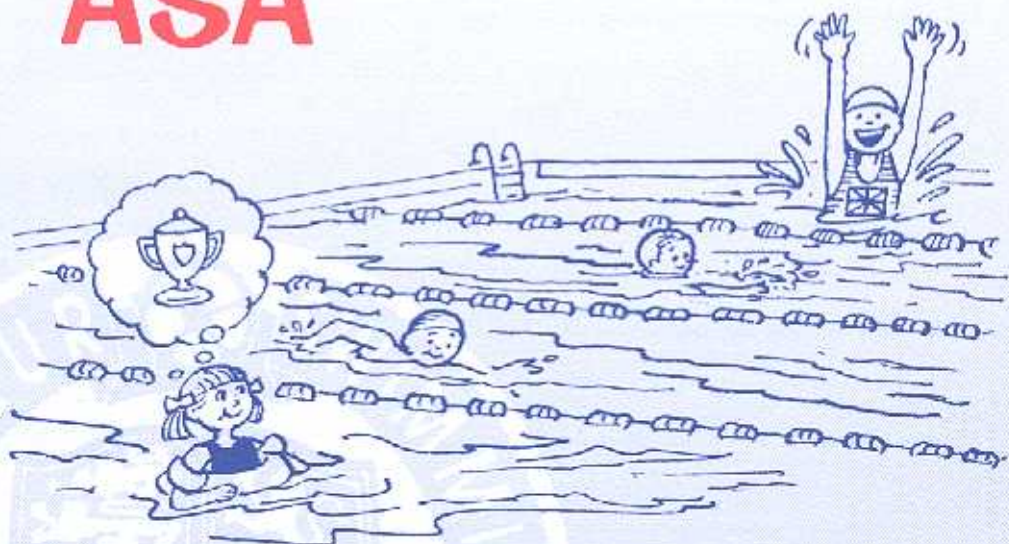




WELCOME to the ASA



Welcome to the ASA

Competitive Swimming

I would like to welcome you as a new member of the ASA Family and wish you a long and successful association with us.

This booklet is intended to introduce you to the ASA by explaining, simply, how we function and what we can do for you as you embark on a competitive swimming career. Its aim is to make you feel welcome and wanted by offering lots of useful information and advice which will ease your pathway through the sport.

I hope the guidance offered from the ASA and your Club(s) enables you to enjoy the Sport of Swimming and achieve your full potential.

Whether your aim is to be an Olympic Champion or join a swimming club to enjoy their social programme, remember, swimming is great fun. As one of the most popular sports, it has benefits for health and fitness in people of all ages, including those with disabilities. It can also open doors to participation in many other water based activities.

Whether you achieve your ultimate ambition in swimming, or not, I hope you remain in the sport and enjoy its many benefits for years to come.

Happy Swimming!

Adrian Moorhouse
Olympic Gold Medallist

About the ASA

The ASA

- ◆ Is the National Governing Body for Swimming, Diving, Water Polo and Synchronised swimming.
- ◆ Organises competition throughout England, and establishes the Laws of the Sport for each of the above disciplines.
- ◆ Supports National Teams in each of the disciplines.
- ◆ Operates a comprehensive certification and education programme for Teachers, Coaches and Officials in each discipline.
- ◆ Operates a comprehensive Awards scheme.
- ◆ Supports 1600 affiliated swimming clubs through a National/Regional/County structure.
- ◆ Communicates regularly with members through various publications.

Your Swimming Club.....

There are many types and levels of swimming club. The level your Club is working towards will depend upon the number of hours pool time available and the expertise of the coaching and teaching staff. They may not necessarily cater for all levels shown in the diagram on the previous page. The higher you aim to achieve the more training time and expertise you require to continue improving.

Some helpful hints.....

- ♦ Find out as much as you can about your Club, what it is aiming for and who runs it. Your club should be providing a well structured programme of training and competition for all its members.



- ♦ Does your swimming club keep you well informed?
- ♦ Get to know your Club staff. You should expect your teachers or coaches to be suitably qualified and to keep their knowledge up to date.
- ♦ Does your club provide all it can to assist you on your road to

SUCCESS?



The Structure of Swimming in England

- * Head Office: Harold Fern House, Derby Square
- National ASA* → * Has a professional staffing structure for all your needs.
- ↘ * Clubs register their members with the ASA.
- ↘ * There are five ASA Districts: Midland District, Northern Counties, North Eastern Counties, Southern Counties and Western Counties.
- ↗ * Clubs affiliate to relevant District ASA.
- ↗ * Each District operates through an Amateur Committee structure.
- District ASA* → * Each District is managed by an Executive Committee, members of which are elected from affiliated clubs and associations.
- ↘ * Each District organises Age Group, Senior and Masters Competitions, in most disciplines.
- ↘ * At present each District select and support representative teams to compete at home and overseas.
- ↗ * Clubs affiliate to the relevant County ASA if they wish to compete in County events.
- County ASA* → * Each County operates through an amateur committee structure as at District level.
- ↘ * Counties organise their own Championships and Competitions in some or all disciplines.
- ↘ * Counties select and support County Teams to compete in Inter-County Competitions.
- ↗ * 1600 clubs are affiliated to the ASA.
- Clubs* → * Under ASA Law a swimmer may be a member of any number of clubs.
- ↘ * In order to compete in any of the above competitions Swimmers need to be Registered with the ASA via their Club.
- ↘ * Each Club must have their Rules and Constitution approved by the District ASA and be run by an amateur committee.

