



# Grangemouth Triathlon Club

## Junior Swim Squads Policy

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide structure and guidance around selection of junior members for each of the swim squads and set out criteria for movement between squads.

The policy lays out the commitments made by Grangemouth Triathlon Club, and informs members, coaches, coaching assistants, parents, and associated personnel of how decisions will be made on allocating junior members to ability squads.

### **Scope:**

All members, coaches, coaching assistants, and parents in relation to swim training whilst participating in club sessions.

### **Policy Statement:**

The committee of Grangemouth Triathlon Club believes all junior members should feel equally valued irrespective of athletic ability. However, it is recognised that for the smooth running of swim training sessions and for the benefit of junior members in both enjoying and obtaining benefit from sessions, it is necessary to group junior members alongside members of similar athletic ability and with similar aspirations. In doing so, it is recognised that as athletes develop, it is of benefit to their development to provide incentives, recognise improvement but also that not all athletes are motivated by competition.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Club's Safeguarding Policy.

### **Method:**

Grangemouth Triathlon Club will provide a structure of multiple swim squads which will be identifiable through the use of a different colour of swim cap for each squad. Athletes will be allocated to a squad on joining the club and meeting a minimum standard. It is envisaged that athletes will be able to progress through squads as they mature and develop their athletic ability. The use of coloured caps will apply to members up to and including the age of 17 years.

A junior athlete will be permitted to take part in club swim sessions from the age of eight years and once they are able to swim 2 lengths of front crawl continuously. Of note, the Club

recognises that coaches are trained to coach swimmers who already have basic swimming skills in multiple strokes and are not trained to teach “how to swim” for those who do not possess these basic skills. The inability to swim will not preclude an athlete joining the club and participating in bike and run sessions. They will, however, not be permitted to participate in swim sessions until they have reached the required standard.

The minimum standard for an athlete to achieve to enter the first level squad (yellow) will be to swim four lengths front crawl with no rest and minimal hesitation at the end of each length. It is not expected that technique will be to a high standard, however an athlete should be able to demonstrate breathing to one or both sides consistently throughout the four lengths.

Squads will use the following cap colours however these may be subject to change depending on the needs of athletes and the club as a whole:

- Yellow – Basic Level
- Green – 1<sup>st</sup> Developer Level
- Blue – 2<sup>nd</sup> Developer Level
- Red – Competitive Swimmer Level
- Black – Elite Level

With the exception of the “black” squad there will be no set times required to move between squads. Whilst times for 100m, 200m or 400m will be used to assess which squad an athlete best fit into, threshold times will vary to ensure the size of each squad remains relatively equitable. In addition, other criteria will be considered including an athlete’s age and level of maturity, application to training and overall athletic ability. For example, some athletes may be able to record a particular 200m time but may struggle to maintain the pace of the squad over a full 45 minute – 1 hour session.

In general terms, of those members who have met the minimum standard, approximately 20% of the junior members will form each squad. Whilst athletes may be moved up from one squad to another, except in exceptional circumstances, no squad should consist of more than 30% of the junior membership. From time to time, in order to spread the membership evenly over the squads, it may become necessary to re-structure the squads. Any restructuring will be done by at least three coaches and will not result in any athlete being allocated to a lower squad than that in which they were previously.

In order to be allocated to the “black” squad, athletes will be expected to record a time over 400m of less than 6:40. This time may be amended from time to time to ensure that the number likely to attend any session, who are members of the black squad, can be accommodated in a single lane. For a 25m pool this would be six athletes. This figure may be exceeded based on the expectation that certain members are unlikely to attend regularly. For example, when athletes remain members but are attending college or university away from the local area.

The coaching team will assess athletes twice a year at the beginning and end of each competition season to establish whether any athletes merit a change in category. On reaching the age of 18 athletes will be expected to attend adult training sessions. Where an exception is made to this, an athlete aged 18 or over will not be issued with a coloured cap but will train with the most appropriate squad as determined by the lead junior coach.

Where it is identified that junior athletes may benefit from additional swim training, athletes aged 14 years or over will be permitted to swim in one session per week with adult members where additional protective measures are in place. At the time of writing, this will be the Tuesday early morning session. To be permitted to access this session athletes must be in the red or black squads and a parent or guardian must be present at the session as either a swimmer, coach, pool responder or spectator. Junior athletes will swim in a separate lane from adult athletes or in the same lane as their parent or guardian.