

# OPTIMAL ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## INTRODUCTION

The objective of British Swimming's Performance Pathway is to develop athletes that have the skills, characteristics and behaviours to thrive in the highest competitive arenas, specifically at the World Championships and Olympic Games.

The Optimal Athlete Development Framework (OADF) sets out to describe the characteristics that we believe our swimmers will need to possess in order to be successful in 2024 and beyond.

The framework defines the characteristics of both "The Great British Swimmer", as well as those that are showing "Future Performance Potential". It is not a rigid curriculum, nor indeed a tool for talent identification or selection.

These characteristics we have chosen have been determined following consultation with leading coaches, support staff and athletes, and further developed by British Swimming in conjunction with Swim England, Scottish Swimming and Swim Wales, supported by the Home Nation Sporting Institutes.

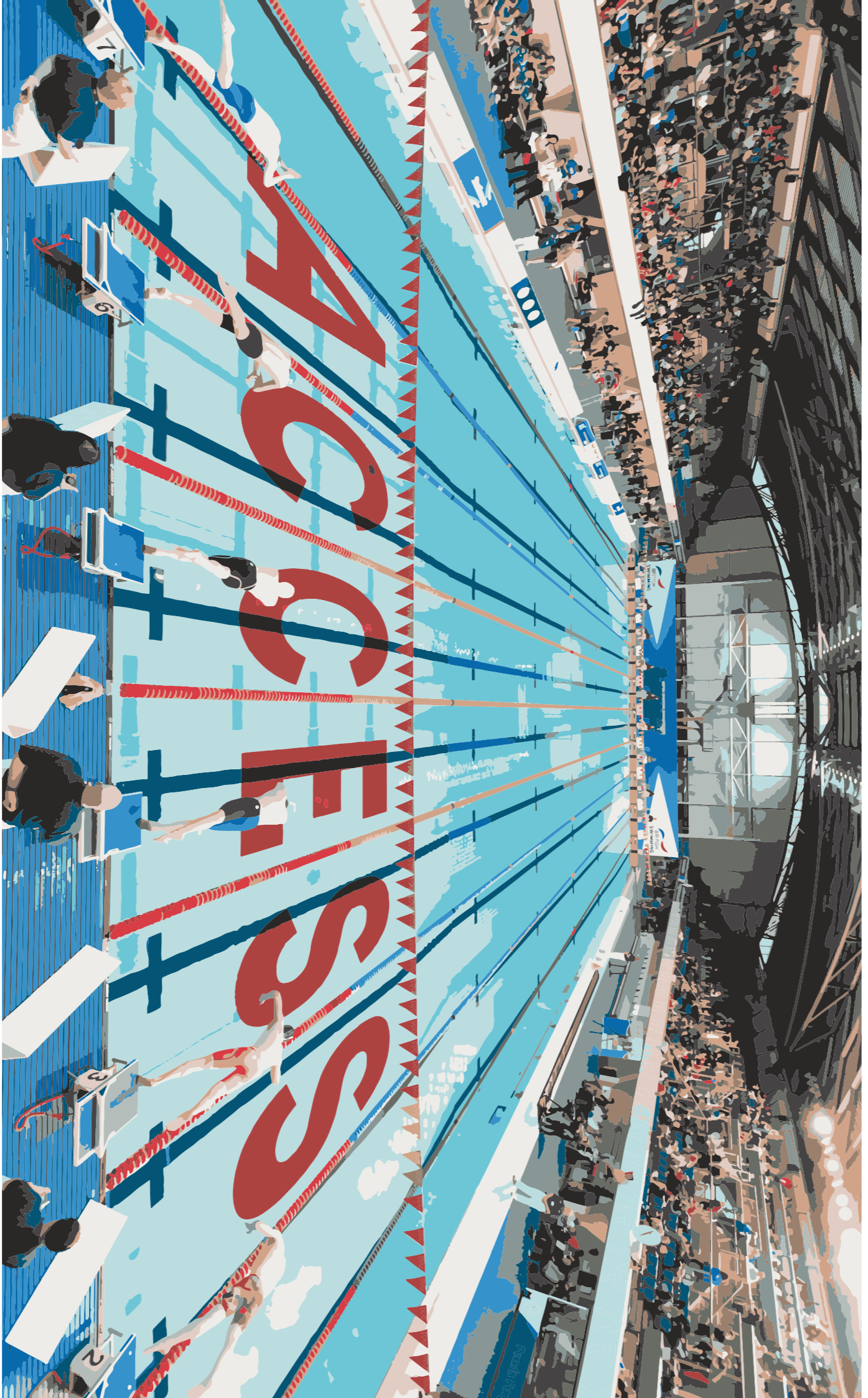
The 6 'A-C-C-E-S-S' pillars of the OADF describe the approach and underlying principles we will use to develop and then transition our 'Future Performance Potential' athletes on to becoming a 'Great British Swimmer'.

