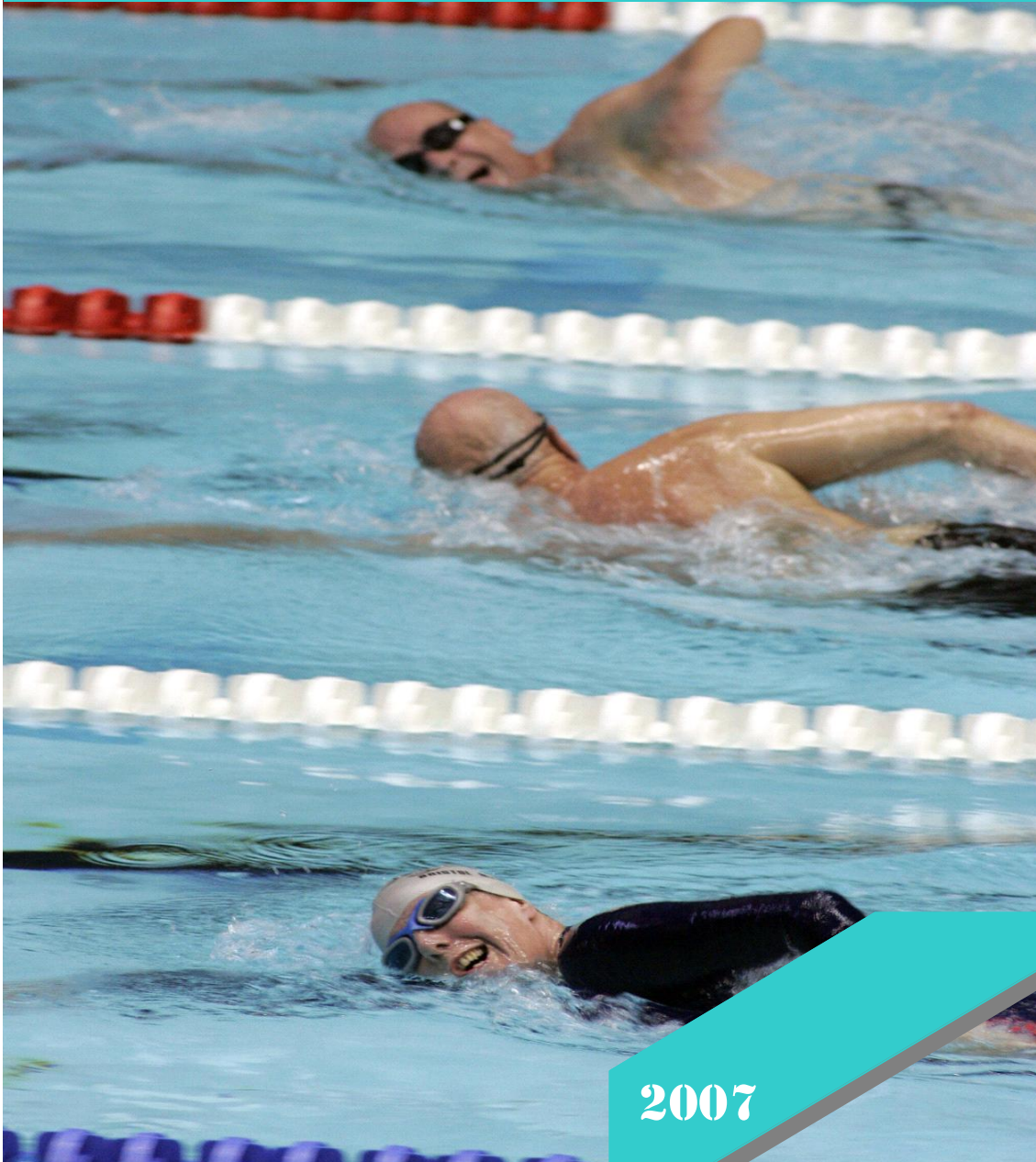


A STRATEGY FOR MASTERS SWIMMING IN ENGLAND



2007

A Lifetime in Swimming

A Strategy for *Masters Swimming* in England

Introduction

‘Masters- set to become an integrated part of swimming’

Masters Swimming has an important part to play in the Amateur Swimming Association’s (ASA) ‘cradle to grave’ policy which encourages people of all ages to take part in swimming in all its forms. This *Strategy* has a further role in helping to shape the future of swimming in its aim of creating lifetime customers.

