



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 - JUNE 2025

## Introduction

*"Dive into June with SSA's hottest updates, triumphs, and a splash of inspiration!"*

Welcome to the **third edition** of SSA's newsletter! From elite triumphs to community currents, we're serving up the freshest updates in South African aquatics.

Whether you're an athlete, coach, official, or fan, we're here to keep you **informed, inspired, and connected** with South Africa's swimming family. Let's dive in!

### Follow us for real-time updates:

- ✓ Facebook: [@SwimmingSouthAfrica](#)
- ✓ Twitter (X): [@SwimSouthAfrica](#)
- ✓ Instagram: [@swimsouthafrica](#)
- ✓ Website: [www.swimsa.org](http://www.swimsa.org)



## Message from the High-Performance Manager

*by Dean Price, High-Performance Manager*

### "Preparing for Excellence: OPEX Programme and Performance Insights"

Dear Swimming Community,

This month, I'd like to highlight two key focus areas in our High-Performance pathway as we build toward **LA 2028** and beyond:

#### SASCOC's OPEX Programme: Structured Support for Elite Success

The **OPEX Programme** is a game-changer for South African swimming, providing targeted resources to athletes based on their Olympic potential:

- **Tier 1:** Medal contenders for **LA 2028**.
- **Tier 2:** Swimmers capable of reaching Olympic **finals**.
- **Tier 3:** Rising stars with Olympic **qualification potential**.

This tiered approach ensures our athletes receive the right support at the right time, from funding to high-performance coaching.

#### Relay Programme for LA 2028

Building on the success of Athletics South Africa's (ASA) relay project, SASCOC is launching a **Swimming Relay Programme** to identify and develop teams for the 2028 Olympics. Expect intensified squad camps and international race exposure to hone synergy and speed.

The foundation for success in **LA 2028 starts today**. Every

stroke in training, every race in competition, and every ounce of support from our community brings us closer to Olympic glory.

To our athletes – Keep pushing boundaries. To our coaches and clubs – Your work shapes champions. To our families and fans – Your belief fuels the dream.

**Together, we can elevate South African swimming to new heights.**

*Dean Price*





## High Performance (HP) – South Africa's Road to Glory

### Performance Deep Dive

A recent High-Performance assessment compared **SANJ 2025** results with **Australian Age Group competitions**, revealing key insights:

**Sprint Power:** Our young swimmers are neck-and-neck with Australia in 50m/100m events.

**Distance Gap:** Performance drops sharply in 400m+ races as athletes age – highlighting a need for endurance-focused training and long-term development strategies.

### World Aquatics Points: The Olympic Benchmark

Swimmers require 900 points (within 3 years) to qualify for

the Olympics (1000 = World Record). Selected squads are now laser-focused on bridging this gap through tailored training blocks and competition exposure.

### Coach's Corner: Closing the Distance Deficit

*"Our data shows sprint talent is abundant, but distance swimming demands systematic investment. Let's build aerobic bases earlier and keep our teens in the sport longer."*

### Next Steps:

- **Relay development camps** (2025–2026).
- **Endurance workshops** for age-group coaches.
- **Squad monitoring** via World Aquatics point system

#RoadToLA2028

### Team Announcements for Upcoming Events

**AUSC Region 5 Games** – Windhoek (Namibia), 4–14 July 2024

- **Swim Team**

**World Aquatics Championships** – Singapore, 11 July–3 August 2025

- **Swimming, Open Water, Water Polo, Artistic Swimming, Diving, Masters**

**World Aquatics U20 Water Polo Championships** – Zagreb (Croatia), 14–21 June 2025

- **Men's Team**

**World Aquatics U20 Water Polo Championships** – Salvador (Brazil), 10–18 August 2025

- **Women's Team**

**World Aquatics Youth Artistic Swimming Championships** – Greece (Athens), 26–30 August 2025

- **Artistic Swimming Team**

To our athletes, coaches, and support staff representing **South Africa** across five disciplines in four countries: Make us proud, but most importantly – enjoy every moment of representing our beautiful country.

#CarryTheFlame #TeamSA





## Competitions – Thrills in the Pool & Open Water

### Spotlight: The Backbone of Our Sport – Our Technical Officials!

*“Celebrating Our Unsung Heroes: The Technical Officials”*

While athletes take centre stage, it's the **dedicated Technical Officials** who ensure every competition runs smoothly, fairly, and safely. Their expertise, commitment, and passion often go unnoticed – but not today... **We salute YOU!**

We're proud to highlight the following officials **nominated** by **World Aquatics** for upcoming international championships. Your excellence inspires us all!