### **BRITISH SWIMMING'S HEAD OF ELITE DEVELOPMENT, TIM JONES:**

"This is an incredibly important project that will help determine our collective future. We are adopting non-prescriptive approach, steering clear of telling coaches and practitioners how to do their jobs. We believe in promoting autonomy, and want to encourage individuality by urging the team around the athlete to exercise all of their knowledge and skill in developing the characteristics set out in this framework."



# GREAT BRITISH SWIMMER



# FUTURE PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL





**FUTURE PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL**

**PERSON**

**ATHLETE**

**PERFORMER**



Future Performance Potential defines the character attributes of our next generation. We are looking to work with our club swimming fraternity to identify, and then develop a new and guaranteed supply of athletes. These athletes will be capable of being successfully transitioned over the medium to long term, to perform at the highest levels of world swimming.

## FUTURE PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL

# PERSON

# ATHLETE

# PERFORMER



### ENJOYS THE JOURNEY

THE PERSON is fully immersed in making the most of every aspect of being the best that they can be.

**SUPPORTIVE NETWORK** - The people around the PERSON will support them holistically in their development, irrespective of sporting success.

**HAPPY** - The PERSON exhibits a relaxed and contented demeanour.

**POSITIVE** - The PERSON maintains a positive outlook on life and sport at all times, irrespective of results in the pool.

**LIFE BALANCE** - The PERSON has the ability to be able to put sport into context and maintain a sense of balance in all aspects of life.

**SELF MANAGING** - The PERSON has an appropriate set of skills to manage and self-regulate all aspects of their life.

**HAS A SENSE OF IDENTITY (IN AND OUT OF THE POOL)**  
The PERSON has developed a unique set of character attributes which sets them apart from others.

**HAS LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE AND SETS LONG-TERM GOALS**  
The PERSON focuses on the best possible 'end of career' result and not the immediacy of a short-term outcome.

### RESILIENT & ROBUST

A strong and durable PERSON who meets challenges head-on, handles adversity, and is able to recover easily from setback.

### DRIVEN

The PERSON is determined to achieve.

**HAS HUNGER AND DESIRE** - The PERSON displays a strong intrinsic motivation to achieve their goals.

**REALISTIC** - The PERSON displays a practical sense of what they can achieve.

**ACCEPTS THAT THIS IS A CHOICE AND MAKES APPROPRIATE DECISIONS** - The PERSON does not see high performance as a sacrifice, but a conscious decision to be the best they can be.

### OWNERSHIP

The PERSON accepts responsibility for their own actions and behaviours.

### GOOD LEARNER

The PERSON is inquisitive to always find out more and become a student of their sport.

**POSSESS A GROWTH MINDSET** - The PERSON is curious about their performance, thrives on challenge, and believes there are few limits to their abilities and talent.

**OPEN-MINDED** - The PERSON is always willing to explore new ideas and ways of doing things to gain a competitive edge.

**WORK ETHIC** - The PERSON has an outstanding appetite to consistently put in an enormous amount of effort.

**HUMILITY** - The PERSON stays grounded and continually takes a modest view of their own self importance.

### INDEPENDENT

The PERSON is a self starter who requires minimal external direction.



## FUTURE PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL

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### PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOURS

The ATHLETE conducts themselves in a manner which is wholly conducive to being successful in high-performance sport.

**DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OVER TIME** - The ATHLETE is viewed to have a long and progressive development path ahead of them.

#### UNDERSTANDS THE SPORT WELL AND THEIR EVENT

**EXCEPTIONALLY WELL** - The ATHLETE is a student of their sport and event.

**RELENTLESS** - The ATHLETE has a relentless drive to achieve.

### PHYSICALLY SUITABLE

The ATHLETE is an optimal physical specimen for their chosen speciality event.

