

South West Region

Annual Report

2025



January

Welcome to our 2025 Regional President

We would like to welcome Maurice Cleaver into the role of the Regional President for 2025 after being nominated by Wiltshire County ASA.

Maurice first joined Malmesbury Marlins ASC in 1982 when his son joined, and he was coerced 2 years later to help on the Teaching staff. He attended and passed the ASA Preliminary Teaching Award and followed this with further teaching and coaching courses. He has been involved with the club as- teacher, coach, lifeguard, Vice-Chairman, Chief Coach and President to the current day.

He first attended the Wiltshire Easter Course in 1989 where he was an Assistant Coach. This was a yearly event until 1996, when one of his children became seriously ill. He resumed working with the Easter Course in 2004 and then ran a group as Coach, until the Easter Courses finished in 2010.

In 1995 Maurice qualified as a judge, later upgrading his qualifications to ASA Timekeeper and Judge, and is currently a licensed J2. Since 1995 he has officiated at Moonraker Leagues, County Championships and Age Groups as well as Open Meets and other events.

In 2002 he was able to resume bath-side teaching and coaching with Malmesbury ASA. By this time, retired from full time work, Maurice also assisted with school swimming lessons and still occasionally covers lessons at the local Leisure Centre.

In 2002 Maurice accepted the role as Wilts County Welfare Officer, stepping in, when we, sadly, lost Margaret Lewis. He held this position for 17yrs, yet many in the County were probably not aware of this. He covered the role superbly. He had many difficult situations on which to help and advise clubs and individuals. This was done quietly, with great understanding and empathy and handled totally professionally.

In 2004, when we were dealing with many problems with swimmers' eligibility within the County Maurice also accepted the role of one of the two arbitrators to decide whether swimmers could compete or not. A difficult job, which he covered in his usual fair and unflappable way.

Maurice was elected as Wilts County President in 2005, as Malmesbury's nomination for their year.

In 2008 he was elected Chairman of Wilts County ASA a position he held for 9 years. Again, an exemplary example of what a Chairman should be - an iron fist in a velvet glove, always striving to support and promote the County and our sport but always supporting other job holders totally and respecting all the work they did.

As well as the County Executives, he has attended many of the sub-committee meetings covering the same role. Whatever the type of meeting, Maurice has handled the meeting in his fair and honest way. He is totally trusted by all the delegates, and they know that it does not matter from where you come, the decisions will not be biased, and his only interest is doing the best he can for the sport and the swimmers.

At the end of his term as Chairman he was made a Life member of Wilts County ASA (now Wiltshire Swimming).



South West Officials on Tour



Pictured above left is Adrian D'Cunha, Jason Tout (Devon) and Sue Gabriel (Cornwall) officiated at Ponds Forge, Sheffield for the BUSC Competition.

Pictured above right is the South West Officials supporting the Masters Inter County event at Millfield School, Street.

Swim England Para Winter Championships.

SW officials Sue Gabriel, Fiona Wilkinson (Cornwall), Tracey Roberts (Dorset), Dave Jones (Wilts) and Nicky Vause (Somerset) enjoyed two days of thrilling competition at Sandwell . Nicky made her debut as a national referee since qualifying as a World Para Swimming International Technical Official in March.

The officials pictured right attended the Swim Wales Winter Championships

Martin Walters and Paul Robbins pictured and Lisa Mathewson and Tania Yelland also attended but are not pictured



February

Swim England members given invaluable opportunity to help shape new coaching strategy

Coaches, participants, parents and clubs are being given an invaluable opportunity to play an active role in shaping the future of coaching in aquatics.



Swim England is to launch a new coaching strategy in 2025 and the views of the aquatics community will be at its heart.

The Co-creation of the Future of Coaching process aims to reconnect and redefine the purpose of coaching, build on existing good practice and create a thriving and flourishing coaching culture.

A survey is being distributed to more than 129,000 Swim England members over the next few weeks, while a series of nationwide workshops will also be held for coaches to explore, reflect, discuss and develop ideas.

The Co-creation of the Future of Coaching will aim to achieve better experiences for coaches, clubs and participants.

Craig McCulloch, Swim England head of coaching, said the insight gathered from the survey and workshops would help to lay the foundations of the new strategy.

“This is a key chance to be part of a shared vision which shapes the future of coaching across all aquatic sports,” said Craig.

“The Listening Report highlighted a number of negative experiences in coaching and we’re committed to ensuring this doesn’t happen in the future.

“However, we can’t do this on our own.

“The Co-creation of the Future of Coaching is a process that will create a sense of belonging and shared ownership. It will be a strategy for coaches, informed by coaches and everyone they work closely with.

