

Swimming for Disabled People in Scotland

This fact sheet provides an overview of swimming for disabled people in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to start to swim and develop your skills volunteer or coach disabled people in swimming.

The Development of Swimming

Swimming has been identified as one of the best activities for total body fitness whether you compete at elite level or just for fun. It really is a fully inclusive sport with many positive opportunities for health and fitness.

Disability swimming is one of the core sports involved in the Paralympic Games and has been present since the inaugural games in Rome in 1960. The Paralympic swimming programme is one of the biggest both in terms of competitor numbers and medal events including all four strokes with distances from 50m up to 400m. Also included in the Commonwealth Games programme in Glasgow 2014, there were six medal events and this will be doubled to 12 in the Gold Coast 2018.

Historically disability swimming in Scotland has been very strong over the years with great success on the world and Paralympic stages. Scottish Swimming is directly responsible for the performance pathway for disabled athletes and works in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) who have responsibility for the development dimension.

Swimming is developing across Scotland with a mixture of mainstream and discrete* provision providing a range of opportunities for people of all levels and disabilities to get involved. Regional swimming squads have been developed in a number of areas and these are increasing each year.

Scottish Swimming's Disability Performance Development Manager takes a lead in ensuring a seamless pathway from Regional squads into the National Squad structure, working closely with British Para-Swimming, performance development clubs, performance programmes and the sportscotland Institute of Sport to ensure Scotland's athletes are best prepared for competing on the world stage.

* Discrete – sports participation, training or

competition that is unique to disability sport, but developmental, meaningful and appropriate to the aspirations of participants.



Classification

To ensure a fair and level playing field swimmers with a disability are classified according to their functional (physical), visual, intellectual or hearing impairment.

Swimmers are allocated a three prefix classification dependent on their disability:

- Prefix S denotes the Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly classification
- Prefix SB denotes the Breaststroke classification
- Prefix SM denotes the Individual Medley classification
- Classes 1-10 – are allocated to swimmers with a physical disability
- Classes 11-13 – are allocated to swimmers with a visual impairment
- Class 14 – is allocated to swimmers with an intellectual impairment
- Class 15 – is allocated to swimmers with a hearing impairment

For example, Scottish swimmer Andrew Mullen's classification is S5 SB4 SM5 and Reagan Doig is classified as S14 SB14 SM14.

The breaststroke and IM events may have a different number as breaststroke is

predominantly a leg propulsive stroke and is therefore viewed differently in the classification process for swimmers with a functional impairment.

Coach Education

For people wishing to become involved with coaching disability swimming there is an excellent programme of courses. The coaching of disabled people in swimming is fully integrated into the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) coach education programmes at Levels 1, 2 & 3.

In addition to this Scottish Swimming and SDS have, in partnership, developed an Inclusive Coaching Continual Professional Development (CPD) programme that delves deeper into the practicalities of coaching a swimmer with a disability in a mainstream club setting.



SDS also offer the "Introduction to Pool Work Course" which supports those working with disabled non-swimmers and offers valuable knowledge and experience on issues such as safety skills, support and learner progression. This CPD offers both practical and theory sessions for delegates.

Helpful Resources

[British Blind Sport – “Visually Impaired \(VI\) Friendly Swimming”](#)

This resource is about helping people to be VI friendly through their provision of training, resources and support and to have a better understanding of the needs of people with a visual impairment.

[National Deaf Children Society – “Deaf-Friendly Swimming”](#)

This booklet is to help swimming teachers and coaches to include deaf children in swimming sessions. The resource shows

how, by making small and simple changes, deaf children and young people can be included in mainstream swimming sessions. Many of the tips will be beneficial to all the swimmers in the group, not just deaf children.

[Amateur Swimming Association \(ASA\) – “Inclusion of Swimmers with a Disability”](#)

This publication contains information on teaching swimmers with a disability. It does not aim to cover every disability but to give an insight into the main disabilities that a teacher might meet in a club/teaching session.

[ASA - “Long Term Athlete Development \(LTAD\)”](#)

Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) is about achieving optimal training, competition and recovery throughout an athlete's career, particularly in relation to the important growth and development years of young people.

This leaflet should be used in conjunction with "The Swimmer Pathway: Long-Term Athlete Development" document (April 2003), and is a guide to the considerations for athletes with a disability.

Some Facts & Figures

- Swimming is a sport in which Britain excels: ParalympicsGB won 39 medals including seven gold at the London 2012 Paralympics.
- In Glasgow 2015 GBR finished 5th on the medal table behind Ukraine, Russia, USA and Brazil. GBR won 10 gold medals.
- In events for the blind and visually impaired, people called "tappers" may stand at the end of the pool and use a pole to tap the swimmers when they approach the wall.
- In the S11 visually impaired classification for swimmers, athletes are required to wear blackened goggles, so that swimmers with light perception compete at an even level with those who are totally blind.
- There are over 150 swimming clubs in Scotland.

Leading Scottish Performers

- Stephen Clegg – Born 1995. Stephen swims in the S12 classification. After a period out of the water, Stephen made

- his GBR debut in the IPC European Championships in Madeira, Portugal 2016.
- Andrew Mullen – Born 1996. Andrew swims in the S5 classification. He has represented GB at the London Paralympics, narrowly missing out on a medal with two 4th place finishes (50m Butterfly & 50m Backstroke). He achieved four medals at the 2015 World Championships in Glasgow with silver medals in the 50m Backstroke and 200m Freestyle Medley and bronze medal in the 50m Butterfly and 100m Freestyle.
 - Scott Quin – Born 1990. Scott swims in the S14 classification. Scott has represented GB at the IPC European Championships in Berlin 2011, Eindhoven 2014 and Madeira 2015, and IPC World Championships in Montreal 2013 and more recently Montreal 2013. In his favoured 100m Breaststroke event he won European silver in 2014 and world silver in 2015.
 - Danielle Joyce – Born 1996. Danielle swims in the S15 classification. Danii represented GB at the 2013 Deaflympics in Sofia. She prefers the shorter sprint events focussing mainly on Freestyle and Backstroke and has proved to be particularly impressive in short course competitions. Danii holds four short course world records in the S15 classification (50m, 100m & 200m Backstroke and 200m IM - 2014).

Competitions

There are a range of events that swimmers with a disability can get involved in.



SDS currently operates a National events programme for junior and senior swimmers

with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. This is underpinned by regional events in all SDS regions.

In partnership SDS and Scottish Swimming annually run two National Performance Championships which supports the progression of classified swimmers into the British national events calendar.

Within the Scottish Swimming National Championships there is a full inclusive programme for classified swimmers which includes all International Paralympic Committee (IPC) championship events.

Scottish Swimming also select teams to represent Scotland at the Disability Sports Events (DSE) Junior, Youth and Open Championships each year. This team is made up of Scottish swimmers who have represented GBR at World, European and Paralympic level as well as identified juniors who have the potential to represent on the world stage.

Key Contacts

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Key Websites

Scottish Swimming

www.scottishswimming.com

Scottish Disability Sport -

www.scottishdisabilitysport.com

British Swimming

www.swimming.org

British Paralympic Association

www.paralympics.org.uk

IPC

www.paralympic.org