

Remodelling of the Swimming Performance Pathway in Derbyshire



Introduction

ClearView Futures produced a report in February of this year, which began the process of reviewing the Performance pathway for swimming in Derbyshire. This concluded that the current model has been very successful in some respects, but equally that it has some flaws and that now may be a good time to review and improve the model. The report proposed some important principles and these should be carefully considered within the new model as it is developed over the next few months.

Some important Principles

- The Performance Pathway is critical
- Selection needs to be against clear performance criteria and bar set high
- Model needs to become more financially robust and sustainable
- Pool time issues need to be resolved
- Travel time for swimmers needs to be reduced
- The “jump” for swimmers between levels must not be too great
- Clubs need to be more closely involved and feel a greater sense of contributing to the success of the pathway and be better recognised when swimmers achieve success
- Needs to be a strong coach pathway running alongside coach pathway and a sense of a coaching team in the county contributing to the success
- Need to eradicate sense of north south split in squad
- Need to ensure the pathway caters appropriately for swimmers all over the county – not just in the south

Whilst this paper might be viewed as a review of Derwentio eXcel (DX) at the performance end of the player pathway, the scope is much wider than this. The purpose of the review is to build a system within swimming clubs in the County, based on the best practice principles of swim21, which gives the sport the best opportunity to achieve success in all its guises, from learn to swim to Olympic gold.

The Consultation Process

This truly is an open consultation process. Nothing has been decided at this time and the views of the many individuals and organisations involved are being sought in order that the right decisions can be taken.

During May 2009 there will be consultations within DX, and throughout Derbyshire clubs and coaches via open meetings. Comments and ideas can also be posted on the Derbyshire ASA (DASA) web site throughout this period. All of the views and opinions will be gathered and will be fed into a meeting to be held on 28th May, when the options will be refined based upon all of the feedback received.

A revised proposal will then be issued on the 2nd June and again widely circulated for comment. Further open meetings will be held within the following 2 weeks and it is hoped to finalise and publish a model by the 16th June 2009.

Financial Modelling

Whilst it is important to start the process of remodelling by exploring a system to optimise performance and athlete pathway, clearly any such system needs to be affordable. Financial principles are proposed within these papers, and the figures presented should be regarded as indicative rather than actual. There are so many variables such as the number of swimmers, the location and cost of pools, the number of coaching hours etc that accurate costing of models at this time is difficult. The preferred model which emerges through this stage of consultation will be accurately assessed prior to circulation for 2nd round consultation in June.

The cost of pools clearly has a major impact on the viability of any performance programme. To this end, key personnel from DASA, East Midland ASA (EMASA) and Derbyshire Sport are working with Local Authority and pool providers to ensure adequate access to water time is available.

Options

Two options are presented for debate and discussion. This is not simply an either or situation. Consultees are invited to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each and to recommend improvements or amendments. It may be that the model which emerges is one of the 2 proposed or a mixture of the two, or it may be that a better model altogether emerges from the consultation.

This is a true consultation. Nothing has yet been decided and the views of the many people involved in the swimming performance pathway in Derbyshire are truly being sought

OPTION ONE

Description

This model is Countywide and has 3 layers above club level – Development Squads, B Squad and A Squad. The Head Coach will have an overview of whole programme. Club coaches will be involved as part of the coaching team at all three levels. Definition of the North is suggested to be anything from Clay Cross and further north and South further south than Matlock. Currently there are a greater number of swimmers in the South.

Squad	Description	Swimmer numbers	Swimmer Fees
A	<p>Top swimmers in the county in the “A” squad. 20 hrs/week. North and South squads train separately for 15 hrs a week with head coach spending equal time at both squads on weekly basis. Whole squad together for 5 hrs week in Amber Valley</p> <p>Asst coaches recruited from FT/PT coaches working in Derbyshire clubs to support this A squad. Some additional payments made to these coaches. Real sense of coaching team developed.</p> <p>Swimmers compete for DX at agreed meets Swimmers entitled to attend DX camps</p>	25	<p>£100 membership £75 per month (x12) fees (£25000)</p>

