

SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP

“Friendly Series”

Central Venue Development Galas

A brief summary

Interested Coaches meet with Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership Coordinators to share ideas then agree and plan the content for the programme. These events are organised locally between small ‘clusters’ of clubs and receive support from the Partnership.

PROGRAMME

Events focus on using the practices and drills commonly used for development of swimming techniques and skills at an early or pre-competitive stage in club swimming. These form the basis for competitive events along with standard relays or cannons and endurance/distance swims. Many events later turn up in club training schedules and in friendly test sets within clubs!

Every effort is made to ensure high levels of excitement, activity and participation for swimmers and to create a great atmosphere using scoreboards, music, commentary and Team spirit. Swimmers for instance will take part in at least 3 or 4 events – often more !

Swimmers all take part in a ‘parade of champions’ at the end of the event to acknowledge the applause of the spectators.

Swimmers are selected by their clubs, according to an agreed formula and are organised into teams upon arrival on poolside. They do not therefore swim for their club team as such. If a club cannot meet their ‘quota’ then a quick call to the other clubs or to one of the coordinators usually produces enough swimmers to make up the teams on the day.

Points are awarded for places and so time-keepers are not necessary. We do not swim under ASA Law but we have a starter/Referee who will mention infringements to home coaches and team managers.

Clubs have discovered a new generation of future Managers and Officials amongst parents willing to assist at this relaxed and fun-based level of competition. Ideally older club swimmers are recruited to assist and develop their manager skills.

SWIMMERS

Club swimmers, aged from 8- 12 who do not normally get selected for B or C team events. Many have been in training squads but have never been selected to swim for their club.

This is an excellent introduction to competition for most. It is not unusual for this to be the very first time a young swimmer has ever competed . The emphasis is

firmly on the testing of 'effective' individual swimming skills and techniques in a 'competitive' setting – often as part of a team or a pair.

Coaches and Team Managers are trusted to select at the right level to ensure fair and equal competition

Ideally the event is booked at a Central venue for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon each month for 3 or 4 months – say a term - at a time. Swimmers receive a hat, certificates and other small tokens of recognition and reward for or taking part.

So the event is developmental and seeks to provide an introduction to competition and the challenge of testing newly acquired skills, techniques and competencies.

Although club-based, we strongly recommend forging and strengthening links with centre-based programmes and local learn to swim schemes as well as local partnership development camps and schools festivals.

Colin Christmas.