What does it mean?.....

Age Groups - An abbreviation of Age Group Competitions, which are competitions organised within specific age groupings.

Competitor Card System - A system of entering events by filling in a card which is then used by the competitors stewards, timekeepers and recorders at an event.

Disqualification - A swimmer may be disqualified for various reasons, i.e. faulty stroke (if the stroke does not comply with ASA Law), faulty take-over (in a relay where one swimmer going off before the incoming swimmer has touched the end of the pool), faulty turn, false-start etc.

False Start - When a competitor dives or falls into the water before the starting signal is given. When this happens, the starter will re-call the swimmers. A rope is dropped across the pool to stop the swimmer(s) from continuing the race.

First Claim - This refers to the club of which a swimmer has the longest, unbroken membership.

Heat Declared Winner - An event (usually 200 or more) where there are too many swimmers for a straight final and the winners are decided on the times achieved in the heats.

Heats and Finals - When there are too many swimmers in an event for them all to compete in one race, that event is divided into heats or qualifying races and then the fastest swimmers go forward to the final.

Junior - In ASA promoted competitions and championships a junior swimmer is one who is under 17 years of age on the 31st December in the year of competition.

Junior Record - For District and National records a junior is a swimmer under 16 years of age on the day of the swim.

Long Course Events - Any competition held in a pool of 50 metres or 55 yards.

Nationals - An abbreviated term used to describe all National Events.

Open Events or Open Meets - Events which are open to swimmers of any affiliated club.

P.B. - An abbreviation for Personal Best, referring to a swimmer's best time to date.

Qualifying/Consideration Times - A time required by some competition organisers in order to enter an event.

Seeding - the method of arranging swimmers who have entered in an event according to their submitted time.

Short Course Events - Any competition held in a pool less than 50 metres.

Submitted Time - A time previously recorded on a stroke and distance which is submitted with an entry to enable meet organisers to "seed" the events.

Swim Off - When the number of finalists exceeds the number of lanes available by way of a dead heat or identical times. A swim off usually takes place between the competitors concerned to determine who swims in the final.

Going For Gold.....



Major International Competitions (i.e. Olympics)

Swimmers are selected for specific competition. Separate Trials may be organised for selection purposes.

National Teams

Swimmers are selected onto a National Squad at Junior, Youth and Senior levels. These selections are usually based on performances at National Events or by the achievement of a published qualifying standard.

National Events

This is the highest level of competition entered through your swimming club. Qualifying times have to be achieved.

District Events

As with County and Open events, individual entries have to be submitted for these competitions through your swimming club. Qualifying times that apply at this stage are usually more difficult than at County level.

County Events and Open (Designated) Competitions

These may be the first level of competition where a swimmer enters him or herself. Entry forms have to be completed with an entry time submitted for each swim. These events may be subject to event qualifying or consideration times, in order to control the number of entrants and the length of the programme.

Leagues:

Usually, these are one of the first introductions to team competitions. The coach will select a team to represent the club from members, this selection is usually based on previous performances.

Club galas Inter-Club

This will probably be the first experience of competition for a young swimmer. Most clubs hold an annual club gala, in which all club members can enter. Swimming clubs also enter into competitions with other clubs on a local basis, these are called inter-club events and the coach will usually select a team from club members.

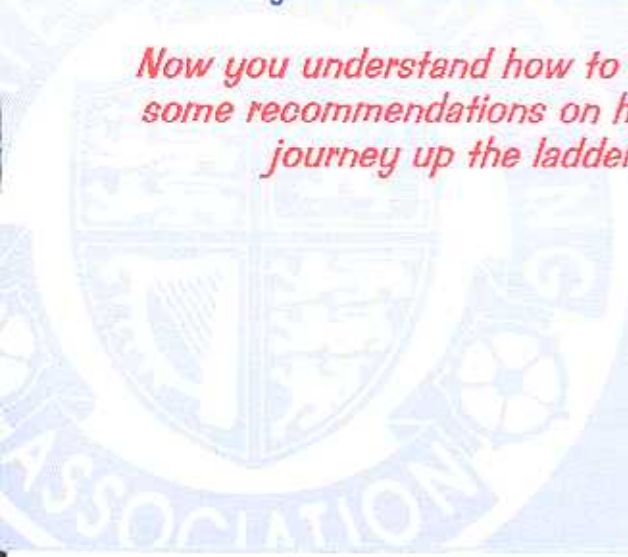


Climbing the ladder of opportunity.....

Some thoughts...