Swimming is a mature industry. It embraces many diverse interests ranging from pool operators to swimming equipment providers, from learners to elite performers and from volunteers to professional staff. *Masters Swimming* is positioned at the matrix of swimming. It has achieved a great deal and has much more to offer both its current and future participants.

This *Strategy* sets out the approaches and policies by which *Masters Swimming* will define itself in the future. The maturity of the swimming industry has brought about diversification. No longer are public pools the only points of delivery. Increasingly health clubs, hotels and universities ‘own’ key parts of *Swimming’s* distribution channel.

Whilst the swimming industry, and we refer particularly to indoor swimming, has been in existence for 170 years, the life of *Masters Swimming* as an organised entity in England is only some 35 years old.¹ It is therefore still likely to be at an early stage in its development.

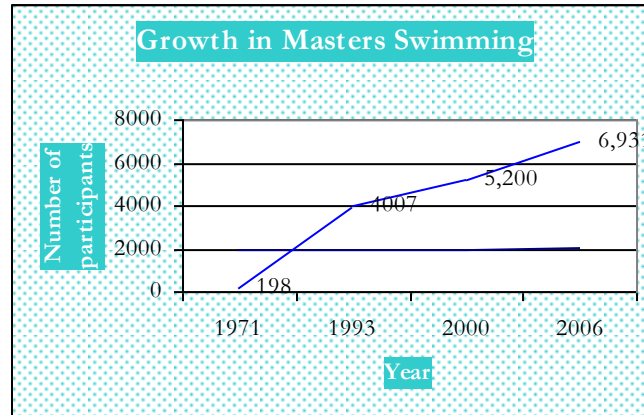
The *Masters Swimming* landscape

‘Increasing the market is a possibility but Masters Swimming needs strategies to increase capacity’

Between 1971 and 1993, the rise in the number of Masters swimmers was rapid. There were just 198 swimmers who took part in the first Masters event in 1972 and this had increased by the time of the *National Masters Survey* in 1993 when there were 4,007 registered swimmers in England. By 2000, the estimated number of registered swimmers was 5,200 and today, the number stands at 6,931 (*ASA Integra* database).

¹ The first national masters championships were held in the USA in 1971; the ASA Short Course started in 1980; the GB (long course championships) in 1997; the first unofficial World Championships in New Zealand in 1984; and the Otter Masters was the first English event in 1972.

The rate of increase in England has slowed. This may be partly due to difficulties in obtaining sufficient water time for all the people who would like to take part. The need for *Masters Swimming* to attract enough new participants to combat the rate of attrition is a consideration. This need is therefore two fold- first, to attract participants, and secondly, to provide sufficient water time to satisfy this demand.



The comparison with other countries in the world beneath shows that England has considerably fewer Masters swimmers per head of population than some other European counterparts such as Germany, Italy, Hungary and Sweden (*Despite FINA applying some commonality to these, it should be noted that each national federation may arrive at the end figures by way of a different interpretation*). New ways need to be sought to increase the Masters base and more pool time allocated to meet any increased capacity:

	Registered Masters Swimmers			Population	Population/ Masters swimmer
	Men	Women	Total		
Germany	31,900	22,000	53,900	82,689,000	1,534
Australia	3,376	3,477	6,853	20,155,000	2,941
New Zealand	726	625	1,351	4,028,000	2,981
Italy	8,071	3,544	11,615	58,093,000	5,002
Hungary	900	700	1,600	10,098,000	6,311
USA	22,000	20,000	42,000	298,213,000	7,100
Sweden	800	400	1,200	9,041,000	7,534
England			6,931	59,668,000	8,609
Austria	450	300	750	8,189,000	10,919
Ukraine	1,500	500	2,000	46,481,000	23,241
Spain	856	454	1,310	43,064,000	32,873
Egypt	700	200	900	74,033,000	82,259
South Africa	297	244	541	47,432,000	87,675
Mexico	600	600	1,200	107,029,000	89,191
Vietnam	600	300	900	84,238,000	93,598
Russia	500	310	810	143,202,000	176,793

(Source: FINA Activity Report, Montreal 2005)

The Masters Landscape

'Building hopes for wider horizons'

The *National Masters Survey* conducted in 2006 showed that typically Masters Swimmers will come from economic backgrounds A, B and C1. Just over 60% of those that responded to the survey were in full time employment. Just under 13% of participants had a partner or spouse actively involved in Masters and 35.8% had not previously been competitive swimmers. This *Strategy*, which takes a 5 to 10 year view, is likely to impact on the majority of Masters as 87.5% of those surveyed had been involved in competitive swimming for more than 5 years. 4,274 (61.7%) of registered Masters are male; 2,657 (39.3%), female (*ASA Integra*).

