

National Squad Selection Policy and Times – Review and Changes

Introduction

Following the completion of the latest Olympic cycle, a review of the National Selection Policy and Times took place, focussing on a number of different areas;

Times

- World top 15 times
- Average age for achieving world top 15 times
- World Class
- Progression between squads

Policy

- Events required at specific age groups

Times

World Top 15 Times

The world of swimming has moved forward considerably over the past 12 months in all events both in the performances of the leading swimmers and the depth of performances within the worlds top 15. With over 100 world records being set, many put the progression down to the advances in suit technologies where improvements of 1 – 2% can be made. It is important that these improvements are taken in to account when reviewing the selection times for the Scottish Swimming squad selections. As a result, the world top15 times used for 2009/10 selection policy have been taken as an average top 15 placing from 2005 – 2008 in the World Rankings (2 per nation). The Scottish Swimming target continues to be 8 swimmers in World Top 15 (2 per nation) at the time of the Olympic Trials, thus a standard equivalent to this remains the cornerstone of the selection times produced.

Further detail on the philosophy used to generate the times can be found within the full Selections Document covering Rationale & Selection Times (2006) on the Scottish Swimming Web Site:

www.scottishswimming.com

Average Age

As per the above, the average age of swimmers from 2005 – 2008 was re-calculated. Changes have been minimal with some events changing by around 6 months. This has affected the differentials used to calculate progressions in a small number of events.

World Class

Due to the continued progress of swimmers at British, Senior, Youth and Junior levels the standard required to achieve on the British Stage continues to improve. The recent publication of World Class Development times clearly challenges swimmers and coaches to achieve at performance levels and swimming in Scotland must respond to this challenge. Thus, the production of the new Scottish Swimming Selection times takes in to account expectancy placed at this level.

Progression Between Squads

The number of swimmers achieving at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels was examined. Numbers at Bronze and Silver levels 11 – 16yrs continue to grow, with numbers at 17+ Senior Gold and Silver above 2012 targets. Numbers of swimmers at Youth Gold remain steady, whilst 2009 saw a significant increase of swimmers at the Senior Bronze level.

Squad	2006 - 07	2007 - 08	2008 - 09
Bronze (11- 16)	409	468	521
Bronze (17+)	8	11	23
Silver (13 – 16)	78	80	84
Gold (14 – 16)	23	17	15
Senior Silver(17+)	19	18	25
Senior Gold (17+)	23	23	29

On examination of the Senior Gold group, it is clear that the age profile of the group favours those swimmers at the ages of 17/18yrs. In addition, examination of the squad selections from the past 3 years would suggest that swimmers are making the senior gold level at the age of 17 but are finding it difficult to retain their position within the squad. Furthermore, swimmers supported on the Youth Squad and Area Institute can maintain this level of support whilst regressing in performance (youth squad – senior silver) between the age of 16 and 17yrs.

