



Scottish  
Swimming

# Club Poolside Helper Information Handbook

## Workshop Outline

This aim of this workshop is to provide you with the knowledge, skills and understanding to assist on poolside in your chosen aquatic club.

The workshop will consist of practical based learning within your home club environment to help you develop and support the swimmers and club.

The credential (which will be added to your Scottish Swimming membership) for this workshop will be valid for 2 years and will help you in progressing towards your teaching/coaching qualification.

### **From this workshop you will be able to:**

- Assist on poolside and know how to safely set up and use equipment
- Understand the importance of Health & Safety in an aquatic environment
- Effectively communicate with swimmers
- Understand basic rules, skills and techniques of swimming
- Support a qualified coach with delivery of a session

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Club Poolside Helper**



#### **As a club poolside helper you will be expected to:**

##### **1. Support with lane organisation**

- a. Organising the swimmers
- b. Ensuring Safe Lane Discipline
- c. Setting off swimmers

##### **2. Communicate with the swimmers**

- a. Informing them of information regarding the activity or sets
- b. Passing on basic technical information
- c. Answering questions from the swimmers

##### **3. Ensure that basic rules are adhered to during training**

##### **4. Ensure that swimmers are following the instructions correctly**

##### **5. Record information**

- a. Taking registers
- b. Recording times
- c. Noting Test set information

## Lane Organisation



**There are various aspects of lane organisation that club poolside helpers will support with**

### 1. Organisation

- a. Direction of lanes – alternating direction of travel
- b. Ensuring the swimmers have correct gaps between each other (5/10secs apart)
- c. Supporting swimmers with reading a clock
- d. Organising equipment prior to and during swimming sets
- e. Utilising a stopwatch and calling out times for the swimmers

### 2. Lane & Session Rules

- a. Overtaking
- b. Lane order
- c. Stopping in lane
- d. Toilet breaks

## Health & Safety



**A good club poolside helper always operates in a safe, responsible manner according to guidelines and acceptable standards of good practice.**

As a poolside helper you will need to:

1. Identify potential hazards and risks around your area
2. Identify relevant information on procedures for health, safety and emergencies
3. Check equipment for damage, cleanliness, suitability for age and task
4. Set up and put away equipment safely and effectively
5. Report any problems to the person responsible (in the first instance the coach)

## Coaching Aids and Equipment



**As a club poolside helper you will know the different equipment and aids and their uses, including how to use these in a correct manner:**

1. Kickboard
2. Pull buoy
3. Fins
4. Snorkel
5. Hand paddles
6. Bands
7. Foam roller
8. Tennis ball
9. Goggles
10. Pace clock

## Understanding a session plan and swimming sets



**As a club poolside helper you will understand the basic principles of a set:**

### **D.I.R.T. Principle**

1. Distance – how far the swimmers need to go of each repetition (100's, 200's)
2. Interval – the rest time or turnaround time
3. Repetition - number of times they should complete the distance (5x, 10x)
4. Time – the length of time or pace of the swim.

There are also other terms that are used by coaches – Please see glossary of terms (appendix). Some of these will be individual to coaches and clubs.

## Supervising swimmers



As a club poolside helper, you will not be solely responsible for the group of swimmers but in conjunction with your coach you will be responsible for supervising and overseeing swimmers. You will also ensure - as part of the organisation - everyone's understanding of the session and general well-being. You will also ensure that all participants are safe throughout..

## Principles of movement through the water



### There are 3 main principles that affect swimmers' movement through the water.

Propulsion – this is the force that swimmers apply to make them move through the water (pulling, pushing or kicking)

Drag – this is the resistance that water places on swimmers and slows them down – streamlining will help to reduce this

Buoyancy – The upward force exerted by the water that supports the body.

