



## Lisa Atkinson

JT: This week we interviewed our one and only Head Coach; Lisa Atkinson. Lisa joined the club in autumn 2014 and has already started to make changes to make Maxwell swimmers faster, stronger and smarter. Lisa started coaching at university when she was in her university swimming team.

LN: Lisa began swimming at a young age and swam for a number of smaller clubs. Her best event was 200m Freestyle, and she has always enjoyed swimming.

JT: Lisa started coaching at university when she was in her university swimming team. Despite her best stroke being Freestyle, interestingly her favourite stroke to coach is breaststroke as it is the hardest to fully understand but now Lisa knows how it works and she enjoys seeing swimmers getting to grips with it. Lisa's knowledge of all the stroke techniques for her coaching role has meant that she has also become a better swimmer.

LN: Lisa's inspiration is Bob Bowman who is best known as the coach of record-breaking American swimmer Michael Phelps. We asked Lisa if it was always her ambition to become a Head Coach she and she told us how in her early days she wanted to be up there with the greats and spent a lot of time volunteering with some great coaches to get as much experience as possible. As her career has progressed Lisa has achieved some amazing things in her coaching life. Not only did she help many swimmers make it to Nationals, some have achieved Nationals Medals and made it to England Talent Camps.



JT: Lisa shared with us some tips and thoughts about gala's and skills in swimming. Since Lisa has come to Maxwell, her biggest challenge has been reintroducing a higher standard of skills across all the squads. She told us that the skills were the most important part of a race, such as the turns, starts and underwater work. Lisa believes that Maxwell swimmers need to work on their turns and under waters to shorten race times down to the best of our ability and she is looking to improve the speed of our underwaters, breakouts, finishes and our overall mental toughness.

Mental toughness is key. Lisa advises that if you don't achieve your targets in a race you shouldn't be disappointed as it's more important to focus on how good your skills were rather than your times and there will always be something positive about the way you swam in a particular race. Lisa also told us that at a gala keeping your energy levels even is essential to help you race through the day. This can be achieved by eating healthily and not snacking on sweets.

Nutrition is also important for training. Before training, Lisa said try not to eat for half an hour before your session starts and after your session ends, you need to have some sort of food (preferably including protein) within half an hour.

LN: Lisa being Lisa obviously said we need to practise streamline! She also told us how fast turns and good technique is the key to everything. One of



the key things she will be working with us on is not just underwater kicking, but fast underwater kicking all of the time.

JT: You might have recently been urged by your coaches to do some 200's in upcoming galas. Lisa said this is because during these races, it is easier to see what to work on as it shines a spotlight on things that breakdown throughout the race. After the race you can focus on improving these aspects to improve your times across all distances.

Finally, Lisa said the best part of being a coach is seeing swimmers get out at the end of a session/race knowing they have done well and improved.

LN: We hope this has given you lots more information about Lisa and what kind of things you can work on to improve! See you next month!