52% of Masters train for 3 hours or less per week, swimming between 1 and 10,000 metres in that time; 54% used dry land training. Weights, flexibility and jogging were the most popular forms of land training. 69.2% travel for less than 5 miles to their regular pool. 75.3% receive some form of coaching.

The largest number of swimmers is situated in London and the South. The greatest number of registered Masters is between the ages of 30 and 50 years:

Masters Swimmers By Region		
Region	Number	% of total
London	1311	18.9%
South East	1516	21.9%
South West	910	13.1%
North West	740	10.7%
East	812	11.7%
East Midlands	519	7.5%
North East	613	8.8%
West Midlands	510	7.4%
No response		
Total	6931	

(Source: ASA Integra)

Masters Swimmers By Age Group		
Age Group	Number	% of total
19-24	298	4.3%
25-29	594	8.6%
30-34	852	12.3%
35-39	985	14.2%
40-44	1187	17.1%
45-49	1084	15.6%
50-54	679	9.8%
55-59	458	6.6%
60-64	296	4.3%
65-69	227	3.3%
70-74	154	2.2%
75-79	79	1.1%
80-84	23	0.3%
85-89	11	0.2%
90-94	4	0.1%
95-99	0	0.0%
Total	6931	

(Source: ASA Integra)

The Scope of the strategy

This *Strategy* is written for registered Masters Swimmers in England. It may also be of interest to those people who are not registered but who swim lengths on a regular basis. The aim of *Masters Swimming* should be to tempt as many of these to the fold as possible although it is recognised that some people would prefer to take part in swimming without being members of a formal organisation. The ASA's *Corporate Aim (2.4 of the ASA's Planning Guidelines 2005-9)* seeks 'to encourage the development of Masters activity through an increase of opportunity and the expansion of the competitive programme for adult swimmers'. This *Strategy* looks to sit within this framework.

Relationship with other swimming plans

'Relating this plan to other key strategies'

Swimming's *Game Plan, a Vision for Swimming*, has a specific relationship to this *Strategy* in that it refers to *Lifelong Participation, Staying in the water* and *Swimming for Health, Prolonging life*, two objectives that *Masters Swimming* helps to support.

Swimming's *Strategic Plan 2005-2009* also sets out its plans for *Lifelong Participation* in *Section 2*. Here, the *Plan* refers to Swimming's mission 'to ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle' and 'to ensure everyone can achieve his or her personal goals' which link to the Government's objective to encourage 70% of the nation, by 2020, to lead an active life. It also comments that these two statements focus on 'the swimmer whose personal goals may be fitness or competitive opportunities at a later stage in life, rather than on elite performance'. This *Strategy* dovetails with Swimming's *Strategic Plan* in that it recognises the important part that *Masters Swimming* has to play in achieving these objectives.

Swimming's *Strategic Plan* has a target of 11,650 Masters swimmers in all disciplines by 2009. This target embraces all of Britain and all disciplines. This *Strategy* looks at *Delivery Outcomes* of between 7,000 and 8,000 Masters swimmers in England alone (see *Delivery Outcomes*).

Sport England's 'Sport Playing Its Part, The Contribution of Sport to Healthier Communities' refers to the part to be played by young and older people in reducing health care costs and workplace absence. As a non weight bearing activity, swimming has an important role in encouraging people to take part in physical activity and *Masters Swimming*, as a contributor to this, has a parallel role in encouraging people who are already taking part to continue in physical activity by presenting them with both a challenging and social environment.

Current situation

PEST analysis

'Masters- meeting the current and future climate'

Political

The *Wanless Report*, the *Choosing Health White Paper*, which sets out the principles to help the public make informed choices about health, and *Choosing Activity (Department of Health)*, a consultation document designed to increase physical activity, have served to underpin the value of the *Masters Swimming* offering.

One of the *Department of Health's* key target groups for health improvement initiatives is that of older people. Almost half the adults in the UK will be over 50 years of age by 2020 and older people are the biggest users of the *National Health Service*. *Masters Swimming* is one of the few activities in which this group can take part.

