

Swimming for Participants with Disabilities in Scotland

This fact sheet provides an overview of swimming for participants with disabilities in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to start to swim and develop your skills volunteer or coach people with disabilities in swimming.



The Development of Swimming

Swimming has been identified as one of the best activities for total body fitness whether you compete at elite level or just for fun. It really is a fully inclusive sport with many positive opportunities for health and fitness.

Disability swimming is one of the core sports involved in the Paralympic Games and has been present since the inaugural games in Rome in 1960. The Paralympic swimming programme is one of the biggest both in terms of competitor numbers and medal events including all four strokes with distances from 50m up to 400m. Also included in the Commonwealth Games programme there will be twelve medal events in Birmingham 2022.

Historically disability swimming in Scotland has been very strong with great success on the world and Paralympic stages. Scottish Swimming is directly responsible for the performance pathway for swimmers with disabilities and works in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) who have responsibility for the development dimension.

Swimming is developing across Scotland with a mixture of mainstream and specific provision providing a range of opportunities for people of all levels and disabilities to get involved. Regional swimming squads have been developed in a number of areas and these are increasing each year.

Scottish Swimming's Disability Performance Development Manager takes a lead in ensuring a seamless pathway from entry level through to National Squad structures and performance programmes. In addition to this support to elite athletes is provided by the **sportscotland** institute of sport to ensure Scotland's athletes are best prepared for competing on the world stage.

* Specific – sports participation, training or competition that is unique to disability sport,



but developmental, meaningful and appropriate to the aspirations of participants.

Classification

To ensure a fair and level playing field swimmers with a disability are classified according to their functional (physical), visual, intellectual or hearing impairment.

Swimmers are allocated a three prefix classification dependent on their disability:

- Prefix S denotes the Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly classification
- Prefix SB denotes the Breaststroke classification
- Prefix SM denotes the Individual Medley classification
- Classes 1-10 – are allocated to swimmers with a physical disability
- Classes 11-13 – are allocated to swimmers with a visual impairment
- Class 14 – is allocated to swimmers with an intellectual impairment
- Class 15 – is allocated to swimmers with a hearing impairment

For example, Scottish swimmer Andrew Mullen's classification is S5 SB4 SM5 and Scott Quin is classified as S14 SB14 SM14.

The breaststroke and IM events may have a different number as breaststroke is predominantly a leg propulsive stroke and is

therefore viewed differently in the classification process for swimmers with a functional impairment.

Coach Education

For people wishing to become involved with coaching disability swimming there is an excellent programme of courses. Inclusive coaching practice is embedded within all coaching qualifications in Scotland. The swimming inclusion model underpins and drives inclusive practice within sessions and clubs.

In addition to this Scottish Swimming and SDS have, in partnership, developed an Inclusive Coaching Continual Professional Development (CPD) programme that delves deeper into the practicalities of coaching a swimmer with a disability in a mainstream club setting.



SDS also offer the “Introduction to Pool Work Course” which supports those working with disabled non- swimmers and offers valuable knowledge and experience on issues such as safety skills, support and learner progression. This CPD offers both practical and theory sessions for delegates.

Helpful Resources

[British Blind Sport – “Visually Impaired \(VI\) Friendly Swimming”](#)

This resource is about helping people to be VI friendly through their provision of training, resources and support and to have a better understanding of the needs of people with a visual impairment.

[National Deaf Children Society – “Deaf-Friendly Swimming”](#)

This booklet is to help swimming teachers and coaches to include deaf children in swimming sessions. The resource shows

how, by making small and simple changes, deaf children and young people can be included in mainstream swimming sessions. Many of the tips will be beneficial to all the swimmers in the group, not just deaf children.

Some Facts & Figures

- Swimming is a sport in which Britain excels: ParalympicsGB won 39 medals including 7 gold and 47 medals including 16 gold at the Rio 2016 Summer Paralympic Games.
- In Glasgow 2015 GBR finished 5th on the medal table behind Ukraine, Russia, USA and Brazil. GBR won 10 gold medals and London 2019 GBR finished 2nd in the medal table behind Italy. GBR won 47 medals including 19 gold.
- In events for the blind and visually impaired, people called "tappers" may stand at the end of the pool and use a pole to tap the swimmers when they approach the wall.
- In the S11 visually impaired classification for swimmers, athletes are required to wear blackened goggles, so that swimmers with light perception compete at an even level with those who are totally blind.
- There are over 160 swimming clubs in Scotland.

Leading Scottish Performers

- Stephen Clegg – Born 1995. Stephen swims in the S12 classification. After a period out of the water, Stephen made his Paralympic Game debut in Rio 2016 In Tokyo 2020, Stephen won;
 - Silver Medal, 100m Butterfly
 - Bronze Medal, 100m Backstroke
 - Bronze Medal, 100m Freestyle
- Toni Shaw – Born 2003. Toni swims in the S9 classification and made her Paralympic Games debut in Tokyo. Toni won a Bronze Medal in the 400m Freestyle Event
- Scott Quin – Born 1990. Scott swims in the S14 classification. Scott will be representing GB in his second Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Scott took the Bronze Medal in the 100m Breaststroke Event

Competitions

There are a range of events that swimmers with a disability can get involved in.



SDS currently operates a National events programme for junior and senior swimmers with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. This is underpinned by regional events in all SDS regions.

In partnership SDS and Scottish Swimming annually run two National Performance Championships which supports the progression of classified swimmers into the British national events calendar.

Within the Scottish Swimming National Championships there is a full inclusive programme for classified swimmers which includes all World Para Swimming (WPS) championship events.



Key Contacts

Paul Wilson, Scottish Swimming Disability Performance Development Manager

p.wilson@scottishswimming.com

01786 466502 / 07809 657661

Scottish Disability Sport

admin@scottishdisabilitysport.com

Head Office

Scottish Swimming

National Swimming Academy University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA

Tel: 01786466520

Key Websites

Scottish Swimming

www.scottishswimming.com

Scottish Disability Sport -

www.scottishdisabilitysport.com

British Swimming

www.swimming.org

British Paralympic Association

www.paralympics.org.uk

IPC

www.paralympic.org

