

Bangor Swimming Club Athlete Pathway

Welcome to the 2025–2026 Season

Welcome to the new season at Bangor Swimming Club. This document outlines our athlete pathway for the 2025–2026 season. It explains the structure of our squad system, entry criteria, goals, expectations, and development opportunities for all swimmers. Our aim is to provide a clear and transparent guide to help athletes and parents understand how progress is made through the club and what is expected at each stage. Please note that all squad movements are based on individual assessments and decisions made in the best interest of the swimmer's long-term development.

Bangor Club Athlete Pathway

The Bangor SC competitive squad pathway is outlined below. Entry criteria into each squad are decided by our head coach following assessment – including use of time trails, and competitions that are held regularly throughout the season, especially for the Junior Squads. Target competitions will be decided each season following discussion between the squad lead coach and Head Coach.

We have swimmers from age 7+ entering our junior squads developing their skills, to swimmers in Age Group and Performance Squads training to compete and optimise performance with targets set to peak at specific meets. This is overseen by our Head Coach.

Squad Level	Club System	Training Phase	Details
1	Entry	Learning to Swim	The primary objective is to learn the skills involved in swimming by developing each of the four strokes, as well as the core elements of body control, feel for the water, and stable movement patterns. This Junior skill development is particularly important during the early childhood years, beginning at ages 5 to 6 and continuing through ages 9 to 11.
	Junior 5		
2	Junior 4		
	Junior 3		
3	Junior 2	Learning to Train	The second phase that each swimmer enters involves mastering basic skills, with a significant focus on training. This phase aims to maximize potential during the rapid increase in physical capacities that occur during growth and maturation cycles, typically starting at ages 10 or 11 and extending to ages 15 or 16. The primary objective is to progressively extend the volume of training. Training volume becomes a critical factor in long-term improvement. Quality is demonstrated through efficient and effective strokes under increased seasonal loading.
	Junior 1		
4	Junior Age Group		
	Age Group		
5	National Performance	Learning to Achieve	This stage occurs after swimmers master the first two stages, typically in later Age group and early open competition. Success here depends on a strong foundation from phase 2. Swimmers begin event-specific training to develop attributes needed for their races.

**** Movement between squads is based on performance, progress and coaching assessment – not strictly on age. All squad moves are subject to space in the respective squads and all squad decisions by the Head Coach are final.**

**** Please note the Pathway does not show the Training or (potential) Masters Squads which are offered to swimmers who wish to continue swimming outside of the pathway.**

** Transitioning athletes/Fast Track

The fast-track program allows identified athletes to access a transition program for 3, 6 or 12 months. Transitional athletes will be identified and engaged with during the season. The head coach can make exceptions based upon exceptional swimmer performance.

1. September - athletes identified to be prepared for following season
 - Usually chronologically selected cohort
 - Small groups prepared together, on a gender, stroke C performance basis
2. January - athletes identified by staff from short course performance
 - Age Group to Performance transition only
 - Substantial change biologically
 - Based on outstanding SC performance

- Performance which exceeds predicted considerably
3. April - athletes identified by staff after cycle 2
- Junior C Age Group athletes identified after National qualification period
 - Based on performances which exceed predictions, and in line with squad above

Bangor National Performance

Squad Aims s Objectives

To compete at the highest level with total commitment to an individually agreed training program with the Head Coach. Swimmers will be targeting the Irish Summer Championships, Irish Championships (trials) and International competitions, and should be prepared to do what it takes to reach the highest levels. This is the top squad in the club and as such should reflect the highest standards from our older Junior and Senior Swimmers. BSC Performance swimmers should be a positive example and role models for the other squads in the club program.

Ages:

Male 15 years+ (considered 14 years)

Female 14 years+ (considered 13 years)

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Qualification for Swim Ireland McCullagh International in minimum 2 events (440+Fina Points)
- Proven ability to follow a demanding training program
- Positive attitude, coachability, work ethic, and personal responsibility for performance
- Full commitment to team events and relays
- Signed Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- Team player: polite, supportive, caring, empathetic, and respectful to teammates and staff
- Consistently attend 90+% of agreed pool and land sessions (reviewed monthly with coach)

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Boys 15+ C Girls 14+
- Boys 14 C Girls 13 demonstrating consistent qualifying standards in competition and training
- OR:
Swimmers assessed by the Head Coach to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within a squad on a probationary period of between 3 – 12 months. The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad criteria and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated competitions and within training.
- Short Course Rankings are taken into consideration.