Economic

Masters Swimming does suffer from the effects of pool privatisation which makes the cost of facility hire difficult to meet for many groups and clubs.

The costs of pool hire and therefore the cost of competitions are set to rise. The increasing cost of pool heating is continuing to have an impact on admission prices.

Whilst some public sector pools are closing, many private pools are being opened and this is likely to impact on *Masters* with the cost of hire again being an issue. Private pools may become more accessible to *Masters* swimmers but costs are likely to be higher than those of the public sector.

Social

Masters Swimming has a part to play in the *safe, strong and sustainable community programme* currently being engendered by Government. It is felt that *'sporting activities and events contribute to the development of stronger social networks and more cohesive communities'*. *Masters* can deliver on these aspirations.

The social aspect of *Masters swimming* is the key 'selling point' which can be utilised to persuade the many swimmers who swim for exercise that they should join a cohesive unit such as a club.

Technological

The ever changing technological market place has had an effect on Masters but future developments are more difficult to predict. Desk top conferencing for those unable to obtain coaching within their local area is likely to be one innovation. The way in which the Postal Competition is conducted is likely to be influenced over the next few years by technological changes.

A web site for downloading training schedules and information sheets on techniques will be important. Masters Swimmers are also likely to be able to download ranking lists, comparative information and information on where to train when working away through more compact media in the future.

SWOT analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis	
STRENGTHS	
Business advantage	<i>Masters Swimming</i> has no immediate competitor in swimming
Core competency	Competencies in structuring and delivering competitive events for adults
Growth	Growing area of swimming- relatively new entrant to the aquatics
WEAKNESSES	
Geographical dissonance	Lack of local competitions and less competition in the south than the north
Resources	Insufficient volunteers among Masters swimmers to act as volunteers, officials and committee members
Areas for improvement	Lack of pool time- expansion in some clubs would be impossible because of an inability to negotiate more water time
	There is a need for more coaching specifically for Masters or more provision within main stream clubs for Masters Swimmers
	Media coverage; rate of conversion of adult general to <i>Masters Swimming</i>
OPPORTUNITIES	
Trends	<i>Masters Swimming</i> will be able to harness the benefits of moves towards health. It will become increasingly salient in people's lives
Niche	<i>Masters Swimming</i> owns this swimming niche market which presents it with the opportunity to build add ons
New technologies	Future web cam technologies are likely to make competition without travel a possibility for Masters
New needs of customers	Many adult swimmers are seeking information on technique and training programmes. <i>Masters Swimming</i> is in a position to provide this and can use it as an opportunity to bring adults into Masters' competition
THREATS	
Potential obstacles	Masters Swimming does not own the distribution channel, i.e.the adult swimmers normally come through pools and the pools are run by pool operators
Negative economic conditions	The future cost of pool heating and the impact of this on the cost of pool hire and the cost of swimming
Funding	Lack of a large income stream may limit the number of educative activities that can be carried out without external or ASA funding support
Changing climate	A severe downward trend in adult age group competitive sport
Vulnerabilities	Insufficient capacity for large numbers of additional Masters either for club training or for competitions

The Challenge

This *Strategy* therefore recognises that there are a number of key challenges for *Masters Swimming* which have to be overcome if it is to continue both to grow and excel:

- Ways need to be sought to encourage the many adults who swim for fitness to join the Masters community. *Masters Swimming* needs to be made salient to them
- Media coverage needs to be sufficient to draw attention to the work of Masters
- Ways need to be found to bring Masters closer to the heart of the average swimming club so that *Masters Swimming* is not viewed as a peripheral activity
- Masters need to work with pool operators to obtain facilities more suited to each club's needs. Often Masters or main stream clubs do not have space to be able to enrol new members
- New approaches to national competition need to be sought to cater for potential increases in the number of competitors
- Stronger organisational structures need to be developed at regional and county level

Critical success factors

There are a number of areas in which *Masters Swimming* must perform well in order to prevail over other competitive pastimes and this *Strategy* envisages that ways will be sought to maintain or introduce these factors:

- Quality- the quality of the national competitions needs to be high and they need to be perceived as being good value by swimmers and supporters
- Access- the entry point to *Masters Swimming* needs to be simple and easily understood to the uninitiated
- Lower barriers- ways need to be found to lower barriers to participation in competitions. Entry fees will be realistic
- Sociability- *Masters Swimming* will continue to develop on its key tenet of being a sociable activity

Core competencies

Competencies can change over time although there are some competencies that need to be developed to meet the factors above. These are

