Wiltshire Masters Newsletter 8

August 2018

Introduction.

This is my tenth occasional newsletter, (fifth this year). Hope you are all getting them.

**Third and final County Championships of 2018**

We aim to present the cups for 2018 at this gala on September 28th. So please could the 2017 winners ensure their cups get to this meet. They are,

*Team cups*

Townsend Cup – Warminster & District

The Head cup – Salisbury Stingrays

*Individual Cups (the four Wessex Walrus cups)*

Ladies 40 and over – Muriel Hitchcock

Ladies under 40 – Stephanie Bremner / Rebecca Smith

Men 40 and over – Nick Hudson

Men under 40 – Anthony Phillips

**We need a new Wiltshire Masters secretary for November.**

I put this in my last newsletter but so far no volunteers.

There is a Masters conference in Loughborough on November 10th for which the county will pay expenses. It would be good for the new secretary to attend, if convenient. It is usually a good day containing plenty of interesting topics and good speakers.

The team of people who make the three galas work are

Rachel Moorhouse who organises the officials for each gala.
Rob Hart who does all the timing work on the night and updates the website.
Konrad Adams who handles the whole entry process and the results.

Also Graham Reeve (county treasurer) manages all the money involved for the galas.

So please let me know if you would be willing to take this job on.

**Inaugural running of the Mystery Medley at Surrey Champs**

Following the appearance of ‘The Mystery Medley’ in the 2018 Pro Swim Series, Swim England Masters Rep Jim Boucher was encouraged by his regulars to consider adding this fun event to the already busy schedule for this year’s Surrey Masters Championships.

The Mystery Medley has proven popular with the elite swimmers so what would the Masters make of it?

For those not familiar with it, the Mystery Medley sees the swimmers draw their stroke order just before they take to the starting blocks.

Masters mathematicians would immediately recognise there are 24 possible permutations (different orders to swim) a medley including the ‘official’ one – fly, back, breast and free.

This reduces to 18 if we eliminate any that start on backstroke. The interest to the spectators is watching the lead changing dramatically as, for example, a swimmer starting breaststroke is initially left far behind by the quicker strokes, but comes back later in the race.

For the swimmers, and particularly for older Masters, there is also the challenge of remembering what the last length should be!

In order not to upset the closely contested club and individual points competitions the event was offered as an alternative to the ‘normal’ IM.

*Mystery Medley Rules*

It was intended as a fun event but it would also score points and medals just like the others, so order was required. This is how Jim explained it to the swimmers in his event briefing notes:

You will draw a sheet, when you marshal behind your block, that gives your order of swimming. This is then given to your timekeeper who will be in charge of issuing a DQ if you swim the wrong stroke.

There will be no stroke orders starting on backstroke.

DQ for infractions for the strokes – judges will judge whatever stroke the swimmer is actually swimming whether it is the correct one or not.

All fly and breaststroke touches should be with two hands simultaneously.

The backstroke leg must be finished on the back whenever it is swum.

So long as the touch is correct they can then turn however they choose! Hence one can tumble turn from free on to the next leg.

*On the Day*

Eight men and 24 (three full heats) women took on the Mystery Medley challenge.

Jim and announcer Clare Uttley oversaw the drawing of stroke order by each swimmer with Clare announcing the sequences to the cheers and oohs of the crowd.

We had one swimmer who forgot the sequence and duly received her DQ, but everyone else made it, with the last heat of the ladies seeing European Record holder Michelle Ware’s last fly leg storm past a couple of Surrey University breaststrokers who were out in front at the last turn.

Jim concluded: “The audience interest was fantastic, the swimmers loved it, and I’m sure we will do it again.”

**Stop the clock breaststroke finishes (coaching factsheet from British Swimming)**

“You don’t have to touch the wall first to win the race; you just have to apply seven pounds of pressure to the touchpad.” Mark Schubert, National Coach US Swimming, ASCA World Clinic, 2008.

APPROACH The ‘finish’ starts quite a distance before the end of the race. The technique and effort over the final 5, 10 or even 15m of swimming (“the approach”) can change the ranking order of swimmers and can definitely change the time. The approach is the most important part of a race finish. A strong, aggressive and well timed approach followed by a forceful touch can make at least 0.3 – 0.5 seconds difference to a race time and, often, even more.

The finish for breaststroke races is exactly the same as the approach and touch at the turns. The swimmer must ‘spot’ the wall from at least 5 meters before the finish so that the touch is made with perfect stroke timing – the final thrust taking the hands forcefully onto the touchpad or wall at almost full extension and with no time-wasting and speed-sapping glide. Both hands should hit the wall simultaneously. They must be separated, i.e. they cannot overlap with one hand on top of the other (otherwise only one hand has ‘finished’) but they do not need to be at the same height as each other; one could be above the waterline and the other below the waterline. However, if the swimmer is swimming with even-height shoulders it is likely that the hands will hit the wall pretty much level with each other at the finish. A finishing ‘stand-alone’ arm stroke is permitted on breaststroke, i.e. one that is not followed by a kick. The elbows are allowed to be clear of the surface on the lunge to the wall. The swimmer can be completely submerged when they touch. These allowances for turns and finishes are contrary to the rules in effect during the rest of the race. See rules below,

SW 7 BREASTSTROKE

SW 7.1 After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the swimmer may be submerged. At any time prior to the first Breaststroke kick after the start and after each turn a single butterfly kick is permitted. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

SW 7.2 From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. From the start and throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

SW 7.3 The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

SW 7.4 During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer’s head must break the surface of the water. All movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

SW 7.5 The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as in SW 7.1. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

SW 7.6 At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

**Qualifying time for Nationals (**Part of article by verity Dobbie prior to Plymouth)

Qualifying times continue to be a topic for debate, particularly because for the first time qualifying times will be required if you want to enter the British Masters Swimming Championships in Plymouth.

For further background I wrote a lengthy blog post last year explaining the thinking behind the [qualifying times for the Swim England National Masters Championships](http://www.swimming.org/masters/reintroduction-qualifying-times-masters-nationals/). (and contrary to popular belief there was a lot of thought, consultation and discussion went into them).

But in brief, the popularity of the Swim England short course event at Sheffield demanded some way of making the event manageable if we wished to retain the three-day format with reasonable session times for competitors and officials alike.

The pressure on the long course event was not quite so acute as long course swimming is not as popular and the entry is dictated by the location of the pool. Generally speaking, the majority of Masters are concentrated in the South and events there are better attended.

*Entries at Plymouth*

We anticipated that the entry at Plymouth this year will be sizeable and therefore the decision was taken to introduce qualifying times for this event.

The times were set at 200 decathlon points, which ensures that there is a uniform qualifying standard across all age groups and events.

In theory, because the times are age adjusted the same standard of swim will be required whether you are a 25-year old or an 85-year old.

Hope you have enjoyed this newsletter

Chris Jessup