

The Sussex Seahawks Swim Team



Atlantis SC and Shiverers SC are announcing their intention to form a combined training and competition squad to be known as the Sussex Seahawks Swim Team - Sussex Seahawks for short. This note is intended to answer some of the more obvious questions that may be in your mind about this initiative. If the answer to your question is not in this note then please contact either Andy Lobley on alobley@sky.com or Karen Woolliscroft on karenwoolliscroft@hotmail.com.

1. What is the Sussex Seahawks Swim Team?

The Seahawks are being formed so that its member clubs - initially Atlantis and Shiverers - can pool their resources to allow our swimmers better to compete on a regional or national level.

2. How will this work?

There are four main themes underpinning the Seahawks concept:

- it will support, NOT replace our existing clubs;
- our clubs will compete as one team at regional and national championships (and everything above) and selected high level open meets outside Sussex;
- it will establish a Performance Squad to prepare swimmers for regional and national championships and a Development Squad for development swimmers who have in the main achieved the county qualifying standard;
- swimmers will continue to do the bulk of their training with existing clubs and will continue to swim for these clubs in all open meets in Sussex, all other open meets (except the few mentioned above), National Arena Swimming League (although this may be reviewed), the Sussex League, Sussex County Championships and Sussex Relays.

3. Do the coaches support this initiative?

Yes. This initiative would not have got off the drawing board without the support, active participation and leadership of the coaches. This initiative offers career enhancing opportunities for them as well as swimmers. And they will work as a joint team to deliver the Seahawks training sessions and manage its competition calendar.

4. Has this initiative been approved by the ASA?

Atlantis and Shiverers have consulted the ASA South East Region before announcing this initiative. An application to register the new club still needs to be made to the ASA and approved, and on the basis of the informal consultation we have carried out, we do not anticipate any objections as the Seahawks concept is similar to East Invicta ExCel in Kent that has already been approved by the Region and is in line with the ASA's strategy to encourage clubs to co-operate to improve opportunities for swimmers. The ASA's Membership Review in 2004 was supportive of the concept of a squad club, which is what Sussex Seahawks will be.

5. What will be the benefits of Sussex Seahawks to our swimmers?

The principal benefits will be:

- * additional training opportunities; regular long course and land training sessions will be organised at K2. These sessions will be planned to dovetail with each club's own training programme and the competition calendar;
- * the opportunity to train with a larger group of swimmers of similar ability and to derive the motivational and competitive benefits from this;
- * an opportunity for the coaches to introduce if appropriate greater specialisation into the training i.e. a lane devoted to a particular stroke or distance;
- * the ability to attend major championships as part of a bigger squad which is on a more equal footing with larger competitive clubs from around the country;
- * additional chances to compete in relay teams at the higher level championships, including the Nationals.

1. Will any other clubs be involved?

We certainly hope so. This initiative is all about improving the opportunities for swimmers within Sussex and other local clubs are invited to participate if

they're interested in working together to improve the standards of competitive swimming in the county. We also intend it to be complementary to the Sussex County ASA Development Plan.

7. Are there any plans for Atlantis and Shiverers to compete as a single Seahawks team in the National Arena Swimming League?

Not at the moment. The constitution identifies the National Arena Swimming League as one of the areas of competition in which Seahawks may compete. The key is to create, not diminish, opportunities for swimmers. If it was felt that entering multiple Seahawks teams in the NASL would be of benefit to our swimmers then this is something we would look at. However, we would only contemplate this if we were sure it did not disadvantage our individual club swimmers and we had the support of the NASL authorities.

8. How do swimmers get involved?

The joint coaching team will publish a set of selection criteria for both the Performance and Development squads, based on age qualifications and in the first case on the achievement of the automatic qualifying time for the South East Regional Championships and in the second on reaching the top six in a final at the Sussex County Championships. However, the coaches will retain ultimate discretion to cater for special individual circumstances and to maintain squads of a manageable size. Selected swimmers will receive a letter inviting them to join one or other of the squads.

9. Will swimmers selected for relay teams be full squad members even if they have not achieved the selection criteria?

In this circumstance the swimmers will be invited to join the squad because there is not enough swimmers who have achieved SER times to form a relay team. We will want to ensure that swimmers have every opportunity to get to know their team mates and to train together. Swimmers will effectively be on probation and will be expected to show commitment and to attend squad sessions. Coaches will assess performance before making a final decision to enter a relay team to the competition in question. If it is decided not to enter a team then swimmers will no longer be required to attend squad sessions.

10. Will the Development Squad compete as one team?

Members of the Development Squad are most likely to compete for the Seahawks as part of a relay team. Its members will continue to compete largely for their home club. The main purpose of the Development Squad is to provide additional training opportunities above and beyond those delivered

by your existing club and to help swimmers advance to the Performance Squad.

11. How many times will the Seahawks train or compete together?

- * 12 sessions, comprising 2 hours of pool time and 1 hour of land training, have been booked at K2 over the period Dec 2011 to July 2012;
- * Across all the Age Groups and Youth levels, Seahawks are likely to compete together in excess of 10 occasions per year.

12. When will the Seahawks be up and running?

- * The first joint training session will take place on Saturday 17th December 2011;
- * The intention is to compete for the first time as Sussex Seahawks at the ASA South East Youth Championships on 5 - 7th May 2012.

13. How will the Seahawks be funded?

The aim is to keep the incremental costs of the Seahawks to a minimum to facilitate participation. Membership fees will be £5 for full and junior members. There will be no membership fee for a Volunteer Full Member. The cost of the additional training - pool hire and coaches costs - is intended to be self-financing and to be paid for by the parents of the selected swimmers. We expect the introductory fee to be £7.50 per swimmer per session of 2 hours of water time and 1 hour of land training. The new club will look to raise additional funds from sponsorship to cover the cost of kit and assist with travel costs. There are unlikely to be any significant incremental gala entry fees as swimmers would have entered these galas in any case with their home clubs.