**ATHLETIC INTELLIGENCE** - The ATHLETE has a capacity for learning and an aptitude for grasping the importance of factors influencing performance.

**NOT OVER-TRAINED OR OVER-DEVELOPED** - The ATHLETE has followed an appropriate physiological development pathway which has not been unduly accelerated and overloaded.

#### PHYSICAL LITERACY AND FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT PATTERNS

The ATHLETE has the physical competence, knowledge and understanding of the movement patterns for high performance swimming.

#### BROAD FOUNDATION IN A NUMBER OF SPORTS

The ATHLETE has participated in a broad range of sporting activities and experienced a variety of physical challenges in their formative years.

**ROBUST WITH GOOD RANGE OF MOVEMENT** - The ATHLETE displays full and durable movement-potential in all of the joints required for their event.

#### GENETIC DISPOSITION - PHYSIOLOGICALLY OR PHYSICALLY

- The ATHLETE has an increased likelihood of developing particularly positive performance attributes based on their genetic makeup.

**STRONG ENDURANCE POTENTIAL AND HIGH LEVELS OF GENERAL FITNESS** - The ATHLETE is naturally predisposed to develop and retain a superior level of health and fitness at all times.

**STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF NUTRITION FOR PERFORMANCE** The ATHLETE has strong knowledge of the value of fuelling & refuelling strategies for optimal physical performance.

### COACHABLE

The ATHLETE will request, positively receive and act upon feedback.

### TECHNICALLY EXCELLENT

The ATHLETE demonstrates a high level of technical execution of all racing skills.

**TECHNICAL SKILLS** - The ATHLETE is viewed as a technically superior at their age and stage of development.



**FUTURE PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL**

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**LOVE RACE DAY!**

The PERFORMER thrives in the competitive environment.

**NOT OVEREXPOSED TO WINNING** - The PERFORMER has experienced and learned from both winning and losing races.

**APPROPRIATE RACING EXPERIENCE INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL**

The PERFORMER has the knowledge of competing at levels required to prepare them for each and every competitive challenge.

**BEING COMFORTABLE BEING UNCOMFORTABLE**

The PERFORMER will positively deal with situations which are challenging and out of their control.

**EXECUTE YOUR RACE PLAN**

The PERFORMER will deliver their intended race model in all situations.

**RACING SKILLS** - The PERFORMER is seen as a 'good racer', displaying an appropriate set of technical and tactical skills to achieve the best result out of every race.

**PROCESS DRIVEN** - The PERFORMER remains focussed on the steps required to achieve a result, irrespective of the conditions, and not the outcome itself.

**PERFORM WHEN IT MATTERS**

The PERFORMER has the ability to always be at their best at the most important events of the season.

**PERFORMANCE DRIVEN** - The PERFORMER always focusses their mind on the importance of their own individual performance.

**PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE** - The PERFORMER has the ability to achieve the best result possible irrespective of the level of competition.



# WE WORK TOGETHER USING THE FOLLOWING 6 A-C-C-E-S-S PILLARS AS OUR FUNDAMENTAL WAY OF GOING ABOUT OUR BUSINESS

## **A**THLETE CENTRED

**OUR ATHLETES ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERY DECISION WE MAKE**

- We coach our athletes as people
- We adopt an individual approach to training
- We give the athlete what they need, not just what they want
- We tell our athletes the reason 'why' before we guide their development
- Our athletes contribute to their own program and their own development

