



Portmarnock Swim Team 26/27 season

Portmarnock Swim Team is an amateur competitive swimming club. The Team aims to provide the structure and environment to encourage and allow all members to develop their highest level of performance.

Our coaches are committed to developing young swimmers in a fun, positive, challenging and supportive club environment. The culture of the Team is athlete-focused, coach-driven and committee-supported, and is based on the “Long Term Athlete Development” (L.T.A.D.) framework. L.T.A.D. seeks to achieve optimal training, competition and recovery throughout a swimmer’s career, particularly in relation to the important growth and development years of young people. For many years, the Team has maintained a squad structure that aimed to afford swimmers the opportunity to develop the technique, skills, endurance and speed that is necessary for competitive swimming, in line with the principles of L.T.A.D.

For the 2024/2025 season, the PST made a number of key changes to its squad structure, increasing pool time for swimmers and clarifying the competitive aims of each squad.

Following the 2025/2026 season, in the spirit of continuous improvement, the squad descriptions have been further refined. The purpose of this document is to allow parents and swimmers alike to understand the goals and expectations of each squad within our team, as well as the path for progression.

Learning & Improvement squads

Who is this squad for?

In order to join Portmarnock swim team, swimmers must be:

- at least 7 years of age
- capable of swimming 1 full length (25m) of front crawl with appropriate breathing
- capable of swimming 1 full length (25 m) of back crawl.

Swimmers in this squad range in ages from 7 - 12 years old.

What will they work on?

In the Learning & Improvement squads the focus is on developing a wide range of aquatic skills, alongside the four main competitive swimming strokes. Each child is placed at an appropriate level according to experience and ability. As a swimmer progresses through the Learning squad, when ready, they will move into the Improvement squad, where they will further develop skills and endurance needed prior to joining the Development squad.

While these squads are 'non-competitive', swimmers are focused on learning the legalities and nuances of competitive swimming ahead of a move to the Development Squad, where they will begin to compete. Swimmers will be promoted when coaches see that they have gained the aquatic competencies required to begin to compete.

Training?

1 x training session per week

LTAD category: Fundamentals & Swim skills

COMPETITIVE SQUADS

Across all competitive squads, swimmers will be expected to compete at galas. As a competitive swimming club, this is an integral part of our team. The squads listed below are our competitive squads:

Competitive squads involve regular gala participation, progressive increases in training load and a commitment to attendance and skill development. Parents will be required to undertake duties at galas, in addition to Parent on Deck.

Development squad

Entry requirements

Development squad swimmers are promoted from the Improvement squad, although a swimmer with the required standard of swimming can be admitted directly into the Development Squad. Preference will be given to PST swimmers if demand exceeds the number of places. The majority of swimmers in the squad are aged between 8 and 13 years.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Development squad is to improve a swimmer's technique and stamina, ability to swim all four competitive strokes legally, as well as turns and starts.

Training?

2 x sessions per week. Training attendance expected minimum 75%.

Competitions:

Swimmers will be expected to compete in Level 1 galas. Level 1 galas are entry-level competitions designed for swimmers new to racing. It's important that swimmers attend these galas when presented with the opportunity as they will gain invaluable experience from competing in these galas and they are designed with younger swimmers and their first competitive experiences. All of the

aspects of competition outside the pool such as warming up, line up, time between events and multiple races in a day are experiences that become the core foundation of their competitive landscape for the rest of their competitive swimming career and that all starts here.

LTAD category: Swim skills

Skills Squad

Entry requirements:

Swimmers are promoted from the Development Squad. Swimmers in this squad range in age from 9 - 14.

Purpose:

Skills squad swimmers continue to work on long term athletic development and swimming techniques whilst also focusing on race skills, kick improvement and developing stamina. *LTAD category: Swim Skills*

Training:

4 x sessions per week. Training attendance expected minimum 75%.

Competitions:

Swimmers will be expected to attend the Future Challenger gala series as well as other specified galas. As the swimmers compete more they will become more comfortable with the competitive environment and will begin progressing from smaller club based Level 1 galas to some of the Level 2 galas including the Future Challengers series which holds some events in the National Aquatic Centre. It's important that swimmers in this group continue building up their racing experience across a diverse set of events as they grow and progress into a well rounded athlete with the ability to compete in the full range of events. They will see consistent progression over time and will begin to build awareness of what success looks like in Portmarnock Swim Team which is based

around individual progression and growth. That can be a faster swim, better execution of an event plan or particularly maintaining technical skills under pressure.