- Quality- *Masters Swimming* will train and develop its officials from its own segment. This will enable it to run a stronger network of events beneath the national competitions
- Access- adult swimmers thrive on information. They all seek to further their knowledge as well as participate. Information will be available at the point of first contact with *Masters Swimming*
- Lower barriers- a basic price of entry and ease of participation will be maximised for the 'toe in the water' swimmer who tries his or her first competition
- Sociability- at club level, there will be a stronger emphasis on participating rather than competing in order to encourage new swimmers. National competitions will

attempt to engender more of a festival atmosphere in order to involve partners and friends

- Problem solving- swimmers who have day to day questions will be answered through one office dedicated to *Masters Swimming*.

The Vision for the Future

‘Creating an environment appropriate to adult swimming needs’

The previous examination of the swimming environment leads to the following set of key definitions to meet a vision for *Masters Swimming*.

Objective and Goal

The goal is to increase the number of Masters swimmers by providing all services and fulfilling all needs at the point of consumption. *Masters Swimming* will seek to embrace the wider swimming community by meeting the specific needs of individuals not already taking part on an organised basis. More specifically, as a goal, this means recruiting new Masters at a rate that meets the Government activity targets of a 1% increase a year.

The Vision

The vision over the next 10 years is to create an environment suitable for adult swimmers to achieve personal fulfilment. This will embrace all levels of swimming and will seek to embrace all parts of the community.

The Mission

The mission is to make *Masters Swimming* competitions, clubs and coaching programmes available to all those adults participating in aquatics; to seek to improve their swimming skills and enhance levels of health and well being; and to engage their interest through imaginative programming and to retain their involvement in the sport throughout their lives.

Core values

The core values of *Masters Swimming* are recognised as being:

- Social and convivial- a meeting point for adult swimmers
- Healthy
- Challenging and target orientated
- Self fulfilling
- Improving the quality of life and standards of performance and practice

Strategies for:

Organisation

In order to build organisational structures, *Masters Swimming* will:

- ~~6.~~ Appoint a dedicated professional to work in a developmental role from 2007
- ~~6.~~ Place this professional in a Masters office so that day to day questions can be answered
- ~~6.~~ Utilise the professional to coordinate day to day matters as they arise with other ASA Departments
- ~~6.~~ Create a 3 year development plan designed to meet the needs of swimmers at all levels

Swimming for Health

'Reaching out to the health agenda'

There is a close fit between swimming for health and *Masters Swimming* and *Masters Swimming* needs to draw new members from this swimming community. It will do this by:

- ~~6.~~ Promoting the health benefits of *Masters Swimming*
- ~~6.~~ Underlining its values, i.e. social, group activity, attrition reducing
- ~~6.~~ Forming relationships with Primary Care Trusts in order to create more pool time for Masters at appropriate times of the day. This would be coordinated with the ASA National Activity Manager
- ~~6.~~ Some (but not all) Masters swimmers will have suffered illness and sessions should be advertised at local level in surgeries and health centres
- ~~6.~~ In general, by initiatives that will make *Masters Swimming* relevant to the *health agenda*. It will reach out to the *health agenda* rather than to wait for the *health agenda* to come to it
- ~~6.~~ Seek to monitor and then promulgate the health benefits by working with university researchers at a club and national level in order to identify health benefits. This will also serve as a basis for much needed local media coverage by Masters. Again we see this being coordinated with the National Activity Manager

Swimming for Competition

'Making the first experience a positive one'

While many Masters take part in competitions, there are other Masters swimmers that prefer to train for the pleasure of swimming without competition. For those that compete, competition acts as an incentive to swim regularly. There is a third group of Masters swimmers who might be tempted to take part in a competition in the future. Swimming for competition therefore has to be framed with both current competitors and those people who might take part in mind.