<p>B</p>	<p>Selected as swimmers on way up, but also place for swimmers displaced from A squad. Swimmers train with North and South squads for the 15 hrs a week, but not within the 5 hours in Amber Valley – although can be invited to these additional sessions.</p> <p>Programmes under Head Coach guidance and Head Coach regularly on pool side with A and B in North and South. Asst coaches recruited from FT/PT coaches working in Derbyshire clubs to support the A/B squad sessions</p> <p>Swimmers compete for DX at agreed meets Swimmers entitled to attend DX camps</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>£100 membership £60 per month (x12)fees (£12300)</p>
<p>Development Squads</p>	<p>3 or 4 development squads – based at agreed clubs. Swimmers identified for potential.10-15 hours/week. Coached by club coach.</p> <p>1 session a month at A and B squad sessions coached by Head Coach Swimmers compete for DX at 1 selected development meet per year Swimmers entitled to attend DX domestic camps</p>	<p>30 in total</p>	<p>£20 membership £10 per month fees (£4200)</p>

Headline Budget Implications – Option 1

Income from swimmers will depend on fees agreed and number of swimmers – based on numbers shown income circa £45k per annum. Open meet income circa £15k. All other income need to be raised from grants including DASA, ASA and Local Authorities – projected £15k per annum. Relatively secure income on this model circa £75k. Other income sources will need to be secured through sponsorship and fund raising events.

Costs will include; coaching fees circa £55k, pool hire circa £40k, other costs circa £10k. This model will almost certainly need more secure income each year or reduced pool hire costs, to become viable.

Option One - SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of progression • “B” squad is a holding place for swimmers on way up but also swimmers whose standards drop • Standards will dictate number of swimmers at each level, not financial modelling • Smoother transition between levels • Strongest club coaches are active as part of DX coaching team and a stronger coaching team emerges • Reasonable number of swimmers connected but “A” and “B” squad still smallish number • Travelling time reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squad still dispersed • Needs ‘buy in’ from a large number of people and clubs • Pool space still a challenge • Timescale to implement • Head coach travelling • Similar to current model • Grants & other funding needed
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance pathway focussed • Creates a strong coach network • Sponsorship & other funding • Performance improves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial model • Question over the numbers of swimmers at required level • Lack of ‘buy in’ from clubs/coaches • Pool space • Credit crunch • Other performance set ups • Egos or apathy • Performance drops

OPTION TWO

Description

This option seeks to overcome the key challenges of the current system and in particular shortage of pool time and reducing the travel times for swimmers for either early morning or early evening training - creating a more athlete centred approach.

Some coaches have expressed concerned about the split coaching within model 1 and the effect of 5 hours away from the performance program. In addition, it has been highlighted that probably 3 clubs in the County can already offer 20 hours per week in their own water time (albeit sharing lanes and perhaps not “quality time”) and the query whether those swimmers would move from their home club to a program that has the logistical problems as outlined above.

This option proposes one County Squad, but accepting that the lack of numbers in the north has an impact upon the financial viability. Therefore, instead of 18 hours with DX and 2 with hub club, this model proposes 18 hours within the Chesterfield structure, but still operating as a DX squad with the training program agreed with the DX chief coach. For the other 2 hours, the swimmers would swim together with the entire DX squad (probably at a weekend, when long travelling is not such a problem).

The swimmers would pay their fees to DX, with recompense to Chesterfield for the additional resources required.

South

Middle (Amber Valley pools - Alfreton, Heanor etc) and South (Derby) groups would train together in their facilities for 18 hours and then train in Hub Squads within clubs for 2 hours. The swimmers from the North would then train with the swimmers from the South for 2 hours as above (weekend base).

Swimmers will move into DX only from a hub club and they can only compete for their home club in Derbyshire / leagues etc. The promotion for the swimmers will be again on achieving a strict Qualifying Time (QT) and swimmers will return to their Hub Squad if they do not keep achieving their QT. Selections will occur twice per year – probably April and September.

Hub Squads

The Hub Squads will be based around 3 of the stronger/larger clubs. Access to the Hub Squad will be from a feeder club or from one of the three clubs – but will be via achieving QT's and this will be strictly adhered to.

The Hub Squads will work within the three clubs, but the coaches will work closely with the chief coach of DX to agree the format of the training sessions. The swimmers are available to move from their “home” clubs to the Hub Squad within one of the three stronger clubs. This move is upon an achievement of an open and publicised set of QT's. Any swimmer moving into the Hub Squad”, is on a fast track to DX and they must commit to the training sessions available to them within the Hub Squad and the long term training required to move to the performance squad.