“By sharing your views, you’ll be helping to ensure that we foster a culture that is supportive and inclusive, where coaches are equipped to lead by example and inspire everyone.”

The survey will ask coaches to share their views on the fundamental purpose of coaching, what is good coaching, the challenges they face in their role and what they would like to see from coach development in the future.

Participants and parents will also be asked what qualities they value in a coach and how they feel when training.

The survey will be open until the end of April, while the workshops will take place on the following dates throughout March, with sessions taking place at two times – 1.30pm to 4pm and 5.30pm to 8pm – at each venue:

Craig added: “This is an exciting process which will drive significant change and create a roadmap for the future which the coaching community can be proud of.”

Artistic Swimming Regional Squad Selections



Congratulations to those athletes who are part of the South West Artistic Swimming Squad for 2025. Lots of happy faces ready for a good year of competition.

Artistic Swimming GB Squad Announcements

The following athletes from City of Bristol Aquatics have been selected for the 2025 GB Squads:

Senior Squad

Kate Shortman
Isabelle Thorpe
Holly Hughes
Amelie Williams
Pia Lanham
Marie-Ange Siegfried

Junior Squad

Danae Boitsidis
Robyn Ashworth
Junior Development
Josephine Phillips
Alycia Garrett
Molly Hussey
Youth Squad
Hannah Gibbons
Anastasia Appleby
Elsbeth Brand

Youth Development

Harper Mosely-Mackenzie

Well done to all of you for such a great achievement.

March

Swindon ASC Para Squad Have a Visit from a Paralympian

On Sunday 16th March, Swindon ASC Para Squad had a very special treat when Stephanie Millward Mbe visited their training session at Highworth Pool. The former Paralympian has represented Great Britain in four Paralympics, Beijing (2008), London (2012), Rio (2016) and Tokyo (2020) and won an astonishing 10 medals including two gold medals.

Stephanie delivered a great presentation about her swimming career and the challenges that she has overcome, with an inspirational and engaging talk about the importance of goals and chasing your dreams. Stephanie then spent time coaching the swimmers in the pool covering skills and technique that have helped her to take on and beat the worlds best Para swimmers.



The swimmers would like to say a very big thank you to Stephanie for the classroom and pool session, the swimmers have definitely been inspired and worked very hard in the pool. We would also like to say a big thank you to Artic ONE Foundation which is a fantastic charity which provides opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved in sports. The charity has awarded grants to many para athletes from across a range of different sports from grass roots level to Paralympic.

Somerset ASA Launches New Masters Meet

Somerset ASA are venturing into the world of Master meets!

The aim is to raise the profile of swimming and Masters swimming in Somerset, the South West and the wider Masters community.

With this being our first one, medals will be one commemorative medal for each swimmer who competes on the day. A bespoke design to celebrate the first meet!

We would welcome entries from all, however, should there be a need to restrict entries, Somerset swimmers will be given priority.

Details of the meet can be found on the Somerset ASA website: <https://somersetasa.co.uk/somerset-masters/>

The Region Completes the Regional Governance Code

The South West Region have successfully completed the Regional Governance Code this month.

The code consists of 6 areas which are:

- Governance - Committee Structures, Articles of Association, Annual General Meeting procedures.
- Welfare and Safeguarding - a regional plan and delivery of this.
- Diversity and Inclusion - regional Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)
- Communication - a strategy within the region
- Standards and Conduct - Board evaluation, Code of Conducts, Conflict of Interest Policy, risk register and risk assessments.
- People - looking at the individuals delivering in the Region including the Board and ensuring they are compliant in terms of Safeguarding and Qualifications.

By completing this the region have completed a process of check and challenge to ensure that all the standards are met and we are running to all the correct policies and procedures.

April

Officials at Aquatics GB Summer Champs



SW Officials Nicky Vause (Somerset), Sue Gabriel, Fiona Wilkinson (Cornwall) and Steve Meeter (Dorset) travelled to the London Aquatics Centre to Officiate at the Aquatics GB Swimming Championships.

May

Team Bath AS Win Community Youth Group of the Year

Thanks to the funding Team Bath AS received from Somerset ASA last year, we were able to launch our junior pathway at Dragonfly Leisure, Midsomer Norton, in September.

I'm thrilled to share that, following a very successful eight months, the club (working in partnership with Dragonfly Leisure) was named Midsomer Norton Community Youth Group of the Year 2025 at a ceremony at the Midsomer Norton Civic Hall. This award recognises the positive impact we've made in encouraging sport, physical activity, and well-being in the local community. Congratulations to all at the club!



