



## CULTS OTTERS AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB

### Squad Structure & Guidelines

1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

#### Development Section

Children who are confident in the water can progress from their Learn to Swim Program to a more structured coaching environment where, although the emphasis is on FUN, they will focus on technique and improving skills in the water. Children should be able to swim a length of front crawl and backstroke and a width of breaststroke.

The club provides swimming instruction to children who have mastered the basic strokes and who wish to improve their technique with a view to becoming competitive swimmers. There are 2 levels in the Development section, Orcas and Cubs. Children who meet the selection criteria are invited for a trial with one of the development squads and depending on ability may progress from swimming lessons into Orcas, Cubs or JS1.

Swimmers parents/guardians are also encouraged to become involved with the club as their swimmer progresses through the squads. Initially this will be attending a Timekeeper course whilst their swimmer is in the Development Section, and then embarking on Judge training during JS1 & JS2, with an aim to be a Judge 2 by the time their swimmer enters the senior squads of JS3 and JS4. The club also needs other volunteer support in its general day to day running which is open to all squad parents/guardians from Orcas upwards.

#### Orcas

The Orcas swim two times each week. The focus is on good technique in each stroke including front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke and learning the basics of butterfly at 25m or 50m distances. The emphasis is on participation and having fun. Orcas swim at fun galas and the club championships every year (for ages 8 and over).

Orcas entry requirements: Aberdeen City Learn to Swim Level 4 or Club Ready (or equivalent). Being able to swim 2x25m Front crawl, 2x25m Backstroke. 15m Breaststroke, 10m Butterfly and kick showing a good basic technique are good additions.

#### Orca Guidelines

- Attend regularly and be willing to listen and learn
- Always bring hat, water bottle, spare goggles, kickboard and fins.
- Enter Development Fun Galas as advised by coaches.

#### Cubs

Cubs swim three times a week, including a morning session, with a requirement to attend at least two of these sessions. The emphasis is on improving technique in all 4 strokes, including turns and dives, and maintaining good technique to provide the foundation for progressing to slightly longer distances. Cubs start to learn lane discipline, how to use the pacing clock and the basic competition rules. Cubs swim in fun and Novice Galas (if aged 8 years+) and also in the Club Championships, plus an additional junior meet aimed at swimmers competing for the first time,



Cubs entry requirements: Swim 50m Front crawl, 50m Backstroke, 25m Breaststroke, 15m Butterfly and kick, showing a good technique and attempting correct turns.

### Cubs Guidelines

- Attend Cubs sessions and be willing to listen and learn.
- Always bring hat, water bottle, kickboard, fins & spare goggles; a swimming snorkel would be a useful addition.
- Enter Fun Galas and/or Club Champs & Novice Galas as advised by coaches.

## Competitive Section

Cults Otters Junior Squads – JS1, JS2, JS3 and JS4 – aim to introduce swimmers to competitive swimming with a more intensive training programme at the Cults pool. There is a smooth progression of swimming distances from 50's to 200's and further, and from Novice Galas to District and National level competitions.

### JS1 – Junior Squad 1

JS1 is the first competitive squad level. Swimmers continue to focus on improving swimming skills and stroke technique. Short skill-based training sets are introduced to develop all four swimming strokes. Swimmers now swim four times each week which includes one morning training session. Swimmers compete in local novice and graded galas, beta leagues and the Club Championships throughout the year.

### JS1 Guidelines

- Attend 3 out of 4 training sessions per week initially, increasing to all sessions prior to promotion to JS2.
- Always bring hat, water bottle, fins & spare goggles to training; a swimming snorkel is also required.
- Enter 1 to 2 galas per term as advised by squad coach.
- Show positive attitude towards coaching team, training and competition.

### JS2 – Junior Squad 2

Swimmers move into JS2 when they have mastered the basic techniques and need to start improving stamina and training ability. Swimmers continue to work on stroke technique and some endurance work is introduced. To start developing racing skills it is important that at this level swimmers take a more active role in galas and commit to attend Beta League matches and recommended graded galas, both locally and further afield (e.g. Alford, Buckie and Peterhead), in addition to the Club Championships. Land training may also be introduced to begin to further develop core strength, coordination, agility and teamwork.



## JS2 Guidelines

- Attend 75% of all available training sessions.
- Always bring hat, water bottle, fins, kickboard, snorkel & spare goggles to training.
- Enter 2 to 3 galas per term as advised by squad coach.
- Show positive attitude towards coaching team, training and competition.

## JS3 – Junior Squad 3

Swimmers move into JS3 when they are ready to develop into more competitive swimmers and have completed 10 out of 12 skills on the progress report. The primary focus is still on improving stroke technique but now aiming to hold good technique over longer distances. More advanced training sets and endurance training are introduced. JS3s will swim five times each week (6-7 hours), including an early morning, and a long course session; on deck land-based training may also be introduced. Swimmers start to compete at open age group meets and aim to qualify and compete at district level meets. Swimmers performance is monitored by regular marker sets and at competition.

