

Strategic Plan



Aim of the Strategic Plan 2018-2022

To create a vibrant environment which facilitates adult swimmers in achieving their personal fulfilment and long-lasting health, through Masters participation initiatives, Masters club development, recognition of achievements and Masters coach education.

Introduction

The Swim Ireland strategic Plan 2017-2021 states that swimming is the most popular sport taken up during adulthood, with almost 300,000 adults swimming at least once per week.

While the term adult swimmer can be used to denote a person aged 18 and over who swims at some level, Masters swimming (as defined by FINA) is the term given to the specific training and competition structures open to swimmers aged 25 years and older who are registered with a swimming club. One of the objectives of this plan is to explain the term Masters better and to encourage 19 to 24-year olds to participate in Masters club sessions and competitions. Another aim is to work with the Swim for a Mile program to encourage people to transition from this program into a local club for them to continue their swimming journey.

The number of Masters clubs registering with Swim Ireland has increased steadily since 1995 with 27 Masters clubs and around 30 clubs who have a Masters programme within them registered in Ireland in 2016. There are approximately 1400 Masters swimmers registered with Swim Ireland.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide a structure and focus for the development of adult swimming and to drive Masters swimming in Ireland towards reaching its full potential.

This plan is aimed at attracting more adult swimmers into Masters swimming as well as providing a structure for senior club swimmers who wish to keep competing as they get older.

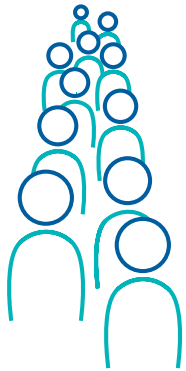
The contents of this plan was heavily influenced by a survey of Masters swimmers carried out by the Masters Committee in late 2015 which had almost 200 responses.



Toe in the water.
Face in the water.
Staying afloat.
Touching the
bottom. One length
without stopping.
Fifty lengths
without stopping.

—
Me and the water.

Everyone has a connection with the water.



Accessible

Swimming is open to people of all ages, abilities, genders and lifestyles.

9.4%

PARTICIPATION

At 9.4%, swimming is the second-highest participation sport among adults in Ireland.



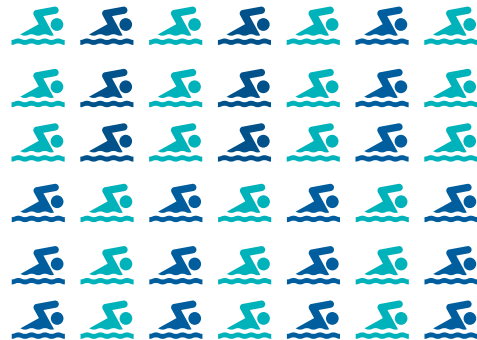
Healthy

Swimming is associated with reduced all-cause and cardiovascular mortality.

POPULAR

290,000

Adults swim at least once a week and it is the most popular activity among older adults.



RETENTION



Swimming suffers the least drop off in participation during the volatile early adult years.

TOP 3

Swimming is in the top three sports that girls and women say they want to participate in.



Adult Participation

Swimming is the most popular sport taken up during adulthood.



Inclusive

Participation in swimming amongst adults with a disability is the same rate as amongst the able-bodied population and higher rates than all team sports combined.

The development plan is divided into six strategic goals:

1. **Education and Coaching:** to continue to develop Masters specific coaches and training programmes
2. **Participation:** to increase participation and retention in Masters swimming
3. **Achievements:** to recognise the achievements of Masters swimming and swimmers in a range of categories
4. **Competitions:** to improve the structure and organisation of Masters swimming competitions
5. **Masters Development swim squad:** to create a squad system and network that will enable High Performance Masters swimmers to develop and maximise their potential
6. **Communication:** to develop and enhance methods of communication among Swim Ireland, Swim Ireland Masters committee, clubs and individual adult swimmers

Each of these goals are developed on the following pages.

This plan has been approved by the SI Board and will be supported by and implemented through the Swim Ireland Masters Committee & the Swim Ireland Liaison Officer.