June

Regional Artistic Swimming Squad Shines at SE Regional Games



The South West Regional Artistic Swimming Squad, made up of talented swimmers aged 11–15, proudly represented the region at the annual SE Regional Games held at Hengrove Pool on Friday, May 30th.

The competition featured a combination of land, figures, and relay events. The squad, comprising 14 swimmers—10 from City of Bristol (COB) and 4 from Cheltenham Artistic Swimming Club (CASC)—delivered an impressive performance across all disciplines.

The team placed 3rd in the land section, showed great skill and coordination to finish 1st in the relay, and ultimately secured 3rd place overall in the competition.

Congratulations to all the swimmers for their dedication, teamwork, and outstanding results!

Meet the Squad

City of Bristol Artistic Swimming

Wren Jones, Konstantina Litsiu, Elsa Earnshaw, Matilsa Ticehurt, Ellie Cope, Elsa LeBleu, Titilayo Adetols, Ena Stagg, Agnes Rogers, Isabelle Rogers

Cheltenham Artistic Swimming Club

Lottie Evans, Lily Skinner, Hattie Morgan-Lloyd, Megan Roberts

Christine Merrifield Honoured with Prestigious Mary Black Award

Kernow Artistic Swimming Club is thrilled to announce that our very own Christine Merrifield has been awarded the Mary Black Trophy for Services to Artistic Swimming – one of the most prestigious accolades in the sport.

This annual award, which has been in existence for over 45 years, was established by Mary Black, a pioneering figure in artistic swimming. Mary was a member of the FINA Technical Synchronised Swimming Committee (TSSC), judged at the highest levels internationally, and refereed at three Olympic Games. Her legacy lives on in the form of this trophy, which honours individuals who have shown outstanding service and dedication to the sport of artistic swimming.



A Life Devoted to Artistic Swimming

Christine's name was kept secret until the official announcement this year, which was made on behalf of Maria Ramos, Chair of the Swim England Artistic Swimming Leadership Group (ASLG), who was away at the European Championships. The award was presented by Maurice Cleaver, who delivered these heartfelt words from Maria:

"The winner of the 2025 trophy is one of those people who is exceptionally passionate about the sport and has dedicated over 25 years to sharing the knowledge and inspiring others. Coach, official, technical expert, teacher, computing skills, music editor and committee member – she thinks nothing of driving over six hours in a day to coach and learn and always brings back her knowledge to the club."

"Her energy and commitment keeps the club constantly striving to achieve their best – at both grading days and competitions. What a testament to her efforts when all swimmers say: 'we love her, she is always super helpful when we need her.'"

Christine embodies everything this award represents: tireless dedication, selfless service, and a deep love for the sport. Whether it's travelling across the country to further her learning, mentoring new coaches and officials, or offering support and encouragement to every swimmer, Christine is at the heart of everything Kernow Artistic Swimming Club stands for.

An Inspiration to All

We are beyond proud of Christine and grateful for the inspiration and leadership she brings to our club every single day. Her passion and energy are infectious, and this award is a well-deserved recognition of everything she contributes — not only to Kernow but to the wider artistic swimming community.

Please join us in congratulating Christine Merrifield, recipient of the 2025 Mary Black Trophy for Services to Artistic Swimming. 🙌🏆👏

July

Exciting Coaching Opportunities in Regional Swimming Programmes

Swim England South West launched a recruitment drive for Regional Skills Coaches across three key development programmes: the Regional Development Programme (RDP), Regional Distance Development Programme (RDDP), and 14–16 Development Days. These roles provided an opportunity for coaches to support athlete progression within the regional pathway while gaining valuable experience in a performance environment.

The programmes delivered a combination of pool-based, open water, and online activity across the 2025–2026 season, engaging coaches in varied development settings. Successful applicants were required to hold relevant Swim England qualifications, alongside safeguarding and DBS certification, ensuring high standards of delivery.

In addition to supporting swimmer development, the initiative contributed to the wider coaching workforce by offering paid opportunities, professional development aligned with national programme principles, and the chance to collaborate with experienced coaching teams across the region.

Para Swimming Training Opportunities

Swim England South West delivered a structured programme of Para Swimming training sessions over the 2025 and into the 2026 season, designed to provide high-quality, inclusive development opportunities for swimmers across the region. The programme was open to both classified and non-classified athletes, ensuring an accessible entry point while also supporting those already progressing along the performance pathway.

Across three regional sessions, swimmers benefited from a holistic training approach that combined focused pool-based coaching with dedicated pre- and post-session mobility work. Sessions were delivered by experienced coaching staff, providing athletes with technical feedback, stroke development, and guidance aligned to national programme standards. This approach ensured that swimmers were supported not only in performance progression but also in developing good training habits and physical resilience.

