

British Swimming London 2012 Performance Debrief

From research and consultations, the Debrief drew the following conclusions:

- **There were clear areas of strength, and a number of areas of weakness in the specific preparations for London 2012** – Strengths relate to the planning of the programme, and specific events and initiatives resulting from this. Weaknesses relate to coaching and technical leadership in the main and the knock on impact and ‘fallout’ from this
- **Below expected performance was not due to any one specific shortcoming in any discrete element of the Programme.** But there are some areas that need addressing – these include the selection policy and the trials process improved communication and further development of the performance planning and athlete monitoring regimes currently in place
- **Some changes, alterations or additions to the programme running up to London 2012 were partly and collectively responsible for lower than expected performance.** There were isolated instances where additional support was not as targeted as it could be, too much flexibility was afforded without a guiding framework in some cases and some deviation from tried and tested training and preparation plans resulted from this
- **Below expected performance overall was not attributable to poor planning overall across the programme.** Robust and appropriate event planning was a key strength across the quadrennial and in the run up to the Games, but there were some examples where plans were not executed as effectively as they could have been
- **The overall theme from looking at the positive outcomes is that those athletes performing well had a clear plan guiding their preparation and stuck to it**
- **There are few additional initiatives, programmes or specific areas of support that were not provided that would have led to improved performance outcomes at the Games,** but a recognition that some of the areas could have been more appropriately targeted in hindsight
- **Some external factors that may have affected expectations and actual performance arguably should these have been anticipated and activity put in place to mitigate against any negative impact** - there were a number of aspects relating to the ‘home crowd’ and commercial distractions that should have been anticipated better.

The Debrief also highlighted a number of positive outcomes from the London Olympics.

- Britain had the highest number of finalists ever at an Olympic Games (23)
- Half of Britain’s finalists finished in the top five
- Britain was one of only three nations to place teams in five of the six relay finals
- Britain was one of only two nations to place swimmers in the top five of both open water events
- Aside from the three medals there were 20 fourth to eighth places

Away from the Games, the Debrief also highlighted “good health” indicators that the World Class Programme is building a significant base for success in the future. There has been a large increase in both European Junior market share and Senior world top 150 market share. The number of swimmers inside the Top 16 has almost doubled in the same period. Looking forward Great Britain already has some 59 swimmers who have achieved at least one FINA A qualification standard for the 2013 World Championships.

Overview of Recommendations and Actions

Two fundamental key actions are required:

- The National Performance Director (NPD) must be UK based to provide strong and dynamic leadership of the World Class Programme (WCP) and to work in close consultation with a newly appointed Head Coach to develop the WCP and fully address the recommendations from the Debrief
- There is a need to clearly define and scope the role for a new Head Coach

Additional recommendations and actions required:

- British Swimming's executive and technical leadership must drive the cultural change required to ensure the panel's recommendations are delivered, and to develop the appropriate communication structures that are required.
 1. Increase the formal monitoring and review of coaches
 2. More on-deck presence (as appropriate and practical in consideration to resources) of key technical staff
 3. Raise awareness of the British Swimming Board's expectations for competition
 4. Development and practical implementation of improved communication structures and knowledge sharing
- Secure changes to the timing and format of the selection trials and the implications of these changes are understood and planned for accordingly
 1. Review and modify major event selection policies
- Ensure training and preparation activity includes a focus on improving progression rates
 1. Further develop the athlete performance planning and monitoring regime
 2. Develop a clearer competition strategy to develop racing skills and strategies
- Improve and enforce the self-management regime of athletes
 1. Review and revise the athlete and staff code of conducts to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands their responsibilities
 2. Develop guidance on acceptable levels of commercial and media commitments
- Explore how to establish Intensive Training Centres (ITC) as centres of applied learning and how clubs within the domestic system may benefit from this
 1. Consider a programme to improve targeting of swimmers to relevant ITCs and programmes
 2. Establish a central system for collating and disseminating learning materials
 3. Continue to develop and maximise the use of local partnerships at ITCs and other daily training environments to ensure effective use of resources
 4. Continue to review the impact of ITCs in respect of the above and cost benefit
 5. Improve use of resources at ITCs for National Team Event activities
- Develop a clearer Sport Science Sport Medicine (SSSM) strategy which sets out stronger parameters for engagement and development
 1. Consider appointing SSSM Discipline Leads to enable the SSSM Manager to more effectively manage service provision and explore innovative opportunities
 2. Develop a Performance Psychology strategy with clear parameters for psychological monitoring and use of the service
 3. Explore the establishment of an Acute Injury Medical Group
- Develop more bespoke and targeted training and development activities for specific disciplines
 1. Explore measures to change the culture and perceptions towards Open Water swimming
 2. Develop a clearer relay philosophy and policy
 3. Consider establishing event specific camps/groups as part of national team activities