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER**1****To continue to develop Masters' specific coaching.**

1. Support the development of Masters focused CPD for Masters' teachers and coaches, rotating between regions
2. Encourage more swimming teachers and coaches to complete the proposed new Masters Coaching qualification
3. Organise two Masters clinics for all swimmers annually
4. Host a Masters coach conference on an annual basis
5. Hold an annual meeting of Masters coaches to review and consult on Masters development plan
6. Set up a bursary system to help clubs to increase the pool of qualified coaches

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER

2

To increase participation and retention in Masters swimming.

1. Explain the term “Master” better to increase swimmer involvement. Increase participation in the “Junior Masters” category (19 to 24)
2. Encourage the development of more local interclub and novice galas and to develop the social aspects of swimming. Have at least one novice/taster gala per year
3. Support volunteer mentoring of new swimmers, e.g. first gala, first gala in a long time, new venue etc.
4. Support the postal swim event to encourage and facilitate swimmers who wish to complete and get times for longer events (400m, 800m, 1500m)

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER

3

To recognise the achievements of Masters swimming and swimmers.

1. Present an Irish Masters “Outstanding Achievement Award” at Annual SI Awards evening. Consider developing additional Masters categories of awards in addition to “Outstanding Achievement Award”
2. Present annual award for male and female winners of the Decathlon competition
3. Supply kit to swimmers representing Irish Clubs at World and European Championships
4. Maintain Irish Masters Records and provision of Certificates
5. Maintain Provincial Masters Records and identify provincial recorders
6. Set up and maintain an Irish Masters ranking list
7. Promote the success of top swimmers in the media to encourage more participation in swimming
8. Formally recognise current masters swimmers who were Senior swimmers as role models for junior swimmers that they are the Masters of the future

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER

4

To improve the structure and organisation of Masters swimming competitions.

1. Work with Swim Ireland to ensure key Masters competitions do not clash with other key events on the Irish aquatics calendar
2. Support clubs to move away from paper entries and to move to using Hy-Tek Team Manager. Clubs running galas should use Hy-Tek Meet Manager. Provide training as appropriate
3. Increase the pool of qualified officials for Masters swimming competitions
4. Support clubs running 'irregular' events, including the 4 × 100m and 4 × 200m relays
5. Utilise "downtime" during Provincial and National meets
6. Increase effort to attract competitors from overseas for major competitions

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER

5

Create a squad system and network that will enable our Masters swimmers to develop and maximise their potential.

1. Maintain the development squad structure for high performing Masters swimmers exposing them to the coaching expertise that exists at the highest level within Swim Ireland.
2. Have group pool sessions before major international galas (British, European and Worlds), which would be supervised by a suitably qualified Masters coach.
3. Have a minimum of 2 no. pool-based workshops each year, rotating venues, run by coaches of the highest caliber, if possible a world recognised masters coach, that has the experience of coaching at the highest level in Masters swimming.

STRATEGIC GOAL NUMBER

6

To maintain methods of communication among Swim Ireland, Masters committee, clubs and individual adult swimmers

1. Maintain irishmastersswimming.ie updating information on a very regular basis.
2. Continue to investigate how Information Technology can reduce various operational workloads and to increase functionality.
3. Utilise existing forms of social networking sites –Twitter and Facebook to increase profile of Masters swimming and to facilitate communication among members.
4. Appoint a member of the Masters committee or a suitable non-committee person with specific responsibility for media relations.

Development Plan 2018 – 2022 Summary

Masters swimming is a relatively new, but very fast expanding discipline in the field of aquatic sports. The 2016 European Masters Championships in London was oversubscribed, at which 143 Irish swimmers competed; over 20,000 swimmers competed at the World Masters Championship in Budapest in August 2017. In Ireland there are a growing number of organised galas that require support. This level of competition has led to a quantum leap in the standard of the sport over a short period of time with both regional and national, short course and long course records falling on a regular basis. Irish Masters swimmers are now listed in the annual FINA and LEN top ten rankings.

This development plan sets out strategy for the next four years to address issues to enable the sport to grow in a sustainable way. The goals of this plan are:

- Developing masters coaching and coaches
- Retain age group and senior swimmers to train and compete at Masters level
- To attract and retain adult swimmers to Masters swimming
- To recognise the achievement of Masters swimmers
- To improve the structure and organisation of Master swimming competitions
- To support clubs and officials running club meets
- Support Masters swimmers to develop and maximize their potential
- Develop and enhance methods of communication for Masters swimmers
- Increase the public profile of Masters Swimming in Ireland

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