Swimming Training Basic Criteria

- Ability to consistently demonstrate quality off walls/turns in streamline under pressure
- Ability to consistently handle High Performance training demands – Swim, Pull, Kick, IM (Individual Medley), Individual strokes; Hold Stroke Count C pace whilst doubling up 100/200/400 Pace, using speed / pace charts

Land Training/Weights Criteria

- To commit to a land training program agreed at the start of each training cycle by the Head Coach (this may include any program of rehabilitation prescribed by a medical practitioner)
- Arrive 10 minutes before each session and stay 10 minutes after each session for stretching.
- Meet approved norms for press-up/pull-up/squat technique

Criteria for Squad Exit

- Unable to attain the relevant performance standard.
- Consistently Late to sessions (pool and land) without agreement
- Consistently unable to maintain the Squad training commitment, as agreed with Head Coach.
- Consistently unable to maintain the Squad competition commitment, as indicated on competition calendar.
- Showing no demonstrable progress towards achieving the required standards.
- Training at other clubs or seeking additional coaching/technical sessions outside of the Lead Coaches Planning, without authorisation.

Pathways

- Not meeting criteria – A move into either Training Program (if available, Masters) or Age Group
- Exit months are typically December or August/September (ready for the next cycle). However, the head coach can action an exit on individual cases throughout the season.

Bangor Age Group

Squad Aims s Objectives

To compete at Regional C National level with total commitment to an individually agreed training program with the Age Group Coach lead. Swimmers will be targeting the Irish National Summer Championships, and/or Ulster championship level competitions, and should be prepared to do what it takes to reach their potential. This is the top Age Group Squad in the club and as such should reflect the highest standards from our Junior Swimmers. Age Group swimmers should have bought into the positive culture of the club supporting their teammates, engaging in training and racing in a variety of events in competition. It is expected that there will be strong support from parents both for the coaching program and objectives of the squad and club.

Ages

Male 12 years to 16 years

Female 11 years to 15 years

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Qualification for National Championships in multiple events, excluding 50m events.
- Proven ability and commitment to following a demanding training program (swimmers, with parental support)
- A positive mind set, with the ability to take personal responsibility for performances
- 100% commitment to team events (Regional/National)
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic
- Consistently attending 80% of available agreed sessions (Pool and Land)

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- To have competed in an Ulster championships (Summer or Winter)
- Swimmers assessed by the Head Coach to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within a squad on a probationary period of between 3 – 12 months. The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad criteria and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated competitions and within training.
- Swimmers that are identified/selected for any Ulster Skills or Regional programme
- Short Course Rankings are taken into consideration.

Swimming Training Basic Criteria

- Ability to demonstrate quality off walls/turns in streamline under pressure
- Ability to handle Increasing training demands – Swim, Pull, Kick, IM, Individual strokes; Hold Stroke Count C pace whilst doubling up 100/200/400 Pace, using speed / pace charts
- Hold a competitive time on 200Free C 200IM (expected to be 2.45 and 3 min respectively)
- Understands training cycles and sessions; and can take full personal responsibility for their efforts in training sessions and is in line with the expectations of the Lead Age Group coach

Land Training/Weights Criteria

- To commit to a minimum of 1 land training session a week.
- Arrive 10 minutes before each session and stay 10 minutes after each session for stretching.
- Can follow safely all instruction given in a land-based environment.

Criteria for Squad Exit

- Unable to attain the relevant performance standard.
- Consistently late to sessions (pool and land) without agreement
- Consistently unable to maintain the Age Group training commitment, as agreed with Head Coach.
- Consistently unable to maintain the Age Group competition commitment, as per fixtures list
- Showing no demonstrable progress towards achieving the required standards for Performance.
- Training at other clubs or seeking additional coaching/technical sessions outside of the Lead Coaches Planning

Pathways

- Not meeting criteria – A move into either Training or Junior Age Group (JAG)
- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Performance Squad, or exposure under 'Fast Track'
- Exit months are December, March, August/September (ready for the next cycle). The head coach can move athletes throughout the season based upon exceptional coaching feedback.

Bangor Junior Age Group

Squad Aims s Objectives

The Junior Age Group squad will be primarily for swimmers aged 11-14 who will be competing mainly at a regional level, and on occasions at a national level. The training content will be focused heavily on stroke technique C skill development and a 4-stroke approach will be implemented for swimmers in this age range. The programme will build on the competencies developed in the Junior Club Squads. Physical conditioning will commence in this squad to compliment the focused technique work. We aim to provide swimmers with the technical foundation on which physical conditioning can be built at a later stage.