## Basic Rules of Swimming

### 1. Disqualification Rules

- Starting before the start signal
- Not touching wall at turn or finish
- Not covering full distance
- Not remaining in lane
- Walking along the bottom of pool
- Travelling further than 15metres underwater at start or turn (except Breaststroke)

### 3. Backstroke

- Must remain on back (other than to turn)
- Must not be fully submerged at finish

### 5. Freestyle

- Can be any stroke

### 2. Butterfly

- Must be on front
- Arms simultaneous
- Arms need to clear the water on recovery
- Legs must be simultaneous
- Touch with two hands on turn and finish

### 4. Breaststroke

- One butterfly kick and one breaststroke pullout and kick allowed underwater at start and turn
- Must touch with two hands on turn and finish
- Must remain on front
- Arms and legs must be simultaneous and on same horizontal plane
- Elbows must remain in water (except turn or finish)
- Head must break water each stroke
- Feet need to turn out on the propulsive phase of the leg action.

### 6. Relays

- Feet need to be touching wall/block when other swimmer touches the wall
- Obstructing another swimmer is not allowed.



# Basic Techniques of Swimming

As a club poolside helper, you will understand the basics of stroke technique.

There are five key aspects to all strokes:

**BLABT – Body Position, Leg Action, Arm Action, Breathing and Timing**

## 1. Body Position

- Butterfly – undulating; shoulder and hip movement
- Backstroke – slight slope downward from head to toes, rotates from side to side
- Breaststroke – varies through each stroke cycle
- Frontcrawl – slight slope downward from head to toes, rotates from side to side

## 2. Leg Action

- Butterfly – simultaneous; legs together; toes pointed
- Backstroke – alternating; toes just breaking the surface
- Breaststroke – simultaneous on the same horizontal plane; feet turned out during propulsive phase
- Frontcrawl – alternating; heels just breaking the surface

## 5. Timing

- Butterfly – 2 kicks to 1 pull
- Backstroke – 6 kicks to one arm cycle
- Breaststroke – Pull; Breath; Kick; Glide
- Frontcrawl – 6 kicks to one arm cycle

**3. Arm Action** – There are two main phases Propulsive (underwater) & Recovery (overwater except in BR)

- Butterfly – simultaneous; pulling and pushing under body; recovery over the water
- Backstroke – alternating; 'S' shaped pull; straight arm recovery
- Breaststroke – pulling around in front of chest; arms forward and together
- Frontcrawl – alternating; pulling and pushing under body; bent arm recovery, high elbow over the water

## 4. Breathing

- Butterfly – to the front
- Backstroke – as and when required
- Breaststroke – at the end of the arm pull on each stroke when the head lifts
- Frontcrawl – to the side



## Responsibility for running a set



**As a club poolside helper, under the direction of the coach, you will be responsible for instructing the actions of the swimmer.**

**To be able to do this you will need to ensure that you:**

1. Know the swimmers you are instructing and their ability level
2. Ensure that you understand the set and the skills the swimmers are undertaking
3. Have all the equipment that is required and is ready prior to starting
4. Have the attention of all the swimmers
5. Check the swimmers are completing the set correctly
6. Have support from the coach

## Recording Information



**As a club poolside helper you will be required to assist your coach in noting information during training sessions.**

**To be able to do this effectively, you will need to ensure that you are prepared with the following:**

- Adequate writing materials
- Clipboard
- Stopwatch (if required)
- An understanding of what information you are gathering
- A list of all the swimmers' names – they may need to call their name out as they come in

*You must communicate with the coach if you have missed any information*

## Stages of Learning



**As a club poolside helper, it is essential that you understand that swimmers go through several stages of learning and that it takes time to develop skills that can be repeated effectively.**

- Stage 1 (Cognitive) Swimmers will not be able to do the skill, but will learn to understand what is required for them to achieve the result
- Stage 2 (Associative) Swimmers will be able to do the skill sometimes. They will need to repeatedly practice it correctly. They may improve and regress through this stage and will need support and feedback to help improve.
- Stage 3 (Autonomous) Swimmers will have learnt to do the skill automatically without much thought. During this stage they will need to keep practising to ensure that they maintain the skills.

## Communication



**As a club poolside helper you will need to use a range of skills to help communicate with swimmers.**

The two types of communication are Verbal and Non-Verbal. When communicating with swimmers, you need to ensure that: all swimmers can see and hear you; you are clear and concise; you use body language and hand signals to aid instructions; and all swimmers understand the instructions.

