

Sean Bailey: My Journey into Elite Coaching!

Where it all began?

I was brought up in a swimming family and became a competitive swimmer at the age of 6. At 19 I started coaching for Bedford University as the Founder, President and Coach; I set up the swim team during my undergraduate study. At this time (December 2004) I also decided it was time to give something back to the club that taught me to swim (Wellingborough), therefore I helped develop younger swimmers (7-16) on a voluntary basis, the swimmers were of a county standard and a few qualified for Regional's and Nationals, this number increased when I became squad coach (Sep 2004- May 2007).

My Undergraduate in Sport Science / Masters in Sports Biomechanics:

My undergraduate degree focused on biomechanics, physiology and anatomy and sport injury rehabilitation. My undergraduate dissertation was on the influences of an aqua pacer (audible bleep) device on stroking parameters in front crawl and overall performance. I then became a voluntary Assistant Biomechanist for British Swimming during my Postgraduate Msc; this involved analysing the starts and turns of swimmers through filming and freeze framing, before discussing with the swimmers and coaches the performances. This work was voluntary once or twice a week with Jodi Crossor and Steph Lancaster (the biomechanists for British Swimming) and involved working with some of the world's greatest swimmers alongside the extremely knowledgeable Bill Sweetenham, Ben Titley and Ian Turner. Some examples of the swimmers I have worked with are James Gibson (pictured above) and Commonwealth Champions, Caitlin McClatchey and Liam Tancock.

My Msc at Loughborough University- my pathway into elite coaching:

Alongside my Biomechanics work I became an assistant coach for the three university squads on a voluntary basis at Loughborough University. This gave me the opportunity to work with three very experienced coaches: Ian Armiger (director of swimming at Loughborough University); Steve Bailey (Loughborough University Squad Coach) and Diane Bass (Loughborough University development Squad Coach). I was also involved in multiple swimming clinics at Loughborough University, which aimed at improving younger swimmers (9-16 yrs rising stars/2012 Olympic hopefuls). I helped prepare many of the university swimmers for the GB champs, European Champs and even the 2006 Commonwealth Games, coaching swimmers such as: Chris Cozens, Julie Douglas, and Amy Smith. I assisted in the British University short and long course Championships (BUSA) and the British National Championships where many of the Loughborough swimmers won medals and qualified for the European championships.

Working with disability swimmers in both the elite and local field:

Throughout my university career I continued to teach swimming at my local swimming pool, these swimming lessons involved teaching children to swim with a range of disabilities (dwarfism, downs syndrome, hearing impaired, visual impaired etc). I also progressed through from a lifeguard to leisure centre manager and set up and ran the water polo club. These experiences enabled me to develop a better awareness of the needs of all individuals and how to ensure all children progress and are successful. Building from this experience, my Msc thesis involved researching what influences body roll in front crawl, in both able bodied and arm amputee swimmers. This involved poolside and underwater high-speed cameras, velocity meters and a balsa wood fin

to establish the body roll angle through digitization. Working with elite disability swimmers was another new experience whereby I learnt the phenomenal capabilities that these athletes can achieve. Each athlete has a different story and it was amazing to have the opportunity to work in this field of the sport.

Six years as a 'Pinkie' (Employed as Assistant Head Coach at Hatfield Swimming Club):

Through coaching at Loughborough University I have met many elite coaches, I developed a strong friendship with Nick Juba at the British University Championships. He invited me to Hatfield and as of September 2006 I was employed as the Assistant Head Coach. At Hatfield I have been involved with coaching children to an International standard. I am responsible for multiple squads and over the years have built the lower end of the club up to be extremely successful. My first major achievement was winning the Hertfordshire Peanut League in my second year. The club had not won the title in 20 years; however since then we have retained the title yearly.

Following this I was selected to Head Coach the National Inter-County team from 2007 and I have done this every year, up to this present day, on a voluntary basis aiming for a top 10 finish. The county team best finishing place was 5th in the Premier Division in 2007. I have also been selected by the ASA to coach on multiple England Talent Camps, helping prepare some of the best swimmers in the country for European Juniors etc. I started on the level 1 camps, working with national champions and multiple national finalists. In the last two years I have progressed and coached on the level two talent camps, which have the main focus of developing the up and coming national youth stars, to take them onto being successful on the international stage. This has provided me with valuable coaching experience with national and international athletes.

