



## Club Newsletter - Club Captains Edition

This special edition of the Club Newsletter includes two articles provided by one of our club captains, Poppy Railton.

Poppy is an inspiration member of our swimming club and is very supportive of her fellow swimmers. She has provided some very interesting and useful insights into balancing swimming and school studies, and her role supporting swimmers within our pre-club squads.

### Balancing Swimming and School Studies – Poppy Railton



Hi, my name is Poppy, I'm one of the Senior Club Captains and also help out the coaches on a Tuesday night. This year is a pretty important year for me as I'm in year 11 and will be sitting my GCSE's this summer. With that in mind I've really had to think hard (more than usual) about how I can balance swimming whilst making sure I can complete my coursework in time for deadlines and revise for exams. I think this is something that lots of young people my age struggle with, so I thought I'd share some of the things that I've done to try and manage this.

Time management is really important and probably the first thing that you will want to consider. I found that I needed to write a plan of the things that I needed to do in the week (attend school, do homework etc.) and the things that I wanted to achieve in the week (attend training at least times as well as Tuesday evening sessions to develop). I then took these and slotted them into a timetable. Prioritising tasks in this way allows me to focus on what needs to get done and if I can do the other things as well, I class that as a 'nice to have'. Without this plan I think it would have been easy to become overwhelmed and fall behind with schoolwork or even not feel prepared for exams.

Secondly, it's really important that you include time to relax. School work and exams can be stressful, it's key to have some downtime. I've found that swimming actually helps me relax at the end of the day, so I've switched my schedule around and have started training more often in the evenings rather than in the morning

Third point – having a routine helps. For me that means that I've created a study schedule that works alongside being able to continue to regularly swim. I tend to get in from school, I may do a tutor session and two twenty-five minute sessions of homework or revision, taking regular breaks, before heading out to evening training. The schedule will be different for everyone as we all have different ways of working and what works for me might not work for everyone else, the best thing to do is try some different things and see what works for you.

My final tip is to communicate. When I started year 11 I had a conversation with my parents about how I could balance my swimming and studies during this busy year and we spoke about how they could support that. We made an agreement that there may be some occasions where I need to miss training to prioritise course work, but if that was the case I would let the coaches know why I was going to be absent. When I've spoken to coaches they've always been understanding and that has always made me feel better about the decision.

## **Supporting Swimmers in the pre-swim squad**

Earlier this year I contacted the coaching team about coming along and helping at sessions. I'm currently studying Sports Studies and eventually want to work within Sports and Fitness so thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to develop some practical experience. Coaching is something that I've been interested in for a number of years now and is another aspect of swimming I've been interested in alongside competing.

Supporting and getting to know the younger swimmers within the club has been really enjoyable and I'd like to think that we always have fun. I've loved swimming for as long as I can remember so it's great to be able to share that with others and watch them develop. I get great satisfaction from teaching the swimmers new skills and techniques and it's always good when they leave the pool looking happy and realise that they are making progress.

I've also learnt lots from Liv and John who are both really experienced coaches. There's a lot more to learn about and consider when coaching than it initially appears! One of the first things I was asked to do before I could help was to complete some child safeguarding training. Helping the coaches also expands my experience and knowledge of swimming in a club setting.

I really hope to continue supporting the younger swimmers next year, I've applied to take Sports and Fitness at post 16 and this would really compliment this/ I also hope to undertake to swim coach training and have just passed my NPLQ Lifeguard qualification which will all add to my experiences and knowledge of swimming.