

Coaches Newsletter February 2026

This month, I provide more detail about what to expect this year, so a slightly longer newsletter. I've briefed the Club Committee on the summary-level outcome from the Swimmer Survey 25/26 and on the draft Annual Training Plan (ATP) which has now been approved.

Survey results 25/26

The Club collects swimmers' views annually in December via a survey, which includes questions on the year just completed and on goals for the next year. These views influence both the ATP and structure of each training cycle. The plan is designed to meet the needs of the average club swimmer who, according to the outcome of the Club's 2025/26 swimmer survey: --

- Intends to swim with the Club three times per week.
- Is a competitive swimmer, training in preparation to swim at major Masters State and National meetings.
- Wants training sessions to include technique drills across all strokes including more opportunities for specific practice on starts, turns and finishes.
- Wants to break their personal best times at Club "Have A Go" events and at major competitions.
- Wants the opportunity to have their swimming videoed, analysed and feedback given poolside but also have a copy of their video for later review.

Preferred strokes and distances are more varied this year to reflect requests for Freestyle main sets to include longer distances of 200-800M vs Sprint freestyle distances of 25-100M. Backstroke and Breaststroke remain at the sprint distances, while Butterfly gained more interest for both 25 and 50M, Individual Medley 100M now features.

Half of the respondents volunteered to assist the Coaching team by being Lane Leaders and there was additional assistance offered for GoPro camera videoing.

Annual Training Plan

The ATP has been published in full on the Club's website - <https://sapphireadultswimming.com/>

Just look under the Coaching heading:

The ATP covers the 2026 calendar year and contains 6 cycles throughout the year. This caters for stroke technique to be introduced and consolidated multiple times:

- Freestyle - 9, Backstroke - 9, Breaststroke - 9, Butterfly - 8 and Individual Medleys - 8 times
- Starts, Turns and Relays - 9
- Race practice, strategy preparation - 8 including 3 Mini time trials
- Have A Go events - 3 plus 1 Family event.

The ATP details each month's training down to the weekly level; however, a single page summary is also available as a Quick Reference Guide.

In this Newsletter, I've included what to expect during February and March (see below).

The Coaching team will endeavour to have at least one coach on the poolside on Sundays and Tuesdays, as these are the more popularly attended sessions. Occasionally, sessions may be commenced by Pat as Program Leader until a coach can attend.

A session training program will always be available for swimmers to follow.

February Focus					
General: Consolidation of stroke fundamentals – Butterfly (Fly) then all strokes/ Individual Medley (IM).					
Specific: Stroke Technique – Starts/Turns/Finishes and ensuring stroke rule compliance.					
Workload: Programs with moderate to high & volume. Aerobic and Anaerobic (FES/BES) across race distances.					
Week beginning	Phase	Session Focus		Weekly Stroke Focus	Drills/Skills
		Distances	General		
1 st Feb	Preparation	25-400	Stroke rules – Starts/Turn/Finish	Fly/ IM	Breathing, Body Position, Arms & Legs
8 th Feb	Preparation	25-400	HIIT	FS/BK	Coord/Timing
15 th Feb	Preparation	25-200	Slow to fast stroking & Sprints	BS/Fly	Coord/Timing
22 nd Feb	Preparation	25-400	Sprint & Recovery	All strokes	Starts/Turns/Finishes

March Focus					
General: Preparation for the first “Have A Go’ of the year on Sunday 8 th March. Additionally, main preparation commences for competitions - NSW Long Course 11 th -12 th April & Nationals 28 th April to 2 nd May.					
Focus on stroke techniques’ specific elements including turns and rule compliance. Consolidating the previous weeks’ stroke in the main set.					
Specific: Higher intensity sets for Level 2 and 3 swimmers (Anaerobic mod/hard). Tempo Trainer for Level 3 to assist with pacing HIIT.					
Workload: Reduced volume for level 2 & 3. Moderate for Level 1 - Increasing volume on main A & B stroke in the main set.					
Week beginning	Cycle /Phase	Session Focus		Weekly Stroke Focus	Drills/Skills
		Distance Reps	General		
1 st March	Competition	25-400	Race Practice	All	Starts/Turns/Finishes
8 th March	Competition	25-400	Have A Go	Individual	Fitness Test
15 th March	Transition	25-400	Recovery	FS	Rotation & Leverage
22 nd March	Preparation	25-400	Streamlining / Underwaters	BK	Rotation & Leverage
29 th March	Preparation	25-400	All strokes, Open / Tumble Turns	BS	Leverage & Kick timing

March will provide the first opportunity to test your fitness level with a “Have A GO” Club competition. In preparation, Helen will commence checking everyone’s timekeeping abilities starting Sunday 22nd February before training which should only take 5 minutes as it can be done 5 people at a time.

Tip Time – This month there are a several videos: Backstroke, flip turns and, for those only just returning to training, a reminder on how to use the Tempo Trainers. We have been using Mode 3 for everyone and Mode 2 for level 3 lanes.

Backstroke

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/FgbSjsbyzfE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTONYQ_UJy8

Flip Turns/Tumble turns – Breaking it down into easy steps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4ZU2uW-YnU>

Tempo Trainers - How to use them and why?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7DO4kVwtqk>

Videos – Do you feature?

When you check out the Club's website for the ATP, have a look through the new uploaded videos. Nine new videos will replace the one which have been there for a few years. These were taken back in October during a normal training session and recorded by coach Wendy. I've culled down to demonstrate what a typical session contains - drills, skills and main sets. No one's perfect but we all aim to improve our fitness and technique, while having fun. So don't be embarrassed if you see yourself and your swimming is not of Olympic standard.

If you've never seen yourself swimming, it's worth having a video done. You can even have your own copy and no, you don't need to share it with anyone; however, you may then understand why the Coach is suggesting the odd tweak to your style to help avoid injury and help with stroke efficiency.

Regards, Sue

Head Coach