Transition Squad

Entry requirements:

Swimmers are promoted from the Skills Squad. Swimmers in this squad range in age from 10 - 14.

Purpose:

This squad is focused on helping swimmers start to improve and hone skills required to compete successfully. They will develop their athlete 'engine ' and learn how to train effectively. Moving from the Skills Squad, Transition swimmers will have an increased training load and focus on achieving qualification and consideration standards.

LTAD category: Swim Skills; Training to Compete; Training to Train

Training:

5 x sessions per week

1 x gym session

Training attendance expected minimum 80%.

Competitions:

Swimmers are expected to compete at galas regularly to gain experience and qualification times and work towards Leinster qualifying standards. This is the point at which the swimmers have gained sufficient racing and competitive experience to begin focusing on the time qualification standards that the sport is built upon ranging from regional, national, international and all the way to the Olympics. Those standards are set by either Leinster Swimming or Swim Ireland and change each year but the swimmers will be focusing their growth and progression towards achieving these standards and will be training and also racing more frequently. Consistency is even more key from this stage onwards as the coaches will be covering different aspects in each of the week's sessions; swimming is incredibly multi-faceted so swimmers will need to be consistently improving their aerobic endurance, stroke development, technical skills along with other areas such as speed, coordination, agility, balance and control across all 4 strokes.

Performance Pathway squad

Entry requirements:

Swimmers are promoted from the Transition Squad. Swimmers in this squad are aged 12 - 17.

Purpose: The Performance Pathway Squad prepares swimmers for the demands of the Performance squad by building training capacity, consistency, and competitive experience. Pathway swimmers will have a high attendance at training and compete at relevant galas as advised by coaches. Swimmers in this squad will be targeting qualification and participation at Leinster Open Qualifying or Consideration Standard. *LTAD category: Training to Train; Training to Compete*

Training:

6 x sessions per week

2 x gym sessions

Training attendance expected minimum 85%.

Competitions:

Swimmers will compete regularly at galas as advised by coaches. Our Performance Pathway athletes are our swimmers who are working towards achieving Leinster Regional Championship Qualification along with National Championship Qualification. This high standard of competition requires dedication and commitment along with our 3 fundamental A's: Attendance, Application and Attitude. These three guiding principles outline our expectations for our high performing swimmers; that they will attend all possible training sessions and competitions, that they will approach each session and race with their best effort and intention and that they will work hard and be a positive influence in the squad, club and support for their team mates.

Performance squad

Entry requirements:

Promoted from Pathway Squad. Acceptance in the Performance Squad is subject to attaining at least 1 consideration or qualification time in their age group as specified by Swim Ireland for Irish Summer National Age Group or Youth & Senior championships. Attaining the consideration/qualifying time will make a swimmer eligible to be considered for transition from the Performance Pathway Squad into the Performance Squad. Swimmers in this squad are aged 14 and over.

Purpose:

The Performance Squad entails a significant increase in both volume and intensity of training. The emphasis in this squad is on performance with particular emphasis on provincial, national and, in time, international galas. Swimmers in this squad are expected to have a very high attendance at training and are expected to attend galas regularly, entering a large variety of events.

LTAD category: Training to Train; Training to Compete

Training:

6 x sessions per week

2 x gym sessions

Training attendance expected minimum 90%.

Competitions:

Swimmers will compete regularly at galas as advised by coaches, and enter a wide variety of events. Our performance swimmers are our senior swimmers who are working towards excelling at National and International level competitions. This group trains almost every day and are extremely dedicated to their craft and individual progression. Our senior swimmers exemplify our 3 A's and role model these behaviours for the rest of our groups

Criteria for moving through each Squad

The squad descriptions help to outline the purpose of each squad and area of focus.

Movement through the squads is at the discretion of the coaching team at all times. In addition to time standards achieved at relevant Swim Ireland galas, the coaching team will also take into account other factors such as attendance, gala participation, behaviour, maturity etc. The 3 A's mentioned above will form a core piece of the decision regarding squad moves for any swimmer. We base our progression around those values and are looking for swimmers who are consistently attending training and competition, giving their best effort and positively engaging in the process. If the coaching team is happy that a swimmer is ready to move, this will be communicated to the swimmer and their parents. Achieving a time standard does not guarantee promotion; it is one of several factors considered.

Movement between squads will take place during set times of the year when there are scheduled breaks in the season such as Christmas, Easter and June (in planning for the new season). Fees associated with each squad will be advised at the time of movement.

