

Introduction

Our sport has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with clubs struggling to return to full training and athletes not having had a chance to race in a long course Benchmark Meet since July 2019. Competitions have been suspended since March 2020 and current restrictions continue to impact the ability of Regions and Swim Ireland to deliver inclusive racing opportunities. Without any current competitive results from which to select athletes and with access to training restricted for so many clubs, our intention is to deliver the Regional Squad Programme virtually between January and June in 2021 and offer these learning opportunities to registered competitive athletes who meet the criteria outlined below.

This is our plan to align the delivery of the Regional Squad Programme in 2020-21 with that of the Government of Ireland’s and the Northern Ireland Executive’s risk management strategy for the next 6-9 months.

Selection Criteria & Application Process

Selections for all squads will be confirmed by 31st December 2020 and the programme will run from 9th January to 30th June 2021.

The selection criteria for each squad is outlined in the table below:

1. Regional Skills Academy, Regional Development Squad Stage 1 and Stage 2
 - a. Athletes will be asked to submit an expression of interest between 23rd and 30th November 2020 on a first come first served basis. Links to the expression of interest form will be circulated to clubs and via the Swim Ireland social media platforms in advance of this date.
 - b. Following the closing date, Regions will check and confirm that athletes are eligible for selection. The Regions will then contact successful athletes with payment details. If payments are not received by the deadline notified within the email, invites will go to athletes on the waiting list.
2. Regional Pathway Squad – Athletes under consideration for selection will be asked to submit a Statement of Intent outlining their current and future swimming/academic goals and plans, their ability to contribute to a Regional team environment, and their current level of support verses the required level of support. Coaches will be asked to submit a Recommendation Form to cover the same areas. Selections will be confirmed in writing on 1st December 2020.

<i>The progression/regression between levels of restriction may differ between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and between Counties/local jurisdictions. The Regional Squad Programme will be delivered based on the highest level of restriction in place at that time.</i>	
SELECTION CRITERIA	
SKILLS ACADEMY (100 per Region)	Open invite to registered competitive athletes born 2008 and 2009 for all virtual activities. If we return to Level 1 or 2 restrictions in the south (and an equivalent situation in the north) we may be in a position to deliver some pool based sessions with limited numbers. Separate selection criteria will be published for this and attendance at the virtual activities will form part of the criteria.
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SQUAD STAGE 1 (50 per Region)	Open invite to registered competitive athletes born 2006 and 2007 (who qualified for the 2019 or 2020 Irish Summer National Championships) for all virtual activities. If we return to Level 1 or 2 restrictions (and an equivalent situation in the north) we may be in a position to deliver some pool based sessions with limited numbers. Separate selection criteria will be published for this and attendance at the virtual activities will form part of the criteria.

<p>REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SQUAD STAGE 2 (50 per Region)</p>	<p>Open invite to registered competitive athletes born 2004 and 2005 (who qualified for the 2019 or 2020 Irish Summer National Championships) for all virtual activities. If we return to Level 1 or 2 restrictions (and an equivalent situation in the north) we may be in a position to deliver some pool based sessions with limited numbers. Separate selection criteria will be published for this and attendance at the virtual activities will form part of the criteria.</p>
<p>REGIONAL PATHWAY SQUAD (12 total)</p>	<p>The use of National Performance Pathway Manager discretionary selections (in association with Regional Pathway Development Coaches) will be activated to select male athletes born 1998 to 2003 and female athletes born 1999 to 2003. When making discretionary selections, the following criteria will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance profile over the last 3 years tracking towards National Squad selection • Percentage away from the National Squad Standards (see page 4) in the athlete’s respective age group (long course performances achieved since 1st July 2019) • Current level of support verses the required level of support • Potential to positively contribute to the overall team environment • Commitment, attitude and work ethic

Annual Curriculum

The Virtual Programme will deliver multiple webinars across the course of the season with an emphasis on holistic development out of the pool. If we return to Level 1 or 2 restrictions (and an equivalent situation in the north) we will be in a position to host pool based clinics to explore and refine some of the technical aspects of our sport. The planned curriculum for 2020-21 is as follows:

	Skills Academy	Regional Development Squad Stage 1	Regional Development Squad Stage 2	Regional Pathway Squad
Strength & Conditioning	Mobility	Injury Prevention	Pre-Swim Self-Checks	Bespoke Programme
Psychological	Self-Awareness & Regulation Mental Wellbeing	Self-Talk Mental Wellbeing	Focus & Distraction Control Mental Wellbeing	
Nutrition	Nutrition for Health	Fuelling Training	Preparing for Travel	
Lifestyle	Athlete & Parent Journey Anti-Doping	Sleep Hygiene Anti-Doping	Preparing for Travel Anti-Doping	

Annual Membership Fee

Athletes will be required to pay the following annual membership fee that will contribute to the overall cost of the Virtual Annual Programme:

- **€40.00 (or the sterling equivalent) for Skills Academy and Regional Development Squad Stage 1 and 2 cohorts**
- **€75.00 (or the sterling equivalent) for Pathway Squad cohort**

There may be other costs associated with athletes selected to attend any pool based sessions at such times as we can safely return to face to face delivery.

Provisional Dates

All dates are subject to change and will be dependant on any amendments to the Swim Ireland or Regional Domestic Competition Plan for the 2020-21 season. Dates for each Region will be confirmed at the time of selection and each Virtual Day will last 2-3 hours maximum.

Regional Skills Academy

- Virtual Day 1 – 9th or 10th January 2021
- Virtual Day 2 – 20th or 21st February 2021
- Virtual Day 3 – 24th or 25th April 2021

Regional Development Squad Stage 1

- Virtual Day 1 – 16th or 17th January 2021
- Virtual Day 2 – 13th or 14th March 2021
- Virtual Day 3 – 17th or 18th April 2021

Regional Development Squad Stage 2

- Virtual Day 1 – 16th or 17th January 2021
- Virtual Day 2 – 13th or 14th March 2021
- Virtual Day 3 – 17th or 18th April 2021

Regional Pathway Squad – dates will be confirmed on an individual basis

Enquires

Any enquiries from coaches or athletes who require clarity on any of the information within this document should be directed to the National Performance Pathway Manager via andrewreid@swimireland.ie

National Squad Consideration Standards 2020-21 (Long Course)					
Male			EVENT	Female	
1998-2001	2002	2003		2003	1999-2002
22.89	23.33	23.77	50m Freestyle	26.26	25.76
50.51	51.48	52.46	100m Freestyle	57.64	56.56
1:51.28	1:53.42	1:55.56	200m Freestyle	2:04.32	2:01.97
3:55.85	4:00.39	4:04.92	400m Freestyle	4:22.77	4:17.82
8:13.28	8:22.77	8:32.25	800m Freestyle	9:04.16	8:53.89
15:37.03	15:55.05	16:13.07	1500m Freestyle	17:31.56	17:11.72
56.00	57.08	58.16	100m Backstroke	1:03.87	1:02.66
2:02.20	2:04.55	2:06.90	200m Backstroke	2:18.21	2:15.61
1:02.33	1:03.53	1:04.72	100m Breaststroke	1:11.09	1:09.75
2:15.56	2:18.17	2:20.78	200m Breaststroke	2:34.25	2:31.34
54.04	55.08	56.12	100m Butterfly	1:01.40	1:00.24
2:01.14	2:03.47	2:05.80	200m Butterfly	2:16.14	2:13.57
2:04.46	2:06.85	2:09.24	200m I.M.	2:20.51	2:17.86
4:26.07	4:31.19	4:36.31	400m I.M.	4:55.24	4:49.67

Andrew Reid
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