Swimmers will also benefit from praise and feedback, make sure that this is **POSITIVE** and **CONSTRUCTIVE**

## Sculling



Sculling is an important skill that swimmers will learn to help them feel the water and have the ability to apply a constant force against the water to help with their propulsion.

Sculling is required for all four strokes and for many other skills within swimming

## Streamlining



Streamlining is an important skill in helping swimmers to reduce the resistance caused by the water, which slows the swimmers down. For swimmers to become streamlined they need to reduce the amount of body surface area presented to the water. This is achieved by making their body as thin and flat as possible.



# Starts and Turns

## Starts



When performing starts we should always ensure that the depth of the pool is a minimum of 1.8m deep for safety. Also, swimmers should be competent in going to deep water before diving takes place.

From the poolside or a starting block there are three types of starts that can be used: Grab start, Track start and Backcrawl Start in the water.

**Grab start** – This where the swimmer has both feet over the edge of the block or poolside, then the hands are placed alongside holding on. The swimmer then pulls against the block or side and throws the hands out in front and extending legs, aiming to enter the water in a streamline position.

**Track start** – Basically this is the same as the grab start except that one foot is at the front with the toes curled over the edge and the other foot back behind the body in line with the hip. Then as before the swimmer pulls against the block or side and throws the hands out in front aiming to enter the water in a streamline position.

**Backcrawl start** – Swimmers start in the water holding the starting block. The swimmer then pulls themselves up towards the block, after which they throw their arms back and push off the wall with their legs, stretching their body out into a streamlined position.

## Turns



Depending on the stroke different rules apply.

**Breaststroke and Butterfly** – The body must be flat in the water with the shoulders level on the same horizontal plane at the touch on the wall. Both hands must touch the wall at the same time.

**Frontcrawl** – Any part of the body can touch the wall. Normally a tumble turn is performed with a half twist taking place as the swimmer's feet push off the wall to put them back onto their front.

**Backcrawl** – Any part of the body can touch the wall. The body rolls on to the front before performing a tumble turn. When turning onto the front one continuous movement is allowed as the arm rolls the body onto the front and the two feet are then placed onto the wall in preparation of pushing off on your back.

## Mentoring Feedback 1

Date:

Topics Discussed:

Areas in need of support:

Action Plan:

## Mentoring Feedback 2

Date:

Topics Discussed:

Areas in need of support:

Action Plan:

## Mentoring Feedback 3

Date:

Topics Discussed:

Areas in need of support:

Action Plan:







# Glossary of Terms

- **No.1 Stroke** - Your best stroke, often Frontcrawl (FC), but can be others
- **Number 1** - Your best stroke, often FC, but can be others.
- **Aerobic** - Longer distance, moderate intensity, short rest period swimming sets or events that focus on building endurance
- **Anaerobic** - Shorter distance, high intensity, long rest period swimming sets or events that focus on building power
- **Ascending** - Getting slower (i.e. the time taken increases)
- **Back** - Backcrawl
- **Backstroke** - Backcrawl
- **BBM** - Beats Below Maximum (Heart Rate).
- **BC** - Backcrawl or Backstroke or Back
- **BPM** - Beats Per Minute (Heart Rate)
- **BR** - Breaststroke
- **Breast** - Breaststroke
- **Catch-up** - Drill where on FC one hand stays at full stretch ahead until the other meets it then it begins the stroke
- **Descending** - Getting faster (i.e. the time taken reduces)
- **Dive Start** - Diving entry from the blocks preferably in the deep end (usually either a grab start or a track start)
- **Dolphin Kick** - Simultaneous leg kick used in Butterfly
- **DPS** - Distance Per Stroke
- **Drag** - Drill where on FC fingertips drag through the water on the recovery (also known as trickle)
- **Drill** - A controlled form of stroke designed to draw attention to a particular aspect of that stroke: Catch-Up , Drag, Salute, Elbows High, Zip-up, Doggy Paddle, Duck, and many more
- **Duck**- Drill where you keep the elbows tight to your sides and move the forearms back and forth (like duck legs) to propel yourself through water
- **Easy** - Usually swim down or warm up, a slow easy stroke focusing on stretching out the stroke and warming up or down.
- **Elbows High** - Drill where as it sounds on FC you keep the elbows bent and high out of the water on the recovery
- **FC** - Frontcrawl often referred to as Freestyle or Free
- **Fly** - Butterfly occasionally BF
- **FR** - Freestyle or Free (normally Frontcrawl, but any stroke is permitted)