First, the strategies to improve the experience for those swimmers already competing will be to:

- Encourage the expansion of open water events
- Encourage more competitions in the south
- Seek to encourage as many entries as possible by keeping multi entry fees low. Within fiscal constraints, this would be supported through the policy of freezing entry fees in national competitions at current prices for two years
- Engage at an early stage with those authorities building 50 metre pools around the country. Whilst existing venues are excellent, many Masters would welcome a travel and accommodation cost 'holiday' by having national events close to their home from time to time. To maintain levels of interest, it would be a good idea when new facilities become available, to add them to the championship portfolio
- Pursue a policy of rotating national events where facilities allow
- Turn national competitions into a festival to encourage partners and others to socialise. A dinner, dance or social event as well as other close-fit entertainments would make them more interesting events for competitors
- At local level to create a wider network of competition

Secondly, policies that will be implemented to make competition more inviting for the third group that might compete if it were sufficiently incentivised:

- In general, all barriers will be lowered to tempt people to enter, for example, by simplifying entry forms and avoiding high initial registration fees
- Where feasible, entry on the day for those who have never competed, will be encouraged
- The cost of entry should also be nominal and payment methods fully flexible. Again, where possible, competitors can pay on the day
- Events as short as 25 metres for 'entry point' adults could be introduced at county and local level
- More local competition will also be more likely to encourage people at this level to take part

Swimming for self fulfilment

This *Strategy* recognises that swimming for self fulfilment is an important area for the development of Masters. There are many swimmers who are registered as Masters who are content to train without competing. In addition, there are many adults outside of *Masters Swimming* that have the same objects in mind.

In the near future, we plan to introduce an activity name to be used as a segway to Masters. *Masters Swimming* is deterring some adults as it suggests a high level of competence and professionalism. Whilst retaining the Masters name for the more serious swimmer, we plan to seek an introductory name for those wishing to move from lane swimming in pools to a more structured approach. Later these swimmers, many of whom will never have competed and may find the idea of competing quite daunting, will be encouraged to move into a fully fledged Masters group.

Similarly, this *Strategy* promulgates the idea of ‘*toe in the water*’ days for non-registered adult swimmers who wish to learn more about technique, keeping fit and planning a fitness schedule. We see an experimental programme being run in the regions by *Masters Swimming*. The emphasis would be on swimming without competition and racing although this ultimately may be a stepping stone for those who wish to register as Masters swimmers and to race later.

The ASA National SwimFit programme currently engages those members of the public who want to add structure to their swimming (i.e. through inter active training programmes, help with techniques etc.) The ASA Masters Committee will work with the National SwimFit organisers to plan a seamless pathway for those ‘SwimFitters’ who want to take their more structured approach to the next level, i.e. *Masters Swimming*, which we see as the natural progression.

Mentoring and volunteering

Masters also have an important contribution to make with young swimmers. The mentoring of young swimmers within clubs would be invaluable. Young swimmers learn by example and Masters are in a position to advise others through practical examples. This means that Masters can advise on stroke technique, reinforcing the work being carried out on pool sides by coaches, and can also recount experiences to young people.

Whilst there are volunteers to help to run clubs, there is a shortage of volunteers to run meets and assist with coaching. There is a reliance on ASA officials not normally involved with day to day *Masters Swimming*. This *Strategy* sees Masters swimmers also training as timekeepers and judges so that events are more underpinned. In order to overcome travel and time difficulties, we envisage training for these officials being by way of an interactive web site with a minimum number of practical sessions.

Facilities strategies

‘Building the case for Masters at local level’

This *Strategy* broadly follows the strategies set out in the *ASA’s Facility Strategy, From Armbands to Gold Medals*. At a local level, Masters will consider how to best engage with its local authority and pool operator. Each club should have its own local strategy for facilities. These will embrace a decision making process as to how much water time it will need in the future, for how many swimmers and how best it can facilitate this.

Pools need to be persuaded to provide lane swimming at times which are accessible to most Masters and not too late at night. *Masters Swimming* should avoid being seen as an ‘add-on’ to swimming which is already taking place and each club should argue the case for Masters. These arguments could best be supported by working with the local Primary Care Trust and by persuading local politicians and decision makers that Masters are working towards reducing obesity and heart disease within their local populations. Masters therefore need to have a higher engagement in local swimming strategies.

Equity and Ethics

Masters Swimming recognises the notion of sports equity and will take positive action to counteract iniquities. We envisage those officials in Masters only clubs attending a course over a day. Clubs will be encouraged to seek out potential members from under represented social groups. They will also be encouraged to ensure that they are accessible to these groups by publicising session times in places frequented by them and seeking out under represented group members that swim in keep fit lanes.

Swimming's Strategic Plan, 2005-9 states '*Swimming believes in the principle of fair play in all disciplines. Fair play includes ensuring that all those who take part adhere to the rules of the sport and participate on a level playing field*'. *Masters Swimming* intends to embrace these principles.