Delivered at accessible regional venues, the sessions attracted a wide range of participants, from those new to para swimming through to athletes competing at regional and national level. This created a positive and inclusive training environment, enabling swimmers to learn alongside peers, build confidence, and develop a stronger sense of belonging within the sport.

The programme made a significant contribution to strengthening the regional para swimming pathway. It supported athlete retention and progression, enhanced engagement across clubs, and provided valuable opportunities for swimmers to access expert coaching and regional-level training experiences. In addition, the sessions helped to build connections between athletes, coaches, and the wider para swimming community, reinforcing Swim England South West's commitment to inclusivity and long-term athlete development.

August

September

Regional Awards 2025



The banner features the Swim England South West logo on the left and the National Awards 2025 logo on the right. The background is a dark teal with light blue abstract shapes.

Categories:

- Club of the Year - Sport Specific
- Volunteer of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Technical Official of the Year
- Participation and Community Coach of the Year
- Children/Age Group Coach of the Year
- Talent Development Coach of the Year

Winners of the Regional awards in the above categories will be forwarded onto the National Selection Panel.

On Sunday 21st September, we gathered at the Holiday Inn, Taunton for a fantastic afternoon of celebration at our Regional Awards Ceremony. The event shone a spotlight on the incredible dedication, passion, and achievements of individuals and clubs from across the region who continue to make a real difference in the world of aquatics.

Award Winners 2025

- **Children and Age Group Coach of the Year** – Sarah Cozens, Bristol & South Gloucestershire SC
- **Technical Official of the Year** – Andrew Ryczanowski
- **Young Volunteer of the Year** – Sophie York, Team Bath AS
- **Swimming Club of the Year** – Forest of Dean SC
- **Water Polo Club of the Year** – Exeter Water Polo Club
- **Artistic Swimming Club of the Year** – Cheltenham Artistic Swimming Club
- **Volunteer of the Year** – Simon Gale, Bristol & South Gloucestershire SC
- **Participation and Community Coach of the Year** - Paula Rutherford, Swindon ASC

👏 A huge congratulations to all our winners and nominees — your hard work and commitment are an inspiration to the aquatics community.

We would also like to thank everyone who joined us for making the afternoon so special. Here's to another year of celebrating excellence in aquatics across the region!



City of Bristol Top Up Sessions

The City of Bristol Aquatics Beacon Programme continued to provide valuable supplementary training opportunities for swimmers across the region during the 2025–2026 season. Designed to complement club-based training, the programme offered access to additional high-quality sessions, with a particular focus on Long Course training, supporting athletes in adapting to competition environments and enhancing performance readiness.



Open to swimmers from a wide range of clubs, the initiative played an important role in broadening access to facilities and coaching expertise that may not be consistently available within all home programmes. In addition to athlete benefits, the sessions also created opportunities for coach development, enabling attending coaches to observe, learn, and engage with different coaching practices and performance environments.

Cycle 1 of the programme ran throughout the early part of the season, with sessions delivered across September to December 2025 on the following dates:

September: 6, 13, 20, 27
October: 4, 11, 18
November: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
December: 6

The Beacon Programme contributed positively to the regional performance pathway by supporting athlete progression, increasing collaboration between clubs, and enhancing the overall training landscape within the South West. By providing consistent access to Long Course water time and a high-performance environment, the programme helped swimmers build confidence, technical skills, and competition preparedness ahead of key meets in the season.

Further information, including booking details and future cycles, is available via the City of Bristol Aquatics website.

Regional Inter-County Water Polo Tournament 2025

The Swim England South West Regional Inter-County Water Polo Tournament took place on **7 September 2025 at Millfield Pool**, bringing together county teams from across the region to compete across multiple age groups.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for young athletes to represent their counties in a competitive and development-focused environment. Matches were closely contested across all age groups, highlighting the improving standard of water polo within the region.

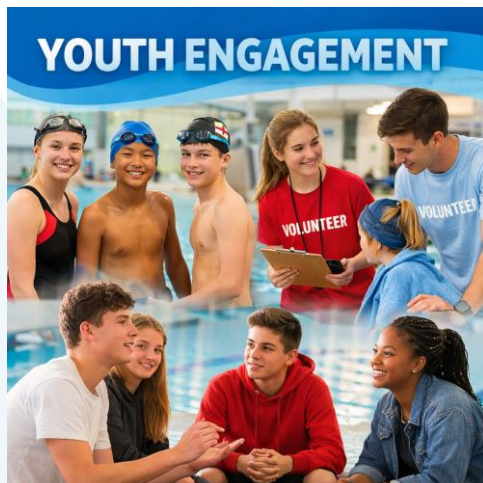
In the **Under-11 Mixed competition**, a highly competitive and evenly matched contest between Devon and Somerset resulted in a draw, remaining level even after both penalty shootouts and sudden death—an outcome ultimately declared a tie by the tournament director.