## **C**OACH LED

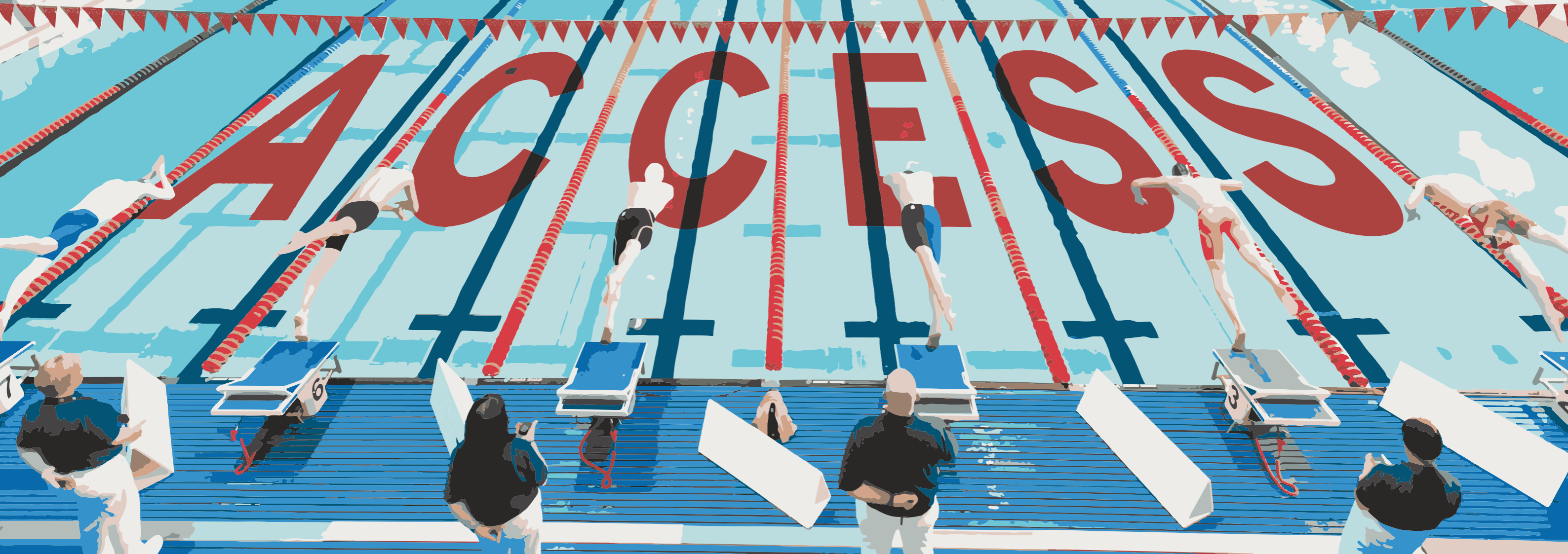
**OUR COACHES ARE EFFECTIVE IN LEADING OUR ATHLETES BY SETTING HIGH STANDARDS**

- Our coaches are the leaders of our programs
- Our coaches are well informed and well educated, continually looking for ways to improve
- Our coaches have leadership skills and understand British Swimming Team Behaviours
- Our coaches provide an individual approach to the long-term development of our athletes

## **C**ULTURALLY DEFINED

**OUR CULTURE DEFINES WORLD-CLASS BEHAVIOURS TO DELIVER PODIUM SUCCESS**

- Athlete wellbeing and duty of care is at the heart of our culture
- Our culture is aligned to British Swimming Team Behaviours
- We have a culture of continuous improvement - Kaizen
- We deliver seasons best performances at the Benchmark Meet





# WE WORK TOGETHER USING THE FOLLOWING 6 A-C-C-E-S-S PILLARS AS OUR FUNDAMENTAL WAY OF GOING ABOUT OUR BUSINESS

## EXPERT INFORMED

### OUR DECISIONS ARE GUIDED BY EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

- We use an evidence-based approach to inform our decisions
- Our Support Staff ensure we work to stay ahead of the pack by implementing marginal gains
- We continually develop all of our staff to be experts in their field

## SCIENCE SUPPORTED

### OUR PRACTITIONERS WORK AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TO SERVICE OUR ATHLETES

- We believe that the collective knowledge and skillset of our practitioners provides the most effective way of solving complex performance problems
- We collaborate to ensure we investigate all possible ways of developing our athletes
- We provide a seamless set of support services to our identified athletes

## SYSTEM ALIGNED

### OUR SYSTEM IS WHOLLY COHESIVE AND ALIGNED

- Our system has a clear Vision and Mission which has been bought into by all of our stakeholders
- We work in absolute synergy with all of our partners
- British Swimming and the Home Nations are all working towards the same agreed set of outcome goals
- We have a domestic competition programme which provides appropriate levels of race opportunity for all ages and stages of development





**THE GREAT BRITISH SWIMMER**

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Building on the characteristics identified within 'Future Performance Potential', the Great British Swimmer defines the additional attributes of athletes who we believe are capable of consistently producing medal winning performances at World and Olympic level.

**DELIVERING OLYMPIC PODIUM SUCCESS**



## THE GREAT BRITISH SWIMMER

PERSON

ATHLETE

PERFORMER



### FULFILLED

THE PERSON is happy and content that they are fully developing their abilities and character.