Whereas *Masters Swimming* will not expect to encounter doping in the sport and testing for doping cannot be envisaged at the time of this *Strategy*, an education programme will be carried out in the form of messages in programmes, via the Masters web site and through educative leaflets.

Corporate governance

The ASA and *Masters Swimming* recognise that there is an interdependence between the two which makes it essential that a close relationship is retained under the general umbrella of the ASA.

The ASA provides *Masters Swimming* with officials for competitions, water space for training within main stream swimming clubs and a level of gravitas associated with a long standing organisation. It also brings credibility and insurance in the booking of pool facilities and dealing with pool operators. *Masters Swimming* provides important funding to some clubs where Masters swimmers are in the majority and swimmers in general for some swimming meets. It is planned that it will also be of assistance in mentoring swimmers within main stream clubs.

The *Strategy* for the years ahead is to invest greater autonomy for the Masters community based on building stronger management structures and delivery. These management structures need to follow best practice in corporate governance with clear lines of reporting and identification of responsibility and accountability.

The first step will be the appointment of a dedicated development officer and the establishment of an office. This office, working with the Chair and Administrator of the ASA Masters Committee will be responsible for day to day requests and development. The ASA professional staff and the ASA Masters Committee would meet in 2007 to determine decision making levels.

The ASA Masters Committee will also determine in 2007 whether it has the overall skill set to deliver on this *Strategy*, whether it needs to recruit extra specialist members to fill any gaps and who those members should be. As a guide, all Masters committees at all levels should be comprised of at least 75% Masters swimmers.

The second step will be the introduction of a budget for development and clinics. It will be the task of the professional officer to seek out the many external funding opportunities now available in this area. New funding, when obtained, would be used to develop the Masters workforce.





The third stage would be a strategic review in 2009 that updates this *Strategy* and considers a dual key involvement with the *Masters Swimming* budget and issues of greater resources such as greater central resources for media coverage.

Planned Strategic outcomes-

Workforce and coaching

Through the Masters Development appointee, we plan to increase the number of dedicated Masters coaches as well as improve the quality of delivery. There is a recognised shortage of coaches in all areas of the aquatics. The *ASA Corporate Plan and Planning Guidelines, 2005-9* seeks to increase the number of dedicated Masters programmes from 16 in 2005-6 to 128 by 2008/9.

This will require a considerable increase in Masters coaches and the strategies to meet this are as follows:

-  To target the training of 100 development coaches for *Masters Swimming* by 2008 to part satisfy the targeted number of programmes
-  To seek funding from external funders
-  To ensure that training meets the Learning and Skills Council and Skills Active criteria for support and to work with the *Skills Sector Agreement Process*
-  To utilise any new nationally coordinated aquatic training service

Courses

In the *National Masters Survey, 2006*, a number of registered swimmers commented that they would like to see more assistance in terms of stroke technique. This will partly be addressed by the upskilling of the coaching workforce as above. It will also be addressed through clinics in each of the ASA Regions. This programme would again be driven by the development appointee.

We also plan for one coaching clinic each year in each of the ASA Regions. These clinics will also be used as an opportunity for trainee coaches to work with swimmers.

Competitions

'Using experience to develop the scope to cope'

Whilst many Masters swimmers do not enter competitions, there are a considerable number that do take part. The task of the ASA Masters Committee is to make these experiences as positive as possible.

Masters Swimming competitions are scaleable and there is sufficient scope to cope with more competitors in many Masters competitions but, the *Strategy* anticipates that as the sport

becomes more popular, the future management of entries will have to be addressed on an annual basis. This will help to resolve any difficulties that occur and improve the experience of those taking part.

There will be a 'light touch' approach towards swim meet accreditation. At this stage, the licensing of swim meets is seen as a barrier to encouraging more events from regional level down. However, general guidance, operational and health and safety advice will be supplied to all meet organisers 3 months before the event and meet organisers encouraged to respond confirming that they have read and understand this information.

The competitive calendar will also be reviewed in 2008 and time given to planning the season. This review should include World and European Masters Championships which are generally held in mid summer and the British and ASA Masters' Championships. As part of this review, the ASA Masters Committee will also determine whether the *ASA Half Hour Swim* and the newly introduced *Swim Decathlon* are likely to encourage wide involvement or whether alternative events may be of more value. The postal swim, which attracted 198 individuals and 36 teams in 2006, has low penetration and future adaptations to make this more attractive will be considered.