The **Under-13 Mixed competition** featured strong performances from multiple counties, with Devon and Dorset both recording convincing victories, while Gloucester County also demonstrated competitiveness across their fixtures. Results across the group stages reflected a good balance of emerging talent and developing team play, with several closely fought matches contributing to an engaging competition.

Overall, the tournament played an important role in supporting the regional water polo pathway, offering athletes early exposure to representative competition and fostering inter-county engagement. The event also provided a platform for skill development, teamwork, and talent identification, contributing to the continued growth of water polo across the South West.

October

Launch of the SW Youth Panel and Young Volunteer Programme



During the 2025–2026 season, Swim England South West launched two key initiatives—the Youth Panel and the Young Volunteer Programme—to strengthen engagement with younger members and ensure their voices and contributions are embedded within the region’s development.

The SESW Youth Panel was established to give young people aged 15–18 a platform to represent the views of athletes and volunteers across aquatics. Panel members act as ambassadors for their peers, providing insight into regional decision-making, raising key issues from the community, and supporting communication between young people and the wider region. The panel also connects directly with the national Youth Advisory

Panel, ensuring regional voices contribute to the broader direction of the sport. Members are expected to engage in regular online meetings and contribute feedback, helping to shape a more inclusive and representative environment.

Complementing this, the Young Volunteer Programme was introduced for 14–18 year olds, offering a structured pathway into volunteering across all aquatic disciplines. Running from October 2025 to July 2026, the programme enables participants to complete a minimum of 25 hours of volunteering through a combination of workshops, projects, and practical opportunities within clubs and regional activities. Delivered through a blend of online learning and hands-on experience, the programme supports the development of key skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork, while also providing valuable insight into roles within the sport.

Together, these programmes represent a significant step forward in youth engagement within the region. They not only empower young people to influence the future of aquatics but also create clear pathways into volunteering, leadership, and future workforce roles. By investing in young people, Swim England South West is helping to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and forward-thinking aquatic community.

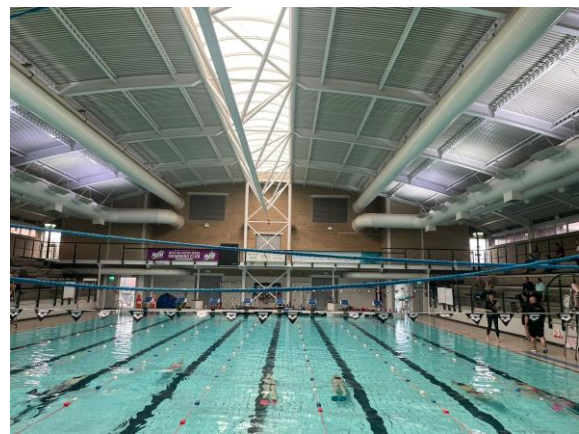
Launch of the New 14-16yr Development Programme in Partnership with AP Race

The 2025–2026 season saw the introduction of a new Regional Development Programme for 14–16 year olds, marking an exciting expansion of the South West performance pathway. Delivered in partnership with AP Race, the programme was designed to provide targeted development opportunities for swimmers who are progressing beyond county level but are not yet part of regional or national programmes.

The programme offered a high-quality, immersive development experience, combining pool-based technical sessions with land training, athlete lifestyle education, and dedicated parent engagement. Swimmers benefited from focused work on key skills—including short-axis stroke development—alongside exposure to expert coaching and insights from elite-level athletes.

Importantly, the initiative created a bridge within the pathway, ensuring that a wider group of swimmers could access regional-level support and continue their progression within the sport. By opening additional spaces beyond the initial selection cohort, the programme also increased accessibility and engagement across the region.

As a new venture, the programme has strengthened the development landscape within the South West, supporting both athlete progression and retention. It reflects a commitment to providing inclusive, high-quality opportunities that nurture potential, inspire ambition, and prepare swimmers for the next stage of their journey.



November

The Coles Family celebrate Joy's Award of Life Membership of Weston-super-Mare Swimming Club

Joy Coles' Life Membership Award was presented to her by her husband, Mike Coles also a Life Member of the club, as well as being Head Coach of the water polo section, and club secretary. Also pictured are her two sons, Sean and Liam.