## JS3 Guidelines

- Attend 80% of all available training sessions.
- Always bring water bottle, fins, kickboard, pull-buoy, snorkel & spare goggles to training.
- Enter any target meet as advised by the coach and any North District events when qualifying times have been achieved. Minimum of 2 to 3 meets per term.
- Show positive attitude towards coaching team, training & competition, taking responsibility for own fitness e.g. start mobilizing prior to session without reminder.

## JS4 – Junior Squad 4

Swimmers are promoted to JS4 once they start to work more independently and show they can focus & train hard, complete 10 out of 12 requirements on the progress report, have a positive attitude and are regularly competing at District Level. JS4s swim five times each week (6-7 hours), including an early morning, and a long course session. Building on the skills learnt in JS3, the JS4s continue to focus on technique, endurance & speed and on pacing & racing skills. Swimmers continue to compete at local & District Level, with an occasional gala out of District, and aim to qualify for the Scottish National Age Group Meet.

## JS4 Guidelines

- Attend 80% of all available training sessions.
- Always bring hat, water bottle, fins, kickboard, pull buoy, snorkel & hand paddles to training.
- Enter any target meet as advised by the coach and North District or National events when qualifying times have been achieved. Minimum of 2 to 3 meets per term.
- Show positive attitude towards coaching team, training & competition.
- Take responsibility for own fitness.



## JS4 Club Connect

JS4 swimmers with great attitude, focus, work ethic and attendance may be offered an extra swim session with the University of Aberdeen's Performance Program. Similar swimmers from each of the University's partner clubs train together once each week and are coached by the University's performance coaches.

## CC Guidelines

- Communicate with both Cults Otters and UoA coaches.
- Maintain JS4 attendance (CC is an additional training session to the regular program).
- Take responsibility for your training and goals.

## UoA – University of Aberdeen Performance Swim Team.

Once swimmers reach the required level of performance and skill, they can be invited to move into the University of Aberdeen Performance Swimming program, which aims to take swimmers to National level competition. JS4 swimmers achieving National event qualification times or several District Championship times may be considered for a promotion to UoA. Selection is based on the swimmer's endeavours in the CC squad and on their attitude, training ability, attendance and performance. Cults Otters joining UoA remain Cults Otters swimmers but now join UoA for training and competition. UoA guidelines and codes of conduct are now followed

This program is run in conjunction with Aberdeen Sports Village together with Scottish Swimming and draws in swimmers from five Aberdeen clubs (Cults Otters ASC, Bridge of Don ASC, Dyce ASC, Bucksburn ASC and Bon Accord Thistle ASC). The program is centered in the 50 m pool in the Aberdeen Sports Village.

## Youth Development Squad

The Youth Squad is for open to all secondary school age swimmers up to 16 years of age, who because of exams or other commitments are unable to commit to the full training programme in a competitive squad. These swimmers still want to train, improving their swimming technique with the intention of either joining the other competitive squads or maintaining swim fitness. Swimmers entering this programme must have gone through a recognized swimming programme and are capable of swimming at least 50 – 100m. This is a non-competitive squad which will train for a single 90minute session weekly at the Cults Pool - sets will be created based on individual swimmer requirements.

## Youth Development Squad Guidelines

- Attend Friday night training session.
- Bring own swim kit to the session (float, pull buoy, fins, snorkel, hand paddles etc).
- Take responsibility for own fitness.



## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL SWIMMERS

- Inform the lead squad coach if unable to attend a session.
- Provide details of any health issues & make sure inhalers etc are poolside if needed.
- Arrive poolside ready to mobilize 5 minutes before the session starts (ensure coach is present before coming poolside).
- Enter galas as advised and inform squad coach if unable to attend all sessions at a gala.
- Support teammates at galas by remaining poolside until the end of each session.
- Respect fellow swimmers, club officials and coaches.

## GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Parents play an important role in supporting their swimmers and must:

- Ensure that a coach is present before leaving a swimmer at the pool and *arrive early to collect their swimmer in good time at the end of the session.*
- Qualify as timekeeper whilst swimmers are in the Development Section & embark on judge training in JS1/2.
- Respect club members, officials and coaches – we are volunteers!

## SQUAD MOVEMENTS

Squad movements are considered on a series of set criteria based attitude, effort & attendance at training & galas before all promotions. In order to move squads, swimmers need to complete 10 out of 12 skills on the progress report. Swimmers showing readiness for the next squad will be invited by their coach, to link with the next squad for a minimum of 4 weeks prior to promotion as a series of 'bridging sessions'. These sessions will be to introduce the swimmer to the new training environment. Bridging may be extended at the request of Coach or Swimmer. New Swimmers joining the Club or moving squad will be on probation for 1 month.

A swimmer may also be moved to a more appropriate squad if fitness levels fall, for example after illness, or if attendance drops below the acceptable level for a squad.