Ages

Male 10 years to 15 years

Female 9 years to 14 years

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Desire and willingness to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- 100% commitment to team events
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic
- Compete in full Future Challengers (and/or Aspiring Champions) series of events
- Good technical knowledge of strokes and competitive rules
- Consistently attending 70-100% of sessions

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer has completed the Bangor SC assessment for entry into squad, to include:
 - Completion of up 100 Free Repeats (e.g. 8x100 on 2) and similar on Back, and IM (with correct turns)
 - Be confident in swimming 100 and 200m events in competition
- Assessed to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within the squad based on coach assessment
- The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad criteria in training and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated meets C open competitions

Land Training Criteria

- Introduction to land training.

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Age Group
- Change of pathway - Non-Competitive pathway

Criteria for Squad Exit

- Unable to attain the relevant competitive standard.
- Consistently Late to sessions (pool and land) without agreement
- Showing no demonstrable progress towards achieving the required standards for Age Performance.
- Training at other clubs or seeking additional coaching/technical sessions outside of the lead coaches planning

Pathways

- Not meeting criteria – A move into Training Squad.
- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Age Group
- Exit months are December C August/September (ready for the next cycle). The head coach can move athletes throughout the season based upon exceptional coaching feedback.

Bangor Junior Squads

Squad Aims s Objectives

The Junior Program emphasises skill development, movement literacy, and the cultivation of competitive abilities. Swimmers are trained to master the four strokes and all essential competitive elements necessary for the commencement of their athletic journey.

Swimmers advance to the Performance squads upon demonstrating the capability to maintain stroke and turn proficiency in accordance with FINA regulations across various events—either through competition or training Time Trials. The objective of our Junior Program is to ensure optimal development of young swimmers and establish a solid foundation and platform to enable them to reach their full potential.

Areas covered:

- Advanced stroke technique
- Starting, turning and finishing techniques
- How to train effectively (warming up and swimming down, endurance, clock reading, lane discipline)
- Land training:
 - Coordination
 - Movement literacy
 - Stretching
 - Injury prevention
- Gala procedures and rules
- Basic nutritional guidance
- Mentorship and advice for competitive swimming

Average ages:

7-11 years

Bangor Junior 1

Squad Aims s Objectives

To compete at domestic Open meets, Skills Challenges C Future Challenger series along with a good commitment to the program. Swimmers should aim to reach the highest levels based on ability and commitment levels. Swimmers will have good technique on all 4 strokes, as well as starts, turns, finishes and relay takeovers. Swimmers will also have good understanding of swimming at different intensities. Proven ability and commitment to following a competitive training programme.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Full commitment to training in Junior 2 for a full cycle prior to squad movements.
- Desire and willingness to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- 100% commitment to team events
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic
- Compete in full Future Challengers series of events
- Good technical knowledge of strokes and competitive rules
- Consistently attending 70-100% of sessions

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer has completed the Bangor SC assessment for entry into squad to include:
 - Completion of training sets e.g. 5x100 Free on 2.00, 5x100 Back on 2.15, 4x100 IM on 2.30 (with correct turns)
 - Be confident (or working towards) swimming 100 and 200m events in competition
- Assessed to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within the squad based on coach assessment
- The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad criteria in training and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated Future Challenger meets C open competitions

Land Training Criteria

- Introduction to pre/post pool movements.

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Junior Performance
- Change of pathway - Non-Competitive pathway

Bangor Junior 2

Squad Aims s Objectives

To compete at a club level with good commitment to the program. Swimmers will be targeting Skills Challenges, Future Challenger series and any inter/intra club meets. Swimmers should aim to reach the highest skill levels based on ability and commitment levels. Swimmers will have good technique on all 4 strokes, as well as starts, turns, finishes and relay takeovers. Swimmers will also have good understanding of swimming at different intensities.

Entry criteria:

- Full commitment to training in Junior 3 for a full cycle prior to squad movements.
- Desire and will to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- 100% commitment to team events
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic
- Compete in full Future Challenger series of events if age supports entry
- Must have basic knowledge of rules on all four strokes, diving and turning

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer has completed the Bangor SC assessment for entry into squad to include:
 - Completion of up to 4x100 Free on 2.30, 4x100 Back on 3.00 (with correct turns)
 - Competent on all 4 strokes or IM training sets
 - Be confident in swimming 100m events in competition
- Assessed to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within the squad based on coach assessment
- The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad criteria and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated competitions and Skill Challenges within training.