The Award was for her work with the club as a team manager, former club social secretary, but most of all her 50 years with the club's water polo section as a table official.



December

Artistic Swimming Report

We have held 6 Grade days in the year with over 241 athletes attending.

The Regional Artistic Swimming Squad consisting of swimmers aged 11-15 represented the South West Region at Hengrove Pool on Friday May 30th, at the annual SE Regional Games competition.

The event was a combination of land, figures and relay events.

The squad of 14 swimmers, 10 from COB and 4 from CASC finished 3rd in the land section and 1st in the relay finishing in overall 3rd place. The Head Squad Coach was Paula Brand Squad Team manager Stacey Jones.

Swimmers Wren Jones, Konstantina Litsiu, Elsa Earnshaw, Matilda Ticehurst, Ellie Cope, Elsa LeBleu, Titilayo Adetola, Ena Stagg, Agnes Rogers, Isabelle Rogers, Lottie Evans all from COB and Lily Skinner, Hattie Morgan-Lloyd, Megan Roberts all from CASC.

4 licensed regional competitions covering Novice figures to Regional Age groups, teams, duets, Combos and Masters were held during the year at various pools.

A Scorers course with 8 successful candidates was completed.

A level 1 teachers' course was held at Taunton with 8 successful candidates.

Christine Merrifield from Kernow Artistic Swimming Club was awarded the Mary Black Award

Mary Hooper
SW Artistic Swimming Regional Manager

Water Polo Report

1. Executive Summary

The 2025 season represents one of the most successful chapters in the history of **Swim England South West (SESW) Water Polo**. The region has evolved into a premier high-performance hub, providing a record number of athletes to Great Britain (GB) and England squads. Key milestones included **Exeter's promotion to Division 1**, **City of Bristol's Championship victory**, and a historic **9th-place European finish** for our senior women in early 2026.

2. Governance and Workforce

Technical Committee: Quarterly meetings (Jan 16, Oct 6, Dec 1) focused on aligning regional talent pathways with National Leadership Group standards.

Young Volunteer Programme: Launched **October 1, 2025**, this initiative successfully recruited 14–18 year olds for coaching and officiating. Notably, the program has fast-tracked the qualification of **Table Officials** to support the BWPL and regional leagues.

Youth Advisory Panel: Established in late 2025 to ensure athlete-led feedback in regional governance.

3. British Water Polo League (BWPL) & National Success

Club Milestones

Exeter (Men's Championship 1): Successfully secured **Promotion to Division 1** for the 2025/26 season. The promotion was clinched in a high-stakes final phase, driven by the scoring prowess of the Powell brothers.

City of Bristol (Men's Championship 2): Crowned **Winners of Championship 2**, demonstrating elite composure with a decisive penalty shootout win during Phase 2.

Cheltenham (Men's Div 1): Maintained their status as a national powerhouse, competing in the Winners' Stage of the top tier.

National Age Group (NAGs) Championships

U19 Female (May 2025): **City of Bristol** were crowned **National Champions**, winning the Dougie Scales Memorial Trophy. **Darcey Tomlinson** scored the winning goal with four seconds remaining in a 14–13 victory over Sheffield.

U19 Open (May 2025): **Cheltenham** secured the **National Bronze Medal** with an 11–10 win over Watford, featuring two critical goals from **Noah Knights-Hume**.

U15 Mixed: **Exeter B** won the Regional Tournament at Millfield (Sept 21).

4. International Honours & Representative Success

Senior & Junior Internationals (GB)

The South West's contribution to the national team was unprecedented across all age groups:

Senior Men: **Kameron Powell**, **Thomas Hunt**, and **Oliver Noyce** (Exeter/Cheltenham) represented **GB Senior Men** in the **European Qualifiers** (Slovenia, June 2025). **Tom Manley** (Devon/Manchester) served as a core leader.

Senior Women: **Katy Cutler** (Bristol) and **Elizabeth Ross** (Cheltenham) were instrumental in the **GB Senior Women's** 9th-place European finish (2026).

Junior Talent: **Jo Lamont-Tuckett** (Exeter) and **India Knights-Hume** (Bristol) represented GB at the **U18 European Championships (Malta)**. **Reuben Powell** (Exeter) competed at the **U18 European Championships (Portugal)**.

Goalkeeping Excellence: **Charlie Dawson** (Exeter) served as the **GB U18 Goalkeeper** during the EU Nations and Athens training camp.

Nordic Water Polo League (NWPL)

Cheltenham expanded the region's international footprint by competing in the **Nordic Water Polo League** qualifiers in late 2025:

Lisbon Qualifiers (November/December 2025): Cheltenham represented the UK in a highly competitive group in Portugal.

