

A GUIDE TO OPEN WATER SWIMMING AT STEP ROCK ASC

OVERVIEW:

In 2018, Step Rock ASC started to offer open water training as part of the 90th Anniversary celebrations, with a view to offering an additional and complementary discipline to squad swimmers.

Open water provides a very different swimming experience for club swimmers who are more accustomed to the pool environment, but it has proved to be a successful addition for many of our swimmers, who now train and compete in the open water on a regular basis.

The small but dedicated Step Rock Open Water Squad have gone on to successfully represent the club at district and national events, with a number qualifying for the British Championship in August 2019.

AIMS:

- Expose suitable Step Rock squad swimmers to a new discipline within swimming
- Provide relevant training in a controlled and appropriate way to ensure the safety of all swimmers
- Prepare and support swimmers for competing at district and national levels

ELIGIBILITY:

Open water training is available to swimmers aged 10 years or older who currently have a place within the junior or senior squads.

As with all forms of competitive sport, open water requires commitment from swimmers so places in the squad are only offered to those who commit to regular open water training and who are willing to represent the club at district events (min 2 out of 4)

In September, a 'come and try' session will be held for those swimmers wishing to join the squad for the following year. Training for new squad members will start with immediate effect.

NB: Open water is not for everyone. The additional environmental factors such as cold, darkness, loch/ sea water as well as different kit such as a wetsuit mean that not all swimmers respond to open water in the same way.

TRAINING:

May – September:

- 6:30pm – 7:30pm, Wednesday evenings (alternate): Lochore Meadows
- An 'open' session, with safety cover provided by Lochore Meadows Outdoor Education Centre.
- Session is led by Step Rock coaches who accompany swimmers in the water.
- Swimmers should be accompanied by a responsible adult who should remain at the loch for the duration of the session

September – June:

- 4pm – 5pm, Saturdays: East Sands Leisure Centre
- A pool based session led by Step Rock coaches, where the focus is on open water skills and training.

Coaches: Damon Thoms, Kirsten Geary

Parent Helpers: Tom Hedley, Jonny Seeley

COMPETING:

Open water races vary from 1km-3km depending on age (the majority of events for 12 year olds are 2km).

The Scottish Swimming Open Water calendar includes 4 district events which form part of the Scottish Swimming Grand Prix series:

- East District Open Water Championships: Lochore Meadows, June
- Midland District Open Water Championships: Monikie, June
- North District Open Water Championships: Loch Morlich, July
- West District Open Water Championships: Loch Ken, August

In addition, the Scottish National Open Water Championships take place each year in August at Loch Venachar

A further event is available on a qualification basis, The Swim England Open Water National Age Groups (British Championships), in Sheffield, August.

NB: All events are entered on a club basis. This means that any Step Rock swimmers wishing to compete in open water events will be entered by the club coaches to ensure suitability and safety

EQUIPMENT:

The district and national events are regulated by FINA/ Scottish Swimming who state that swimming wetsuits are required for waters below 18 degrees

Step Rock Open Water Squad members therefore require at a minimum:

- Swimming wetsuit (as opposed to surfing wetsuit)
- Regular swimsuit
- Goggles
- Swimming cap (Step Rock Open Water branded versions available to purchase)

In addition, for training purposes, it is recommended that swimmers have:

- Neoprene hat
- Neoprene booties
- Safety buoy
- A warm, fleece-lined robe such as DryRobe is also advantageous to wear pre and post training.

SWIMMER REQUIREMENTS/ COMMITMENTS:

- ✓ Eligible age and squad status
- ✓ Coach approved selection (based on trial)
- ✓ Regular attendance at pool based and open water training events
- ✓ Entry into a minimum of 2 district events
- ✓ Essential kit
- ✓ £2 entry for Lochore sessions (falls outwith club budget provision)

CLUB COMMITMENTS:

- ✓ Selection of squad members based on eligibility/ suitability
- ✓ Provision of training in a safe and appropriate open water environment
- ✓ Entry costs for all district and national events