The swimmers become a member and training fees are paid to the Hub Squad but compete for their “home” club at all times.

Feeder

To help the swimmers to move forward in their swimming career, prior to any move to a Hub Squad, swimmers will be able to access monthly “top up” sessions. These sessions will be technical in nature and designed to work with and compliment their training at their home club.

Squad	Description	Swimmer numbers	Swimmer Fees
DX1 (South)	<p>Top swimmers in Derbyshire. 20 hours/week. South Squad for 18 hours/week.</p> <p>Head Coach spending equal time at North and South squads on weekly basis.</p> <p>Squad return to Hub Squads for 2 hours a week at weekends</p> <p>Squad Coaches to support this squad. Some additional payments made to these coaches/clubs.</p> <p>Swimmers compete for DX at agreed meets Swimmers entitled to attend DX camps</p>	20	<p>£100 membership £75 per month fees</p> <p>(£20,000)</p>
DX1 (North)	<p>Top swimmers in Derbyshire. 20 hours/week. North Squad for 18 hours/week within Chesterfield Hub</p> <p>Head Coach spending equal time at North and South Squads on weekly basis.</p> <p>Whole Squad together for 2 hours/week at a weekend within South Hub Squads</p> <p>Squad Coaches to support this squad. Some additional payments made to these coaches/clubs</p> <p>Swimmers compete for DX at agreed meets Swimmers entitled to attend DX camps</p>	10	<p>£100 membership £75 per month fees</p> <p>(£10,000)</p>

Hub Squads	<p>3 development Hub Squads feeding into DX. Swimmers identified for potential and train with Hub Squads. Locations for Hub Squads to be agreed with clubs – but ideally with the strongest clubs</p> <p>Swimmers compete for their home club Swimmers compete for DX at 1 selected development meet per year Swimmers entitled to attend DX domestic camps</p>	20	<p>£20 membership to DX £? per month fees to hub club</p> <p>(£400)</p>
Club & Coach Squads	<p>3 development clusters feeding into the Hub Squads. Swimmers identified for potential.</p> <p>Coached by Club & Coach 2hrs per month</p> <p>Swimmers compete for DX at 1 selected development meet per year</p>	30	<p>£20 membership £10 per month fees</p> <p>(£4,200)</p>

Headline Budget Implications – Option 2

Income from swimmers will depend on fees agreed and number of swimmers – based on numbers shown income circa £35k per annum. Open meet income circa £15k. All other incomes need to be raised from grants including DASA, ASA and Local Authorities – projected £15k per annum. Relatively secure income on this model circa £65k. Other income sources will need to be secured through sponsorship and fund raising events.

Costs will include; coaching fees circa £55k, pool hire circa £20k, other costs circa £10k. The costs within this model are reduced, but this model will also need more secure income each year or reduced pool hire costs, to become viable.

Option Two - SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weakness
Coaches working together Swimmers from "hub" clubs train together Lose perceived athlete elitism problems The gap between top of a club and DX is smoothed out Better athlete pathway Better cooperation between clubs Reduced costs Better use of pool space	Squad still dispersed Needs 'buy in' from a large number of people and clubs Smaller numbers for financial viability Timescale to implement
Opportunities	Threats
Performance pathway focussed Creates a strong coach network Can adapt for specialisms Sponsorship & other funding Performance improves	Financial model Lack of 'buy in' from clubs/coaches Pool space Credit crunch Other performance set ups Ego's or apathy Performance drops

This is an “Open” consultation process, so all comments are welcome. Comments can be posted on the DASA website (subject to decency, defamatory etc standards, or sent via email.

To assist in the collation of comments and redesign of the models, it would be helpful to capture comments under similar headings, across the various consultation events. The following questions are proposed

It is important to note that this round of consultation is about collecting the questions – those managing the consultation may not have the answers at this stage, but by gathering the questions and challenges, answers can be designed into the next draft of the model which is to be produced at the beginning of June.

Consultation Questions

1. What are the Pros and Cons for Model 1?
2. Could there be any amendments or improvements which could make this the preferred model?
3. If this is a preferred model, what would have to be in place for Model 1 to work?
4. What are the Pros and Cons for Model 2?
5. Could there be any amendments or improvements which could make this the preferred model?
6. If this is a preferred model, what would have to be in place for Model 2 to work?
7. Is there an alternative model you would like to propose or comments to record?