

**A Performance Programme for NSSC**

Your Questions Answered

**What is a Performance Programme?**

It is an education programme that supports the total athlete, it doesn’t just focus on creating a technically great swimmer. The programme encompasses the following areas:

* Swimming
* Nutrition
* Strength and conditioning (land training)
* Mindset/mental strength (including goal setting)
* Athlete support network (including an understanding of the important role that parents play)

**Why is the Club implementing a performance programme for its athletes?**

To prepare swimmers for transition on to talent pathways at university age. The focus will be on age group swimmers up to the age of 18 years, but does not preclude older swimmers from benefiting from the programme.

**How does the Optimal Athlete Development Framework (OADF) fit in?**

British Swimming has done a lot of research to understand what characteristics make up a highly successful swimmer, and they found that it’s not just about being a great swimmer. The work to understand what makes a great British swimmer looked at the characteristics of

The **PERSON,**

The **ATHLETE**, and

The **PERFORMER**

These common characteristics have been defined and shared with clubs and we have chosen to use this framework to link in with our performance programme. More information about this framework (called the Optimal Athlete Development Framework) can be found at [OADF](https://offtheblocks.info/optimal-athlete-development-framework-oadf/).

The OADF is important as it guides coaches and parents on how to nurture the attitudes and behaviours important in developing athletes of the future. In addition to these common characteristics, we will be focusing on what makes a ‘Castle swimmer special - the attributes that we value as a Club and which, we believe, are important in unlocking our swimmers’ full potential. These values are summarised at the end of this document.

**Why are we doing it now?**

Our Head Coach, John Davey, has the skills and experience (having been a GB athlete himself) to deliver a performance programme. Swim England have confirmed this and John has recently been through rigorous assessment by Swim England as part of his Senior Coach qualification.

For some time now, there has been limited access to a performance programme for swimmers in Staffordshire and Swim England are keen that we (NSSC) step up to fill this gap. The next nearest performance programmes are DX (Derbyshire) and Royal Wolves School (Wolverhampton).

**Which swimmers are able to access Newcastle’s Performance Programme?**

This programme is open to ALL members who swim at Newcastle (except Masters). There are no qualification criteria, all of our swimmers will automatically be part of the programme. The reason for this is to enable the coaches to start to embed the characteristics of a performance athlete at an early age and then continually develop swimmers as they progress through the squads. This will make it easier for swimmers to transition to a performance programme beyond Newcastle as performance habits will already be part of their DNA.

Of course, not every swimmer will go on to join a talent pathway but we believe it is important to give all swimmers the opportunity, particularly as every swimmer develops differently with some ‘shining’ at an early age and others making their mark at a later stage.

**How Will the Programme be Delivered?**

News of a more individually tailored swim training programme has already been communicated to all squads. Devised and written by John Davey, our Head Coach, this programme has then been tailored by your squad coach, meaning that the entire club will be unified in working towards common goals. The annual plan has been written to try and ensure that all squads are competing at the same points within the cycle. The cyclical nature is to ‘train’ the body and mind to swim fast at certain stages throughout the year. Having a holistic club-wide plan also helps swimmers who are transitioning between squads.

Outside of the pool programme, we will bring in experts as well as accessing support materials from Swim England. We have partnered with Adam Brigham from Adapt Health & Fitness to deliver a wide-reaching Land Training programme (including Strength and Conditioning).

We will also link in with the OADF and use support materials developed by British Swimming. From time to time, we will invite guest speakers to talk about their specialist areas in more depth.

**How will the programme change as swimmers progress through the squads?**

**Swimming Programme** – As mentioned above, this has already been communicated to all squads and will start in September. The principle of this new method is to create a more individual approach to training by using colours to represent effort and intensity. In its simplest form (for our younger squads), colours will correspond to easy, medium and hard effort levels. In the senior squads, swimmers will be working towards individual target times per stroke, distance and desired effort.

The **land training programme** will shift from an emphasis on aerobic fitness to body strength and conditioning (S&C). Strength exercises will be introduced in a carefully controlled way, as young bodies develop. Whilst swimmers are still growing, resistance training will focus on body weight only, moving on to high reps of light weights with age and body maturity. Introduction to strength training will be very much dependent on the individual’s needs and stage of development. Our senior swimmers will receive personalized S&C programmes which they will be expected to undertake in their own time.

Other aspects of the programme – **nutrition, sports psychology, parent support** – again, will be tailored according to the swimmer’s stage of development. So, for example, information on nutrition will be about the basics of good nutrition and hydration for all swimmers, with additional specific information on supporting growing bodies. Elements included in this will look at various ways to allow the body ample rest and recovery through nutrition and hydration.

**What do I need to do to get the most out of the programme?**

This is a fantastic opportunity for you to become the best swimmer that you can be. As a club, we are passionate about developing swimmers so that they reach their full potential. This might be qualifying for the County or Regional champs, making the finals at Nationals or beyond. You will all have different expectations of yourselves and different goals and you will all go on a different journey. But there are common themes - your swimming journey is about YOU, the only journey that you can influence is YOURS so focus on yourself and don’t be tempted to compare yourself against others, as you cannot control anybody’s performance but YOUR OWN.

