

Seals Guide to Setting Performance Goals in Swimming

As coaches and former (some current) swimmers we understand that it can be a challenge to know what goals to set yourself to help focus your swimming. To help with this we have developed the following guide to possible performance goals. Use this for your 'Goal Setting form' that you discuss with your Mentor Coach and for your 'Swimmer Passport'.

Time based Performance Goals

Personal Best (PB) Times

As you know it is all about improving your personal best times for each stroke/distance. Your PB's are recorded after every fixture (open meet, galas, competitions) and uploaded on to GroupSpaces. Keep a record of your PB's in your 'Swimmer Passport' and enter as many open meets on a regular basis to record the improvement in your times as a result of your hard work at training sessions.

Sprint / Middle Distance Flashes and Awards

Swim England has a set of competitive award standards and badges for swimmers to work towards regardless of age. Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum badges are available in Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle and Individual Medley (IM).

The awards are split into Sprint (25m, 50m and 100m for all strokes) and Middle Distance (200m all strokes and 400m freestyle) and more information including the target times are available on the Seals Website under "Club Records, Personal Best Times and Awards".

With each badge / award achieved don't forget to update your Swimmer Passport and show off your badge on your Club Tee.

Club Records

Check your PB's to see if you have beaten any of our club records and add your name to the hall of fame on the Seals website.

Swim for your Club

Look to earn a place in the Seals competition teams: EML or ESL. Once you have achieved this for 1 stroke then earn a place at another stroke.

County Recognition

Look to achieve Age Group Qualifying Times for the Essex County Championships. Start with 1 stroke over 50m and then look to extend to other strokes and distances.

To plan your success set interim targets: Within 10% of the time, then 7.5%, 5% and 2.5%.

Regional /National Recognition

Look to achieve Age Group Qualifying Times for the East Region Championships (and ultimately Nationals). Start with 1 stroke over 50m and then look to extend to other strokes and distances.

To plan your success set interim targets: Within 10% of the time, then 7.5%, 5% and 2.5%.

Fitness and Training Goals

Use the clock in training to improve the consistency and speed with which you can achieve a continuous training set, for example:

20 sets of 50m in Front Crawl: your current time is an average of 1 minute. Set a goal to improve this to 50 seconds.

You can set similar goals for shorter/ longer distances and alternative strokes.

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Technique based Performance Goals

You can earn a Seals Certificate or a stamp in your Swimmer Passport for mastering swimming technique. However, the real prize is that better technique will lead to faster swimming and should help you achieve more PB's.

Conquering all 4 strokes

Developing your stroke from swim school to make it effective and efficient for competition swimming is a key aspect of your time at Seals. To measure your progress look to gain a Seals Certificate or Passport stamp for each of the following:

1. Swimming Stroke Award for Front Crawl
2. Swimming Stroke Award for Butterfly
3. Swimming Stroke Award for Breaststroke
4. Swimming Stroke Award for Backstroke

Pre-Competitive Start Award (Yellow Hat)

This can be achieved once you have successfully completed the shallow diving sessions held by the coaching team. Once you have shown you can safely dive into shallow water and have passed the course you are eligible for the Pre-Competitive Start Award and will be given a coveted Yellow Hat. This shows all teachers, coaches and poolside helpers that you are able to dive into shallow water.

Competitive Start Award

There are a range of awards that you can discuss with your coach that will help your starts. Mastering the start is a key step in achieving PBs that will meet County or Regional qualifying times.

Competitive Turns Award

As with Start, being excellent at turn and transition can significantly help improve your PB for a stroke and distance. To measure your progress, earn a certificate for demonstrating consistent mastery of the following turns:

- Front Crawl
- Butterfly
- Breaststroke
- Backstroke
- IM