



Competitions Update 2022-23

2021-22 Season Review and Consultation

As part of the introduction of the new Competition Programme in 2021-22, we promised our swimming community that a comprehensive Review Process would be undertaken at the completion of the first year. To ensure that we gathered a wide range of feedback and gave all Stakeholders an opportunity to input we undertook the following:

- Engaged with Regional Management Committees at the end of Short Course and Long Course Season.
- Engaged with Regional Competition and Coaching/Technical Committees at the end of Short Course and Long Course Season.
- Open Surveys to Club Coaches after Short Course and Long Course Season.
- Open Coach Feedback meeting during Summer Nationals with approximately 40 Coaches in attendance.
- Surveys issued to all Athletes, Coaches, Officials, Team Staff and Spectators after every National Competition
- Discussed the plan with the Competitions Steering Group and the Performance Advisory Group
- Discussed our proposals with the Swim Ireland CEO and the Swim Ireland Board

In general Stakeholders were happy with the 2021-22 Season and whilst it was a challenging year between restrictions, reduced membership numbers and lack of swimming opportunities we were pleased to return to a near full Programme of Events for our Clubs and Members.

2022-23 Season (Irish Summer National Championships and Irish National Division 2 Competition)

In preparation for the coming Season and in line with the feedback we received through our various stakeholder engagement opportunities, we have made some big changes to our two main summer competitions.

The Irish National Division 2 Competition will see a complete change and will be replaced with the Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (details outlined below). Whilst the name has changed, we can assure you it won't lose the fun, excitement and amazing atmosphere that we know and love.

Irish Summer National Age Group Championships

- Division 2 will be replaced with an Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m)
- The competition will be run in University of Limerick and will be held in a 50m pool rather than in a 25m pool
- This competition will cater for **only** ages 12-14 years
- Qualification times and consideration times will remain in line with 2021-22 season **Division 2** entry times
- The introduction of new individual prizes to reward improvement on entry time
- The introduction of new club prizes such as top team and top cluster points awards
- The competition will now run over 4 days from the 6th – 9th July 2023

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The Irish Summer National Championships will also see a complete change with the introduction of the Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m). This new event will see the top athletes (15+) from around the country come together under one roof, further details below.

Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m)

- Summer Nationals will be replaced with an Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m)
- The competition will run in the National Aquatic Centre, Dublin
- The competition will cater for ages 15 years & over
- Qualification times and consideration times will remain in line with 2021-22 season **Division 2** entry times
- The introduction of new individual prizes to reward improvement on entry time
- The introduction of new club prizes such as top team and top cluster points awards
- The competition will run over 5 days from the 26th – 30th July 2023

The reasons for these changes are outlined below:

- Feedback from club coaches around the country felt that National Division 2 needed a refresh and a change of format
- With this new format coaches, swimmers & families will know at the start of the season which competition they will be swimming at in July the following year, thus giving them ample time to put plans in place.
- It will eliminate swimmers from the same club of the same age having to go to different competitions. Previously swimmers of the same age from the same club were split up across two different competitions, with this sometime resulting in clubs not being able to field relay teams.
- It will mean that swimmers can race more competitions & events and race to their full potential, without the fear of qualifying for a competition they, their coach or family doesn't want them to take part in.
- Families were unsure what competition their child was going to be swimming in (National Division 2 or Irish Summer Nationals) until the last qualification competition had finished, which led to the late acquisition of accommodation and interfering with planned family holidays.
- Staying with Division 2-type qualifying standards will ensure that all athletes that would be used to racing a National event in the summer still have this chance
- Individual age bands (medals) across both competitions
- There is a clear line as to when a young athlete transfers for a 4-day meet in Limerick to a 5-day meet in Dublin and this is often the age where swimmers make a judgement as to how much commitment they wish to put into our sport

As stated above, we have undertaken a comprehensive review and consultation process with key stakeholders and thoroughly believe these changes will have a positive outcome for Irish swimming and ultimately Irish swimmers and clubs.