At the moment, only the South East (2 open), North East (1 open), South West (2 closed) and East and West Midlands (1) ASA Regions have a Masters Championship and more meets should be placed at a greater spread of venues within a reasonable travelling distance for most Masters, i.e. 30 miles or less. This planning will be addressed by the Masters development appointee. As a guide, this *Strategy* envisages each Masters swimmer being able to attend a minimum of three Masters meets and one national competition per year should they wish to do so, these meets being placed at appropriate sites that provide a full range of accommodation at different prices. Each region should stage one Masters Championship, these to be staged early in the year and will form part of the progression through national to international competition in August.

Publicity

Press coverage of *Masters Swimming* continues to be low and there is little coverage even within the local and regional media. To improve on this situation, this *Strategy* foresees:

- ~~6.~~ A national training day to be held for those members of Masters that would be interested in acting as their club's local public relations contact
- ~~6.~~ A web site is launched for swimming along the lines of *'Friend's Reunited'* which will help to build a network of contacts, put old team mates in touch with one another and generally serves as a source of information that people from outside of the Masters community could tap into
- ~~6.~~ The production of an annually updated media guide which includes profiles of all of those Masters swimmers who would like to be included. This will be available for local press via the web.
- ~~6.~~ *Masters News* is a good information outlet for Masters swimmers. In the future, it will be converted to colour and circularised to all swimming pools and current participants in the *National SwimFit* programme in order that non registered adult swimmers can be engaged

- 6. As and when money becomes available, a campaign should be run around one edition of *Masters News*. This would again be sent to all pools with posters and copies of *Masters News* so that they can be made available to members of the public

Swimmer recruitment

To a certain extent, those swimmers who wish to swim lengths of their own volition and those who train to compete appear to be mutually exclusive. The challenge for *Masters Swimming* is to convert as many of those people who swim lengths to Masters. There will continue to be a certain level of attrition from Masters competitions and, like any other competitive activity, this is likely to continue over the next ten years.

Masters Swimming therefore needs to further understand the values of those people who swim of their own volition and to look at ways of matching those values in its own offering. This is a separate task for *Masters Swimming* over the next two years. Effectively this is an examination of its potential customers.

The questions that will be determined are:

- 6. The most appropriate umbrella name for a transitional group
- 6. How they can be engaged at a peripheral level of involvement
- 6. How the notions of swimming for health and fun can be linked to the concept of competition
- 6. How it can 'sell' its offering to those who often do not know of its existence and/or do not understand how they can become involved

The *National Masters Survey 2006* has put the Masters community in a better position to understand its current customers. The *Strategy* sees this further examination taking place over the next two years with the primary purpose of trying to understand its potential customers.

Delivery outcomes

The delivery outcomes required to meet this *Strategy's* future desired state are listed beneath. The start point is the existing data provided by the ASA Masters Committee. The targets show a 1% increase year on year in line with the Government's national activity targets. The exceptions are the targets for coaching which are desired projections from the ASA Workforce Plan and the policy and equity targets which are promulgated in the ASA'S key targets:

Delivery outcomes (based on 2005 & 2006 approximations)			
Measure	2007	2011	2015
Number of registered Masters swimmers	6,931	7,000	7,070
Number of swimmers taking part in National Masters Championship	1,100	1,111	1,122
Number of individual entries in National Masters Championship	4500	4,545	4,590
Number of swimmers taking part in annual Masters Postal Competition	200	202	204
Number of Masters swimming coaches attending Masters Swimming coaching courses	2	100	210
Number of Masters swimmers entering FINA World Masters Championships	185	187	189
Number of Masters swimmers entering LEN European Masters Championships	225	227	230
Number of equity policies read & implemented by clubs	?	?	?
Number of doping information policies read & understood by clubs	?	?	?

The additional delivery outcomes for *Masters Swimming* in the *ASA Planning Guidelines 2005-9* are listed beneath. The variance in projections for the number of registered Masters swimmers is because these figures are not based on Government activity targets. Although they are more challenging targets than those based on Government activity targets, they do not present an unrealistic target given past growth figures in *Masters Swimming*:

ASA Planning Guidelines 2005-9					
	2004 (actual)	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Registered Masters swimmers	5,000	6,700	7,000	7,500	8,000
Regions with Masters competitions	5	5	6	8	8
National Masters competitions	1	1 to 2	1 to 2	1 to 2	1 to 2
Number of dedicated masters programmes in the Regions	0	16	32	64	128



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