Key Match: A standout fixture saw Cheltenham face the South African side **Elevate U23**, resulting in a thrilling **16–17 loss** following a tense penalty shootout. This participation

underscores the club's commitment to high-level European competition outside of domestic league structures.

5. Regional Training Academy (Millfield)

The Academy provided monthly high-performance training for over **130 athletes**. These sessions remain the foundation for the "South West Sharks" representative teams, which saw the **U14 Boys** and **U14 Girls** both compete at the highest level of Division 1 in the 2025 Inter-Regionals.

6. Summary of 2025 Award Winners

Award / Competition	Recipient
National U19 Female MVP	India Knights-Hume (City of Bristol)
National U19 Female Top Scorer	Darcey Tomlinson (Exeter)
National U19 Female Top Keeper	Esme Griffiths (City of Bristol)
Regional Club of the Year	Newton Abbot Water Polo Club
BWPL Promotion	Exeter (to Division 1)
BWPL Championship 2 Winners	City of Bristol

7. Conclusion

The 2025 season has been defined by **promotion, podiums, and professional growth**. With players like **Charlie Dawson, Noah Knights-Hume, and Jo Lamont-Tuckett** bridging the gap between regional talent and international caps, the South West enters 2026 as the leading region for water polo development in the UK.

Para Swimming Report

Para swimming within the South West Region continues to thrive, demonstrating sustained growth, increased engagement, and a strong developmental pathway for athletes at all levels. Over the past year, the programme has built significant momentum, with both participation and performance continuing to improve.

Development and Engagement

A key highlight of the year has been the successful delivery of a series of Development Days, which have played an important role in identifying and nurturing talent. Sessions held at Taunton Prep School (19 April), Riverside Leisure Centre, Exeter (12 July), and Bath (27 September) were all very well attended.

Across these events, over 40 para swimmers took part, including both established athletes and individuals new to the programme. These sessions provided valuable opportunities for skill development, athlete assessment, and engagement with the regional coaching team, helping to strengthen the pathway into competitive para swimming.

Competition Pathway

Competitive opportunities remain a cornerstone of the region's success. Events throughout the year have been consistently well supported, reflecting both the strength of the programme and the commitment of athletes and clubs.

Notable competitions included:

- The South West Para Championships, held in Plymouth on 3–4 May
- The Para Swimming Championships in Coventry on 7 June
- The joint South East / South West Para Regionals in Reading on 12 September

These competitions continue to provide essential race experience and benchmarking opportunities, supporting swimmers as they progress through the performance pathway.

Athlete Progression

The regional programme continues to successfully support swimmers transitioning along the competitive pathway, with a number of athletes progressing to national-level competition and beyond. The structured combination of development activity and competition exposure has been instrumental in enabling swimmers to reach higher standards of performance.

Looking Ahead

While there is always more work to be done, the foundations in place across the South West Region are strong. The continued commitment of the regional para coaching team, supported by a dedicated network of clubs, volunteers, and stakeholders, ensures that the programme is well positioned for future growth.

With clear direction, increasing participation, and a proven development structure, para swimming in the South West Region is set to continue its upward trajectory in the coming years.

Adam Clarkson

South West Para Development Lead Coach

Swimming Report

Overview

Swimming activity across the region in 2025 has demonstrated strong participation, continued development of athletes and coaches, and successful delivery of both competition and development programmes. Across the year, there has been a clear focus on providing high-quality competitive opportunities alongside meaningful athlete and coach development experiences.

Regional Championships

Summer Championships (April–May 2025)

The Summer Championships were delivered across three venues: Millfield School, Plymouth Life Centre, and Hengrove Leisure Centre.

Total swimmers: 1,198
Total entries: 4,996

The Championships saw excellent engagement across all age groups, with high entry numbers reflecting the importance of this competition within the regional calendar. The use of multiple venues allowed for increased accessibility and capacity, supporting the continued growth of the event.

Winter Championships (November 2025)

The Winter Championships were held at Millfield School.

Total swimmers: 382
Total entries: 1,314

This event provided a valuable short-course racing opportunity towards the end of the year, supporting athlete progression and maintaining competitive momentum outside of the summer season.

Regional Development Programmes

Regional Development Programme

Athletes engaged: 63
Sessions delivered: 2 pool sessions (Millfield School)
Coaches/Team Managers: 10

This programme continued to support the development of emerging athletes within the region. The sessions focused on skill development, technique refinement, and introducing swimmers to a higher-performance training environment, while also providing development opportunities for coaches and team managers.