**SUPPORTIVE NETWORK** - The people around the PERSON actively support their holistic development, irrespective of sporting success.

**ENTHUSIASTIC FOR THEIR SPORT AND ENJOYS THEIR JOURNEY** THE PERSON has energy, is positive and optimistic and brings the best version of themselves to the pool each day.

### STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY (IN AND OUT OF POOL)

The PERSON has a strong sense of self and has developed a unique set of exemplary character attributes which sets them apart from others in sport and life.

**LIFE BALANCE** - The PERSON has the ability to put sport into context and maintain a sense of balance and perspective in all aspects of life.

**SELF MANAGING** - The PERSON has an appropriate set of skills to manage and take ownership and responsibility for all aspects of their life.

### PERFORMANCE-BASED DECISION MAKING (IN & OUT OF POOL)

THE PERSON makes appropriate decisions both in and out of pool situations that enhances their ability to excel in the pool.

### RESILIENT & ROBUST

THE PERSON is psychologically and physically strong, durable, and able to recover well from setbacks.

**ADAPTABLE & AGILE** - THE PERSON is open to and quickly embraces change.

**SELF-CONFIDENT** - THE PERSON has trust in their own ability and qualities and has strategies to effectively maintain their confidence despite setbacks.

**STRONG AND IN GREAT PHYSICAL HEALTH** - THE PERSON is able to cope with the daily rigours of training as a full-time athlete and managing other commitments outside the pool.

### ASPIRATIONAL

THE PERSON has a desire to achieve at the highest level of the sport, knows where they are going, and knows how to get there.

**COMPETITIVE** - THE PERSON is a fierce competitor who always looks for ways to develop in order to find a competitive edge.

**DETERMINED** - THE PERSON has commitment and desires success and is relentless in their pursuit of excellence in all that they do.

**COURAGEOUS** - THE PERSON is brave in making difficult decisions regarding their sporting life, does not just follow the crowd and does not fear failure.

**HIGH STANDARDS OF SELF AND OTHERS** - THE PERSON acts professionally and endeavours to do the right thing at all times while expecting the same from the wider team around them.

### POSSESS A GROWTH MINDSET

THE PERSON is open to learning and believes that they can and will improve over time with hard work.

**APTITUDE FOR LEARNING** - THE PERSON pro-actively seeks advice and feedback in order to develop and improve and acts upon this feedback appropriately.

**OPEN-MINDED** - THE PERSON is always willing to explore new ideas and ways of doing things to gain a competitive advantage.

**USES FEEDBACK POSITIVELY** - THE PERSON has the ability to process feedback without emotion and acts on it in a positive manner.

**HUMILITY** - No matter what they achieve, THE PERSON remains open to learning.



## THE GREAT BRITISH SWIMMER

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### DISPLAYS WINNING HABITS

THE ATHLETE displays a series of Psychological characteristics that enhance their ability to excel as an Elite Athlete.

**MOTIVATION, DRIVE & DIRECTION** - THE ATHLETE is clear on, what they want and need to do, how to do it, and acts accordingly in their training.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE IN THE MOMENT** - THE ATHLETE demonstrates a range of psychological qualities and techniques consistent with elite performance that enhances what they do in training.

**DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL** - THE ATHLETE demonstrates great self-awareness, realistically reflect on own performance, engage in purposeful practice, and access appropriate support from others.

**ABILITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS** - THE ATHLETE communicates effectively, relate to others, forms effective relationships and demonstrates appropriate leadership.

**INQUISITIVE AND ALWAYS WANTING TO KNOW MORE**  
THE ATHLETE seeks feedback on their performance and looks for new ways to get a competitive edge.

**SCHOLARS OF THE SPORT** - THE ATHLETE is up to date with current trends in training and competition strategies, knows the history of the sport and has informed opinion on the future direction of the sport.

**OWNERSHIP** - THE ATHLETE demonstrates accountability and responsibility for their own performance.

### PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

THE ATHLETE has the optimum physical and physiological qualities for the event that they are focused on .

**APPROPRIATE PHYSIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION** - THE ATHLETE has the physiology best suited for the event they are competing in.

**ATHLETICISM** - THE ATHLETE has full and complete physical literacy required for all aspects of the sport.

**GENETICALLY PREDISPOSED TO HAVE A SUPER-STRENGTH**  
THE ATHLETE has an increased likelihood of developing particularly positive performance attributes based on their genetic makeup.