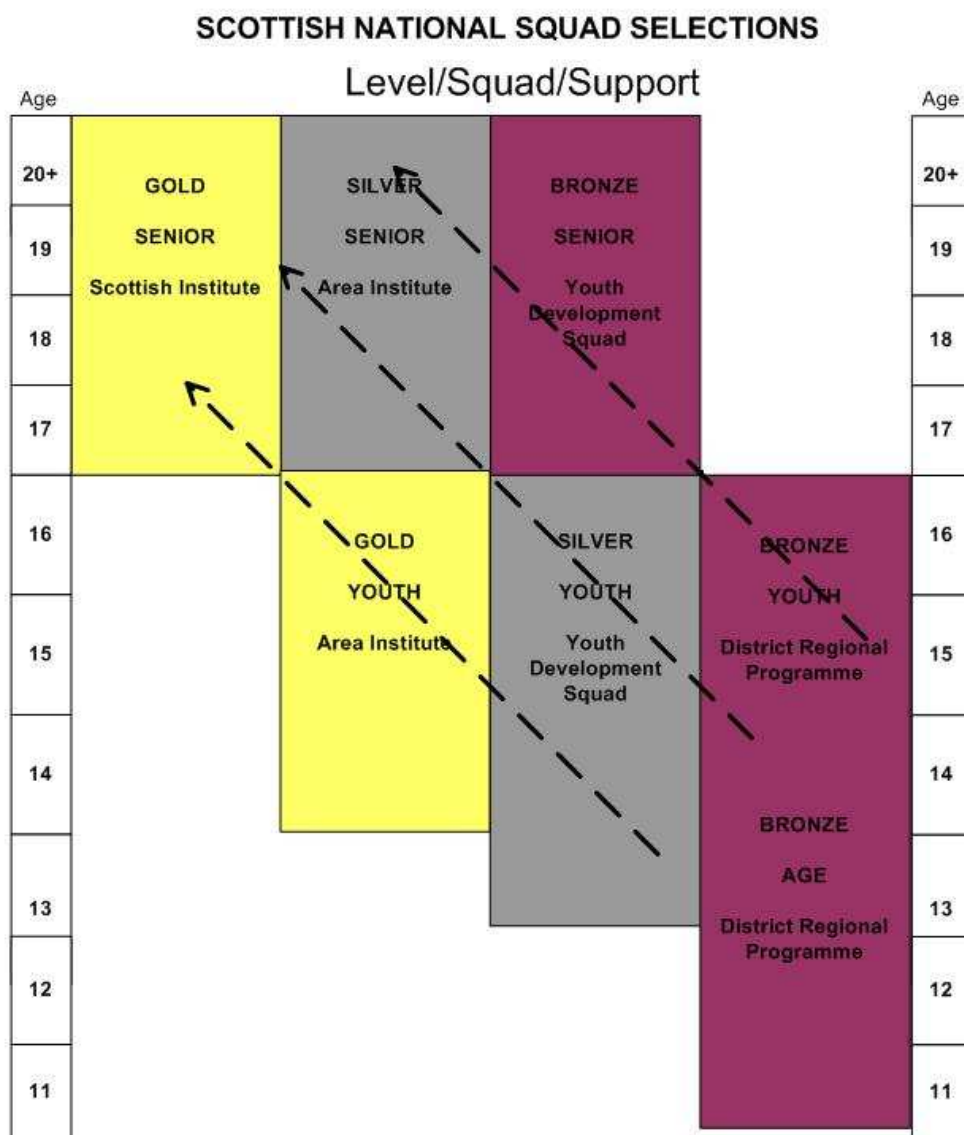
Changes to Times

Taking in to account the above, the following changes have been made to the National Squads Selection Times;

- Gold times tightened per event based on the improvement to the World Top 15 average and altered to reflect any change in the observed age at which peak performance is reached.
- Silver and Bronze times adjusted to maintain progression towards Gold times and to acknowledge the improvement of times achieved at all levels.

- Progression pathways for swimmers entering senior programmes recalculated resulting in some changes to senior times to ensure that:
- The level of support received during a swimmer's time as a junior will only be retained on transition to the senior programme if the swimmer has continued to progress.
- Swimmers will only progress to a senior squad carrying the next level of support (eg AIS to SIS) if they are tracking a path that is significantly higher than the baseline for the junior programme they have just left.

Swimmer progression and support is described within the diagram below.



Selection Policy

Changes

Through feedback from coaches, observation of selections of swimmers in to squads, entries in to National meets, tightening of Scottish Age Group consideration times, it is fair to say that the philosophy behind the National Squads Selection policy has been successful in changing the training philosophies of many coaches and swimmers. Many more opportunities to swim the identified distances and events are now being provided and as a result no changes to the selection policy have been made between the ages of 11 and 16yrs.

It is felt however, that there is an opportunity to develop the Senior Bronze policy by altering the number of events needed to gain selection. In recognition that senior swimmers are likely to be focussing on more specific events at this age of development a reduction in the number of events is required.

Taking in to account the above, the following changes have been made to the National Squads Selection Policy;

- Senior Bronze 17/18 yrs – 2 times required (not including 50m events) or 3 times required (including 50m events)
- Senior Bronze 19/20yrs – 1 time required (non 50m event) or 2 times required (including 50m events)