**ATHLETE: Georgia Gussey
AGE: 16
EVENTS QUALIFIED: 100m Breaststroke, 200m Breaststroke, 200m Individual Medley, 400m Individual Medley**

**Georgia's Response:**

When did you first join a club / Who was your first Club?

I joined my first club which was Keynsham Amateur Swimming Club when I was 6 years old. I went through all the squads from prelims up to gold squad and that’s where my love for swimming began.

Why did you want to swim?

I wanted to swim when I was younger as I was extremely competitive and always wanted to win! I’ve grown up in a very sporty family and did all sorts when I was little such as gymnastics, dance, football, cricket, athletics but nothing compared to the feeling I got when I was swimming. I remember winning gold at the Keynsham club championships in the 50m breaststroke when I was 7 and not being able to stop smiling afterwards. I think it was from that moment that I realised swimming was my passion!

Who are/were the Coaches along your pathway who have had a big influence on you?

Along the way I’ve had many coaches that have influenced me in becoming the athlete I am today. When I was learning to swim I was taught by Olympic swimmer, Jamie King (now known as Jamie Ormshaw). She was a breaststroker which may explain why I am too. I joined Keynsham at the age of 6 and was coached by Lynne Bartlett, she coached me all the way until I was 11. She saw me at my first open meets and counties and praised my drive to become an Olympic swimmer when I was older.

When I was 11 I joined my first ever performance club, Aqua Sulis (or more commonly known as Team Bath AS). My coach was Susie Bowen and she too noticed the drive and determination I had and wanted to work with that. I went to my first Regionals in 2015 aged 11 with only 3 times; the 50, 100 and 200m breaststroke. I remember not placing very well at all but it only drove me to work harder in training and Susie could see that.

Unfortunately, Susie moved on from Aqua Sulis in 2016 when I was 12. However, I had been offered to become a Network swimmer at City Of Bristol Aquatics. I was offered a place in Age Performance with assistant head coach Marc Williams. Marc and I had a great relationship from the beginning and it’s only got better over the years. Again, Marc could see my drive and commitment so we worked very closely. In 2017, I qualified for my first Nationals! I qualified for the British Nationals in the 50m breaststroke and head coach of City Of Bristol, Matt Puddy told me that I had qualified a year early as I was only 13 and that I had lots of potential. I also qualified for the English Nationals in the 100 and 200m breaststroke and managed to final in the 100 and placed 6th. I was over the moon and Marc was extremely pleased.

After being coached by Marc for two years, at the end of 2017 I was moved up into Youth Performance at the age of 13 and was coached by Matt Puddy. However, Matt left a few months later so Marc was my coach again until a new head coach was found.

In May 2018, Lisa Atkinson became the new head coach of City Of Bristol. Me and Lisa clicked from the word ‘Go!’ She understood me very well and could see I had potential. In 2018, I qualified for the 50,100 and 200m breaststroke and the 200 and 400IM at the British Summer Nationals. Me and Lisa worked closely on the lead up to the Summer Nationals and I couldn’t of been more confident going into the competition. It was at these Nationals I made 3 finals in all breaststroke events with new PB’s and I won silver in the 100m breaststroke. I was so happy and couldn’t believe what I had achieved as the race was incredibly close. Lisa was super happy with me and both of us were excited to progress in the oncoming season.

Unfortunately, my 2018-2019 season did not go quite as I had hoped. I struggled a lot with my mindset and staying motivated due to personal issues. Lisa had a massive impact on me during this time as she kept me motivated and made sure I didn’t give up! After struggling through some tough family trauma I managed to win gold in the 200m breaststroke at the English nationals and silver in the 200m IM both with new PB’s!

All the coaches I’ve had from the beginning of my swimming career until now have taught me not just stuff in the pool but to always fight for what I believe in and NEVER give up!

Why do you still swim?

I swim because it’s unlike any other feeling! When you achieve PB’s, medals, records or you just have a good race or training session, the feeling is indescribable. Whenever I don’t feel myself or I’ve had a bad day, going training always makes me feel myself again. I also love being apart of a team as it gives me a sense of belonging. I swim because I love to push myself out of my comfort zone and working hard to improve myself not only as an athlete but as a person!

What's the best thing about being a part of CoB?

The best thing about being a part of COB is the competitive atmosphere. You can always count on you teammates to push you and motivate you in a training session. During my time at City Of Bristol I have made friends for life that are like my second family. They’ve seen at my best and at my worst but have stuck with me through the highs and lows. At COB you can be guaranteed to have teammates and coaches to share uncontrollable laughs with and have a second home!

Any other motivational info for our club members?

My main piece of advice would be to go out everyday and make your younger self proud. Always try 100% in every single training session you do because you never know when it will be your last and finally, never be satisfied. Yes, be proud of your achievements but never stop being hungry to improve and get better!