- **FR** - Freestyle or Free (normally Frontcrawl, but any stroke is permitted)
- **Free** - Freestyle - normally Frontcrawl, but any stroke is permitted
- **Freestyle** - Normally Frontcrawl, but any stroke is permitted
- **Gala** - Competition (also called a Meet)
- **Go off** - Time in which you have to complete a swim or set of repeat distance/times inclusive of rest time
- **Grab Start** - A type of Dive Start.
- **HR** - Heart Rate
- **HRT** - Heart Rate
- **HVO** - High Velocity Overload – Swim part of the length (no more than 15m) at full speed without breathing, rest of the set distance swim easy
- **IM** - Individual Medley (all four strokes together in order Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Frontcrawl)
- **Intensity** - Run on a scale from 10 – 20 with 10 being easy and 20 being as hard as it gets
- **Kick** - Legs only (no pulling)
- **Kickboard** - A flat float used for doing kick
- **Lactate** - Lactic acid is produced in the muscles during anaerobic sets. Swim down & stretching help disperse lactate.
- **Long Course** - 50m pool (term used for describing competitions)
- **m (e.g.25m)** - Metres – Our training pools are generally 25 metres so 50 metres is 2 lengths, 100m – 4 lengths, 200m – 8 lengths, 300m - 12 lengths and 400m 16 lengths. The ULU pool is 33 metres, so 100m – 3 lengths etc.
- **Masters** - Name used for adult swimming at Meets
- **Medley** - All four strokes swum in a specified order
- **Medley Order** - Individual Medley
- **Meet** - Competition (also called a Gala)
- **Negative Split** - Go faster for the second half of the set distance than the first half
- **Open Turn** - The two handed touch turn completed for Breaststroke and Butterfly
- **PB** - Personal Best - this is your best time to date for a particular stroke
- **Percentages** - Usually refers to the effort exerted or pace swum at during the set. i.e. 80% is pretty hard but not maximum effort or sprint.
- **Pull** - Arms only (no kicking)
- **Pull Buoy** - The figure of eight style float that goes between your legs for pull

- **Recovery** - On FC when the arm is out of the water being brought forward towards the entry for the next stroke. Can also be a recovery swim when you slow down to bring the HRT down after a high intensity set
- **Regeneration** - A set where you swim to regenerate after an intense competition
- **RI** - Rest Interval - How much rest (usually in seconds) you get after a set swim e.g. 8 x 50m FR RI 20s (20 seconds rest after each 50 metres Freestyle) - sometimes also called simply Interval
- **RPE** - Rate of Perceived Exertion
- **Salute** - Drill where the hand touches head prior to entry on FC
- **Set** - A self-contained part of the swimming session as 'set' by the coach e.g. a 'main set' might be 10 x 100m free
- **Short Course** - 25m pool (term used for describing competitions)
- **Sprint** - All out as fast as you can go, breathing as little as you can.
- **Steady** - Swimming at a pace which is easily maintained (not easy or too hard, aiming for consistency of pace)
- **Streamline** - Underwater body position after diving or pushing off the wall which maximises swim speed and efficiency
- **Stroke** - The stroke you are completing (usually not FC)
- **Stroke Count** - Number of strokes per 25m or 50m (FC and BC every 2 arm pulls - a cycle - BR and Fly every stroke) abbreviated as SC
- **Stroke Rate** - Number of strokes per minute (measured by stopwatch or calculation) abbreviated as SR
- **Swim Down** - Swimming slowly and steadily at the end of the session to warm down
- **Track Start** - A type of Dive Start
- **Tumble turn** - The flip (somersault style) turn used for Frontcrawl and Backcrawl
- **Turnaround** - Time allowed for each swim and rest within a swim e.g. 4 x 200m FR on 3.00 (You have 3 minutes to complete each 200 metres - if you do it in 2m50s you have 10s rest)
- **U/W** - Underwater (usually refers to kicking, using Dolphin kick)





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