Over the years I have developed the lower end of Hatfield Swimming Club to ensure that the age group swimmers have the foundations that they need to become international athletes. The best way to assess this is to look at the age group results both Regionally and Nationally, to see how the club has progressed since my employment. My first year at Hatfield involved only a hand full of swimmers qualifying for the East Region Age Groups, however since then it has spiraled and the number of qualifiers and medals have vastly increased. The medal tallies at these events are as follows:

East Region Age Group Medals	National Age Group Titles / Medals
2009: 8 GOLD, 7 SILVER, 11 BRONZE = CLUB RANKING 6 th	2009: 3 NATIONAL TITLES / GOLD MEDALS
2010: 2 GOLD, 8 SILVER, 9 BRONZE = CLUB RANKING 10 th	2010: 3 NATIONAL TITLES / GOLD MEDALS, 2 SILVER, BRONZE
2011: 21 GOLD, 14 SILVER, 16 BRONZE = CLUB RANKING 2 nd	2011: 11 NATIONAL TITLES / GOLD MEDALS, 4 SILVER, 1 BRONZE
2012: 44 GOLD, 24 SILVER, 16 BRONZE = CLUB RANKING 1 st	2012: 6 NATIONAL TITLES / GOLD MEDALS, 5 SILVER, BRONZE

Two of the national titles in 2011 were in the Boys relays and these results made us the top male club and the 2nd overall club in the country. 2012 was an amazing year as I had the opportunity to coach at the London Aquatics Centre for the British Championships (Olympic Trials), working with Hatfield's most successful swimmers. This included 15 swimmers who qualified and consisted of athletes of an international standard

(Adam Brown, Caleb Hughes, Shauna Lee). I was directly responsible for our leading disability swimmer Lauren Smith (who has been working closely with me to achieve her dreams of going to the Paralympics), Martyn Walton and Nico Campbell who are our young stars of the future on the border of international success. I finished the 2012 season in spectacular style winning both top club at the East Region Age Group Championships and the National Age Group Championships. The above results help to justify my belief that I am running one of the most successful age group programs in the UK.

Swimming has always been my main interest and always will be, I find being able to help a swimmer reach their maximum potential very rewarding. It was time for the start of a new era at the close of 2012 I became the Director of Swimming for Rushmoor Royals Swimming Club.

Director of Swimming (Head Coach) Rushmoor Royals 2012-2108:

I spent 6 years developing RRSC in terms of size the club grew due to success breeding success and the mechanisms I implanted to provide a balance program that catered for all. The learn to swim program near enough doubled in size and we gained over 100 swimmers in the main club over the 6 year period. From a staffing point of view the club went from having an assistant head coach to 3 full time coaches working with me.

With regards to results we achieved many incredible accolades over this period, from making the National Arena League B final to becoming the dominant club in Hampshire for many years. This in turn produced multiple Regional / National medalists. The highest achievers represented the South East Region Internationally and went onto British Champs where the club year on year had multiple qualifiers. I had two swimmers (Angharad Eburne & George Emmins) under half a second off qualifying for the European junior championships so all in all I would consider this to be a successful program.

So what made me leave?

Becoming a father and joining FSC:

Early 2018 I had the joys of becoming a father to my incredible daughter Ellie and fairly quickly realised my lifestyle did not leave much room for parenting and that I wanted to get back to my roots and focus on coaching. I have always admired FSC as a club and had great admiration for its community feel and ambitious nature.

So very quickly found my new home, over the last year I have been made to feel incredible welcome and recognised for my achievements and passion for the sport that has given me so much. I have aided in increasing the number of County qualifiers and over the last year and have found a great sense of achievement with aiding swimmers to get their Regional base times at age group level.

I feel this is a programme that has so much potential and certainly looking forward to expanding and developing my role further when the opportunity arises.

IF YOU GOT THIS FAR THANK YOU 😊