**TECHNICAL SKILL** - THE ATHLETE has world class start, turns, underwater phases, breakouts and transition phases and has athletic intelligence that allows them to easily make technical changes to strokes and skills.responsibility for their own performance.

### COACHABLE

The ATHLETE has effective communication skills to enable a positive coach/Athlete relationship. They will request, positively receive and act upon feedback.

**TRAINING WITH INTENT/CONVICTION** - THE ATHLETE trains to optimal race models, is adaptable, works to rectify weaknesses and develops super-strengths.

**HARDEST AND SMARTEST TRAINERS IN THE WORLD WHO LOVE TO TRAIN** - THE ATHLETE trains to the best of their ability dictated by workout aims whilst understanding their body and the need for rest and recovery.

### TECHNICALLY SUPERIOR

The ATHLETE will demonstrate a world-leading level of technical execution of all racing skills best suited to them as individuals.

**MINIMISE DRAG** - THE ATHLETE holds optimum body line in the water and minimises resistance by presenting a smooth and efficient profile.

**MAXIMISE PROPULSION** - THE ATHLETE applies optimal force through strong and efficient upper and lower body mechanics.

**DELIVERING OLYMPIC PODIUM SUCCESS**



## THE GREAT BRITISH SWIMMER

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### ARENA SKILLS

How THE PERFORMER behaves and handles themselves in the competitive arena.

**THRIVE IN COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT** - THE PERFORMER becomes energised by the challenge around the race environment while exerting appropriate emotional control.

**EMBRACE EVERY SITUATION AND DEAL WITH IT** - THE PERFORMER is not thrown by competitive distractions and is fuelled by the unexpected.

**WINNING PRESENCE**- THE PERFORMER'S body language says 'I am here to win', they look, act and speak with calm focussed confidence.

**LOVE THE RACE/RACE DAY/THE STAGE** - THE PERFORMER positively embraces the Arena environment and all that race day brings.

### RACE CRAFT

THE PERFORMER is a great racer and has the ability to understand and execute various racing strategies.

**OWNING A RACE PLAN** - THE PERFORMER has belief in and ownership of a race plan, yet is adaptable to race the situation as it changes whilst achieving the same result.

**ATHLETIC INTELLIGENCE** - THE PERFORMER has an aptitude for grasping the important factors influencing performance.

**ANALYTICAL OF THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE** - THE PERFORMER critically evaluates their race and understand all risks and opportunities.

**ARENA/RACE EXPERIENCE** - THE PERFORMER has competed at a sufficient number, quality and type of competitions that they are comfortable in the biggest arena.

**EFFICIENTLY MOVE THROUGH HEAT TO SEMI TO FINAL WITH MINIMAL EMOTION** - THE PERFORMER is efficient in their energy expenditure as they move through rounds, both physically and emotionally.

### PSYCHOLOGICALLY PREPARED

THE PERFORMER is psychologically primed and has the mindset to race at their optimum level on all occasions.

**DEAL WITH ADVERSITY/CHANGE** - THE PERFORMER is not distracted by last minute changes or setbacks, and they remain in control of their emotions.

**NO FEAR OF CONSEQUENCE** - THE PERFORMER is focused on race process and does not get distracted by 'what if' scenarios around the outcome.

**EMOTIONALLY CONSISTENT** - THE PERFORMER does not have huge swings in mood - no high peaks or low troughs!.

**FOCUSED ON SELF** - THE PERFORMER is able to look inwardly and ignore the distractions around them - they let the opponent worry about them!

**EVERY DAY IS DAY 1** - THE PERFORMER is able to bring the same level of physical and emotional energy to each and every day of the competition.

**CONFIDENCE MANAGEMENT** - Everyone has bad days in their preparation, but THE PERFORMER doesn't let them influence their performance on race day.

**ABILITY TO RACE UNDER PRESSURE** - THE PERFORMER delivers best performance on the day when it matters most (E.g. Olympic Final) by remaining process-focused.

### PHYSICALLY PRIMED

THE PERFORMER is physically ready to race.

**RACE READY THROUGH PRE-RACE WARM UP** - THE PERFORMER has a well rehearsed pool-based warm up that prepares both the body and mindset for the race ahead.

**PRIMING** - THE PERFORMER has a well rehearsed land-based routine for physically priming the body immediately prior to racing.