Land Training Criteria

- Introduction to land training.

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move to Junior 1
- Requires assistance - Combine club C teaching program

Bangor Junior 3

Squad Aims s Objectives

To compete at a club level with good commitment to the program. Swimmers will be targeting Skills Challenges and any local inter/intra club competitions. Swimmers should aim to reach the highest skill levels based on ability and commitment levels. Swimmers will be developing good technique on all 4 strokes, as well as starts, turns, finishes and relay takeovers

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Full commitment to training in Junior 4 for at least one cycle prior to squad movements.
- Desire and will to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- 100% commitment to team events
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer can complete 100m in IM, free, back, breast and butterfly (with legal turns).
- Swimmer can complete a competitive start and demonstrate correct finishes in all 4 strokes.
- Assessed to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within the squad based on coach assessment
- The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall
- squad assessment goals and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated competitions
- and Skill Challenges within training.

Land Training Criteria

- Introduction to land training.

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Junior 2
- Requires assistance - Combine club C teaching program

Bangor Junior 4

Squad Aims s Objectives

Continued understanding of competition rules for all strokes and race starts and turns. Improved learning of the skills involved in swimming by developing each of the four strokes, as well as the core elements of body control, feel for the water, and stable movement patterns.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Full commitment to training in Junior 5 for at least one cycle prior to squad movements.
- Desire and will to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- 100% commitment to team events
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer can complete (legally) 25m in all 4 strokes with an introduction into IM
- Swimmer can complete 50m free, back, breast (with legal turns).
- Swimmer can complete a competitive start and demonstrate correct finishes in all 4 strokes.
- Assessed to have near term potential and or having longer term potential may be admitted or retained within the squad based on coach assessment
- The swimmer must be able to show commitment and demonstrable progress towards the overall squad assessment goals and show improvement (based on goal setting) at designated competitions and Skill Challenges within training.

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Junior 3
- Requires assistance - Combine club C teaching program

Bangor Junior 5

Squad Aims s Objectives

To develop an understanding of competition rules for all strokes and race starts and turns. Continued learning of the skills involved in swimming by developing each of the four strokes, as well as the core elements of body control, feel for the water, and stable movement patterns.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Desire and will to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Considered criteria for entry into squad

- Swimmer can complete 25m in all 4 strokes with an introduction into IM

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Junior 4
- Requires assistance - Combine club C teaching program

Bangor Entry

Squad Aims s Objectives

The primary objective is to learn the skills involved in swimming by developing each of the four strokes, as well as the core elements of body control, feel for the water, and stable movement patterns.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Assessment into club and acceptance into Entry Squad
- Desire and will to improve and progress through Bangor SC athlete's pathway.
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Junior 4 or Junior 5.
- Requires assistance - Combine club C teaching program

Bangor Training Squad

Squad Aims s Objectives

A squad to develop all 4 strokes, building a strong foundation of swimming and refining technical skills. Swimmers will have the option to compete at competitions. Athletes who do not qualify or wish to abstain from the squad criteria but are keen to continue training to maintain fitness and friendships.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Coach invite extended to candidates (space permitting).
- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility for move into Age Group Squads

*** Please note in the 25/26 season Bangor SC will endeavour to provide an opportunity for committed swimmers in Training Squad who wish to compete or significantly supplement another water-based sport e.g. Water Polo, Triathlon. Spaces will be limited, for an extra 2 sessions totalling 3 more hours per week.*

Bangor Masters (*under review*)

Squad Aims s Objectives

A programme targeted at swimmers over the age of 18 years who want to train and perform at Open or Master's national competitions. Sessions will work to develop all 4 strokes, building a strong foundation of swimming and refining technical skills.

Accepted criteria for entry into squad

- Signed and returned copies of Swimmer Code of Conduct C Parents Code of Conduct
- A Team player – polite, supportive, caring and empathetic

Pathways

- Exceeds performance levels – possibility to explore additional training options.

Appendix:Equipment

Bangor SC Kit List Matrix	Perf	AG	JAG	Train	J1	J2	J3-J5	Entry
Kit Net Bag	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Water Bottle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fins (Short Length)			Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Alignment Board						Y	Y	Y
Kickboard	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Pull Buoy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Paddles (Finis yellow agility)	Y	Y	Y					
Finger Paddles	Y	Y	Y					
Snorkel	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		
Yellow Ankle Band	Y	Y						
Power Fins	Y	Y						
Red Chute	Y	Y						
Loofah or Sponge (to attach to chute line)	Y							
DragSox	Opt							