Regional Distance Development Programme

Athletes engaged: 40
Sessions delivered:
1 pool session (Millfield School)
1 online education session
1 open water session (Lake 86, Cotswold Water Park)
Coaches/Team Managers: 6

The Distance Development Programme offered a well-rounded approach, combining pool-based training, education, and open water experience. The inclusion of an open water session provided valuable exposure for athletes, supporting the growth of distance and open water swimming within the region.

New 14–16 Year Development Camp

A new initiative introduced in 2025, the 14–16 Year Development Camp, proved to be a significant success.

Swimmers engaged: 162
Session delivered: 1 pool session (Hutton Moor Leisure Centre)
Focus: Breaststroke and Butterfly
Coaches/Team Managers: 21

The camp brought together a large cohort of swimmers and coaches, creating a high-energy and collaborative development environment. In addition to the pool session, athletes and parents benefited from a range of educational opportunities:

A new partnership with AP Race
Parent education sessions delivered by Kevin Pickard
Strength and Conditioning session delivered by Rob Norman
Lifestyle session delivered by Olympic athlete Anna Hopkin

This holistic approach ensured athletes received not only technical coaching but also valuable insights into performance, lifestyle, and long-term development.

Summary

Across 2025, regional swimming activity has shown strong participation levels, effective programme delivery, and continued innovation. The introduction of new initiatives, alongside well-established competitions and development pathways, highlights a commitment to supporting swimmers, coaches, and the wider swimming community.

The region remains well-positioned to build on this success in 2026, with a clear focus on enhancing athlete experience, expanding development opportunities, and maintaining high-quality competition standards.

Regional Licensing Officer – Report

Licensing Overview

Licensing is going well and the 2027 calendar is starting to build as well as the ongoing 2026 calendar. County Licensing Reps continue to be a great help in keeping the calendar from becoming congested. My thanks go to them. Rosie Gordon – Cornwall, Martin Walters – Devon, Di Gibbs – Dorset, Keith Smith – Gloucestershire, Kelly Podbury – Somerset & Sandra Yeoman – Wiltshire.

SWR Licensing

First Come First Serve meets are still causing a bit of an issue with some clubs abusing the process of these meets. These clubs are being identified and watched carefully. These meets should not be used as a way to allow your favoured clubs in at the expense of other clubs who are trying to follow the rules/licence guidelines properly.

Some clubs are also now making their meets invitational to allow in certain clubs first, with back up invitational lists if they are undersubscribed. This should also not be allowed as a way around FCFS.

We are also struggling a little with two counties sticking to the free weekend per month process. This is to Protect our Officials from being overworked. However again some counties although keeping a weekend free are allowing more than one Low L4- L1 meet to run on the same weekend in the same County. This is very unhelpful and is causing problems with cover of officials and with numbers entering the meets leaving some clubs with no option but to cancel meets. We have to remember that clubs can also run a Single Club L4 meet any time in any month so, this further burdens the load on the calendar and on Officials each month without allowing extra meets per County.

Reports on the whole are coming back on time and with proof of payment to the SWR. Clubs are trying harder to meet the needs of the L3 swimmers in terms of upper limit times, but a few clubs are still abusing this. Clubs must remember that L3 meets are for swimmers at County and lower-level Regional swimmers. Swimmers who have swum in both GB Aquatics & Home National events should not be able to enter a L3 meet.

There has also been evidence of severe over acceptance of entries into some meets in the SWR causing session times to run over the desired 3-hour session times. This can only be seen as clubs trying to make as much money as possible and not adhering to timing of sessions when accepting entries. This causes the need for 20 minutes breaks in sessions causing Coaches/Swimmers to hang around on poolside while the officials take a much-needed comfort break. Clubs must be more aware of the timing of their meets when accepting entries please.

Swim England – Licensing – Officials

The reporting of updates on Timekeepers and JL1 Trainees / Timekeeper passes is still causing me problems and as such causing extra work. Jill Beard has asked repeatedly for Timekeeper Passes for both Stand alone and JL1 Trainees to be reported to her and for certificates to be loaded onto OMS. However, this is only helpful if the candidate then also makes their profile on OMS Visible. It is a really easy process and does not show any personal information. It simply means I can check a TK pass without bothering either Jill or the Meet Promoter for the information. How to do this is below

Show Qualifications & Certificates

Please go to <https://www.swimmingresults.org/membershipcheck/>

search your membership using your member ID

Click on - Member Options

Login in using your Member ID and Password

Click on - Online Membership System

Click on - Login in as Member

Click on - Edit Details

Click on - Data Protection Choices

Click yes in all boxes except the last four. If Disability does not apply say no. You do not want any personal info such as address and email/telephone numbers showing so say no.

Click Save