We are giving you the tools to be the best that you can be. In return, we expect you to:

**COMMIT** to unlocking the best version of you (by focusing on yourself, by committing to training and by being open to learning)

**BE RESILIENT** to setbacks and robust under pressure (your support network, especially your parents, are important here)

**RESPECT** your coach, team mates and parents

**BE PART OF THE TEAM** (**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore so get involved)

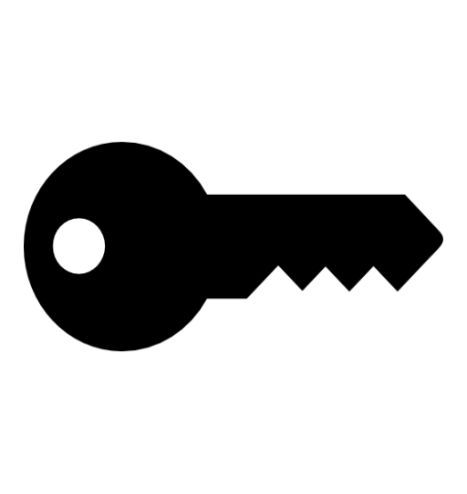
Above all**, HAVE FUN** and enjoy your journey!

**What is the Role of Parents in the swimmer’s performance programme?**

Parents play a pivotal role in supporting their swimmer through the performance programme. Parents are, on the whole, the most influential people in their young children’s life and our children will often take the lead from us. A swimmer’s enjoyment of and performance in the sport can be heavily influenced by us, sometimes unknowingly. Parents are, unquestionably, an important factor in a swimmer’s support network, alongside their coach, friends, other family members, even teachers (especially P.E. teachers). Have a look at the overview of The ‘Ideal’ Swimming Parent.

**Any questions?**

If, having read this, you have any specific questions or you think this might not be for you or your swimmer, then please do get in touch with your squad coach. Of course, we hope that you will all want to start this exciting journey with us – the next chapter in our club. Let’s **GO CASTLE!**



Parents:

* Supporting the journey
* Providing opportunities
* Matching swimmer commitment
* Respectful to coaches, volunteers & other parents

Up to Development Squad:

* Commitment to developing new habits
* Having fun

Regional – National Squads:

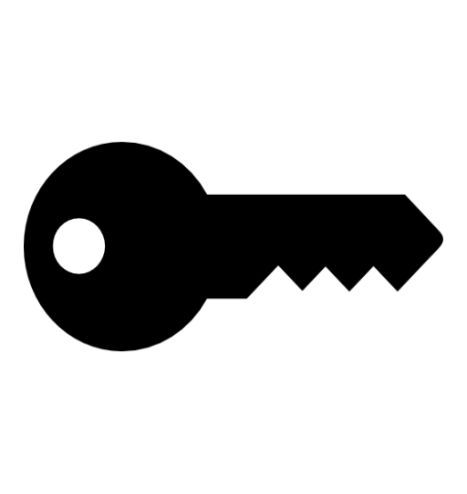
* Embedding habits
* Seeking feedback
* Continual questioning
* Proactive mindset
* High engagement & attendance levels
* A performance lifestyle

**NSSC’s Values: The keys to unlocking our swimmers’ full potential (aka ‘The Newcastle Way’)**

**“I have the personal drive & commitment to unlock the best version of me”.**

**Commitment**

**ment**



Up to Development Squad:

* Excited to learn
* Learn from trying

Regional – National Squads:

* Recognise the value of failure
* Understand the importance of the journey
* Relish pressures such as race day

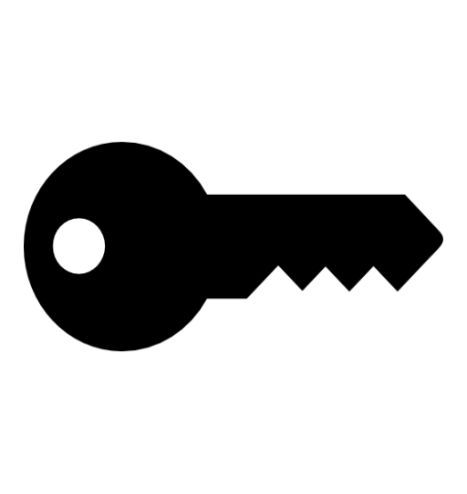
Parents:

* Support the journey
* Non-judgemental
* Focus on the process not the outcome

**“I have a positive growth mindset. I see setbacks as opportunities to learn & improve rather than reasons to make excuses, falter or give up”.**

**Resilience**

**ment**



**“I am confident but not boastful, humble in victory, graceful in defeat. I am respectful & thankful to those supporting my journey. I treat others as I would like to be treated myself”.**

Up to Development Squad:

* Open to learning
* Good listening skills

Regional – National Squads:

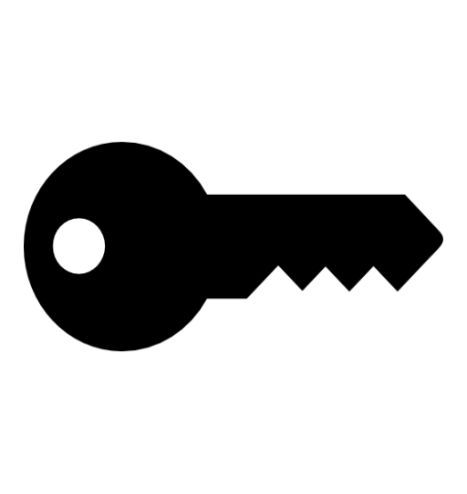
* Coachable
* Positive attitude
* Lead by example
* Can always learn something new
* ‘The Newcastle Way’

Parents:

* Understands & respects the swimmer/coach relationship
* Sets a good example
* Role model at competitions
* Accepting of & supportive of others

**Respect**

**ment**



Parents:

* Volunteer for the club
* Unconditional support for the club & its swimmers



Up to Development Squad:

* Willingness to participate in galas
* Join in with club activities

Regional – National Squads:

* Support teammates
* Show equality
* Eager for selection
* Proud to represent the club
* Mentor next generations

**Power of the Team**

**ment**

**Together Everyone Achieves More**

**“Being part of a team, we will perform better and have more fun. Pride in our club. Go Castle!”.**