



# Bicester Blue Fins

*Amateur Swimming Club*

Dear Swimmer and Parents

Firstly, thanks to all for an amazing first season back for us at Bicester Blue Fins! We have gone through a period of significant change over the past year and there is even more happening. This letter provides information on the changes that are coming into effect in September, the expectations that we have of the swimmers, the coaching team for the new season and information on competitions.

## Changes for 2010/11

We are making big changes within our Lessons structure. We are going to see good growth in the lower levels, and are bringing in a Swimming Academy for levels 6 upwards. The academies are Academy Bronze, Academy Silver and Academy Gold. Academy Bronze and Silver will still follow the National Plan for Teaching Swimming, but with an addition of more advanced competitive skills and drills, access to more training time, allowing for greater development of competitive strokes at a younger age. This will improve our grass roots and junior sections of the club, and in turn will lead to a more structured swimmer pathway through the club.

The changes are not only occurring in the Lessons and Swimming Academy, we are also changing the squads in the competitive section of the club. The Competitive Development Squad will become **Academy Gold** with access to the same training sessions. The Performance section of the club is going to remain as three squads. These squads are; **Development Squad, Elite Development Squad and Elite Squad.**

Development and Elite Development Squads will remain with the same training timetable that Junior and Youth have had. Elite Squad will get an additional hours training on a Tuesday morning at Bicester from 06:30 – 07:30, (Please see club website to confirm training times and venues).

During the course of next season, we are also going to be extending our training programme to a Thursday evening with the year divided into two. From October – March we will be delivering land training sessions (Elite Development and Elite Squads only) and from April – end of July, we will be training in the 50m pool in Banbury (All Squads including Academy Gold). This additional training is a very exciting move forward for the club and will positively impact on the improvement of the swimmers and the club.

We are also bringing in a 'house' system to the club. Each swimmer and parent will be allocated to a house where they will remain for the whole of their swimming career with Bicester Blue Fins. The rationale for this is to increase inter-club competition and give an additional sense of loyalty. We have fantastic team spirit as a club and this will further enhance it. Details of this will follow.

## Expectations

To maintain this positive growth and increase in performance across the club, we are also bringing in minimum expectations into every squad from Academy Gold upwards. For Bicester Blue Fins to reach the ambition of once again becoming the best performing 'small' club within the County is imperative that we instil these expectations from day one of the new season. Each and every swimmer will need to adhere to the following minimum expectations to ensure that they maintain their squad place;

1. \*70% attendance at training (minimum)
2. \*\*All swimmers to attend Saturday morning training and Elite Squad to attend at least one of the week day morning sessions.
3. All kit brought to training
4. 20 minutes of land training and stretching daily
5. Complete concentration in all training sessions
6. Willingness to go through the 'pain barrier' in training
7. Attendance at competitions as advised by the coaching team

If these expectations are not adhered to, then we cannot guarantee a place in a squad. We will be making squad changes in December and April.

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## Coaching Team

We are in a very fortunate position as a club to have the coaching team that we are putting in place for next season. Kirsten and Craig Pankhurst will still be heading up the coaching of the club, within the following structure;

Head of Development (Teaching and Academy)	-	Kirsten Pankhurst
Assistant Head of Teaching	-	Caroline Fowler
Head of Performance	-	Craig Pankhurst
Assistant Head of Performance	-	Struan McNeil
Squad Coaches/Helpers	-	Brian Wiggins/Sam Tagg/Anita Wanless/Angela Gabbott/Shelley Radford

As a coaching team, we will be driving the performance of each swimmer through the club, and ensuring that we are delivering a quality programme that supports the development of each swimmer. At the beginning of September, we will be running an evening for Swimmers and Parents where we will be presenting on the targets and goals of next season along with a question and answer session.

As always, we are always looking to recruit new helpers onto poolside to assist with training and teaching. If you are interested, please do approach Kirsten or Craig.

## Competitions

The first season back at the club had been an interesting time when looking back at competitions we have entered, be it Open Meets or Club Galas. It is essential that if you are selected for a gala and you have confirmed your attendance, you turn up to compete; otherwise you are letting your team mates down. If you cannot attend a gala you have been selected for, then you need to discuss this with your coach as early as possible.

During the 2009/10 season, there have been the same small core of swimmers that attend open meets. From next season this must change. We have had a positive response for the early season meet in Coventry, and we expect the same level of entry across all competitions. We can only gauge progress by analysing both training performance and competition performance. Please ensure that if you are handed an open meet entry form, you make sure that you enter and compete. If you are unable to, this must be discussed with your coach.

Any swimmer that achieves a considered or accepted Oxon and North Bucks County entry time, or South East Regional entry time for 2011 will be expected to compete at those championships. The County championships and then Regional championships are the next progression on a swimmers pathway from competing at club level and therefore, a great achievement. Our aim is to get swimmers competing at all levels.

## In summary

We are very excited about the future of Bicester Blue Fins, and the foundation and structures that are being put in place. We are certain that everyone who maximises their opportunity with the club, will reap the benefits and have an enjoyable, successful season.

Regards,



Craig and Kirsten Pankhurst

\*Subject to coaches discretion (Cold/cough/headache etc will be counted as absent as will holidays. Training in another sport/activity is not classed as absent)

\*\*No excuses for missing Saturday training will be accepted without prior notification to coaches. At least one week day morning session to be attended by all swimmers in Elite Squad.

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