- ♦ You have seen the ladder of opportunity. Does your club offer *YOU* all that you need to reach the top of the ladder.
- ♦ You should check out your Club's competition and training structure. *Does it suit YOU!*
- ♦ Be prepared to change your situation in order to maximise your potential.
- ♦ After reading the above, do not forget that true motivation can only come from within yourself. The level you achieve will be dependant partly on your ability, but your attitude to the opportunities that are provided for you is equally important. Ultimately, it is you who is responsible for your own level of achievement.
- ♦ Above all, remember, swimming is a tough sport, do not get totally consumed with times and performances, make sure you take time out to relax and have fun.

*Now you understand how to Go for Gold - here are some recommendations on how you can plan your journey up the ladder to **SUCCESS**.*



Preparing to reach the first rung on the ladder.....

- You should master basic stroke technique and skills thoroughly. No cutting corners here otherwise you may not get past the first rung.
Remember, it is at this stage you are laying the foundations on which your future swimming career will be built.
- Competition should be fun, do not place too much emphasis on times or positions, develop your racing techniques just as you do your stroke techniques.
- Be prepared to train more than once a week, developing a skill takes time, concentration and commitment.
- Enjoy your swimming, look forward to training and competing at swim meets.



Climbing rungs 1 and 2.....

- As you are growing and getting stronger your technique will change, it is important that you continue to build on your technical skills to ensure no bad habits appear.
- Gradually increase how often and for how long you train. This will allow you to introduce more types of training, which will include flexibility and stretching exercises.
- Remember, developing performance needs increased commitment, such as, regular attendance.
- At every stage of the ladder *it is important to control the amount of competition*. Improvements in your swimming can be tested by methods other than competition. (The ASA have incorporated competitive skills, sprint and distance awards into their Awards Scheme, which can be used within clubs to measure the development of the swimmer).

Rungs 3 and 4.....

- In order to improve your performance, you will need to continue improving your technique. Technique and skills are always of primary importance.
- Increase the number and length of training sessions, as more specialised coaching methods are introduced.
- Be prepared to travel in order to access suitable training opportunities.
- At this stage your training should be planned in cycles leading towards competition
- Competitions should be selected carefully to ensure they are appropriate to your stage of development. Racing every weekend is not recommended! Be prepared to refuse to race in competitions which are of no benefit to you.
- Competitions should be used to measure personal improvement, do not place too much emphasis on racing to win.

Rungs 5 and above.....

- You should now be participating in a complete training programme, including land work. This could mean training twice daily on some occasions.
- Work cycles will continue to build on previous training.
- Remember that there is no substitute for hard work and commitment.



SWIMLINE 0808 100 400 1

Who is the ASA SwimLine for?

This service is provided for anyone involved in swimming, including children and young people who believe that the welfare of a child is at risk. This could be neglect or abuse, bullying or fear of someone, or anything that is worrying you and you don't know who to discuss this with.

Who will take the calls and what happens?

When you ring you will hear a message. This will explain that if you wish to speak to someone urgently – or it would not be convenient or safe for someone to call you back – you can press a number to transfer you straight to the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline. This will be answered by trained and experienced counsellors who will advise you and will act to protect children.

If there is no problem with someone calling back and you wish to speak to someone who understands swimming, you will need to leave your telephone number and a time convenient for one of our Child Protection Group to ring. These people are members of swimming clubs who work in child welfare as a profession and have volunteered to help this ASA programme. If there is an issue which causes concern the ASA will act to protect the child.

Other things you should know

SwimLine calls are free and do not appear on itemised bills unless the call is made from a mobile phone.

SwimLine does not use the 1471 code or any other call return or call display facilities.

If you leave a message we aim to ring back during the next working day. If you phone over the weekend we will aim to contact you on Monday.

**You can call the FREE 24 hour NSPCC Child Protection Helpline direct on 0800 800 500
If you have a textphone you can call the NSPCC textphone on 0800 056 0566.**

Comments and suggestions on how we can improve this service are welcome.

Amateur Swimming Association

Harold Fern House Derby Square Loughborough LE11 5AL

Tel 01509 618700 Fax 01509 618701

PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN WITHIN OUR SPORT



**WORRIED OR CONCERNED SWIMMER?
OR WORRIED OR CONCERNED
ABOUT A SWIMMER?
IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
OR NEED SOME ADVICE -
GIVE US A RING**



You will have two choices - If it is urgent you can transfer to the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline.

If you would rather discuss your problem with someone who understands swimming - leave a message with your daytime or evening telephone number and contact time and a member of our Child Protection Group will ring you back.



(Calls are free and do not appear on itemised bills unless the call is made from a mobile phone. We aim to ring back during the next working day.)

Useful Contacts

ASA Office:

Harold Fern House, Derby Square, Loughborough LE11 5AL
Tel: 01509 618700
Fax: 01509 618701

Competitions Department:

Tel: 01509 618762
e-mail: val.reddish@swimming.org

Membership Services:

ISTC House, 41 Granby Street, Loughborough, LE11 3DU
Tel: 01509 210012
e-mail: istc@swimming.org

Registration Services:

ISTC House, 41 Granby Street, Loughborough, LE11 3DU
Tel: 01509 210012
e-mail: registrations@swimming.org

Swimming Magazine:

Subscriptions Tel: 01509 618766

ASA Awards Centre & Publications:

Freephone: 0800 220292

Web -site: www.britishswimming.org