## World Aquatics Appointed Officials

### World Aquatics Championships (Singapore)

- **Water Polo:** Dasch Barber, Dion Willis (TC Member)
- **Artistic Swimming:** Courtney Musson, Kerry Norden, Jennifer Naidoo (TC Member)
- **Diving:** Kathleen Shepherd
- **Open Water Swimming:** Joe Mashao, Emile van Veenhuysen (TC Member)
- **Swimming:** Sharief Gamiet, Daphne Bird (TC Member)

### Masters World Championships (Singapore)

- **Water Polo:** Mike Baty, Lee-Anne Stewart
- **Artistic Swimming:** Moira Norden

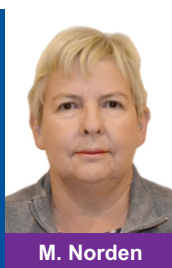
### Water Polo U20 Championships

- **Men's U20 Championships (Zagreb, Croatia):** Lucky Letshabo
- **Women's U20 Championships (Salvador, Brazil):** Matt Stringer

### AUSC Region 5 Games (Swakopmund, Namibia)

- Stella Young, Yogan Naidoo





M. Norden



L. Letshabo



M. Stringer



S. Young



Y. Naidoo



## A Round of Applause!

To every official, from local meets to global stages: **Thank you!** Your meticulous work keeps our sport thriving. Let's keep celebrating these incredible role models!

#TechnicalOfficials #WeAppreciateYou

Know an official who deserves recognition? Tag them or share your stories with us!

## Mass Participation Programme (MPP) – Swimming for All

*"Learn To Swim Success"*

### PEA Swimming Club Makes Waves with Nesibindi Outreach Program!

The PEA Swimming Club pool has been alive with laughter, determination, and nesibindi (courage) this past month, as 39 children from Zwide township took another stroke toward swimming proficiency. The energy? Electric. The smiles? Contagious. This program isn't just teaching kids to swim – it's creating a ripple effect of confidence, resilience, and joy.



### Highlights from the Pool Deck:

- **8 rising stars** have progressed so brilliantly they're now **competition-ready**, a testament to their hard work and the dedication of Coaches Luvuyo and Nats, whose pride shone brighter than the morning sun.
- Every splash marked a victory: from first-time floaters to budding freestylers, each child is writing their own story of growth.
- The Nesibindi Outreach Program isn't just about strokes and kicks; it's about **building futures** – one fearless swimmer at a time.



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### A Standing Ovation for PEA Swimming Club!

Your commitment to drowning prevention and mass participation is changing lives. To the coaches, volunteers, and little champions in the water – keep making waves!

**#LearnToSwim #MassParticipationProgramme #NesibindiCourage**

**Want your club's story featured?** Contact us to share how you're driving participation in your community!

## Education & Training (E&T) – Building Future Leaders

*“Bronwyn's Leap – And How You Can Too!”*

- **Feature:** “Why I Chose SSA's Online Course” – Bronwyn's 2-min video. [Watch HERE](#)

Ready to take the plunge and unlock your coaching potential?

**Register now** and embark on an exciting journey.



## Big News: Revised CPD Framework!

*“Elevating Excellence Through CPD”*

We're thrilled to announce that the **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) table** has been updated to include **new learning areas** and ensure **all coaches and instructors** are fully supported in their growth journeys. Whether you're guiding beginners or training elite athletes, there's something for everyone!

### Why CPD Matters: 10 Benefits for Aquatic Professionals

#### 1. Enhanced Skills & Knowledge

CPD helps aquatic coaches and instructors professionals to stay current within the industry and to ensure continuous improvement of skills and knowledge.

#### 2. Career Advancement

CPD helps to enhance career prospects and are a clear demonstration and commitment to professional growth and learning.

#### 3. Increased Job Satisfaction

Continuous learning makes instructors and coaches in aquatics to be more competent and fulfilled in their roles.

#### 4. Networking Opportunities

CPD often involves attending workshops, conferences, and seminars, providing opportunities to meet industry peers, learn from

each other and expand professional networks.

#### 5. Adaptability to Change

Education evolves, and workshops equip instructors and coaches with the ability to adapt to changes and to be versatile in their approach.

#### 6. Improved Performance

Regular training and development can lead to improved job performance, benefiting the instructor, coach, club and swim schools.

#### 7. Stronger Professional Reputation

Continuous learning enhances coaches and instructors' reputation, showcasing their commitment to excellence in aquatics.

#### 8. Accreditation & Registration

Submission of CPD points is necessary for all instructors and coaches to maintain their certification.



## 9. Personal Growth

CPD foster personal development, boosting confidence and fostering a growth that goes beyond one discipline.

## 10. Holistic Development

CPD isn't just about skills; it's about shaping well-rounded, inspired professionals.

### Upcoming CPD Opportunities

- **Workshops:** Dive into new coaching methodologies.
- **Webinars:** Learn from experts – anywhere, anytime.

Watch this space for dates and registration details!

### Coaches & Instructors: Your Voice Matters!

What CPD topics would you love to see? Reply to this newsletter or tag us with your ideas!

#CPDForGrowth #BetterCoachingBetterAthletes

## Athlete Profile – Faces of The Future

*"Meet the Phenoms Making SA Proud"*

### Behind the Scenes with Team SA

This month, we're diving into the minds of South Africa's top athletes – straight from *their* perspective. Beyond the medals, the training grind, and the pool deck, they're sharing their unique journeys, big dreams, and even the quirks that fuel their success.

What drives our athletes when the cameras are off? This month, they're pulling back the curtain on their careers, goals, and the little superstitions that keep them sharp. No fluff, just real talk, *in their own words*.

Here are the **questions**, followed by what they had to say...

### Athlete Profile Questions

#### CAREER JOURNEY

1. "Take us back to Day 1 – what first pulled you into the water?"
2. "Was there a single moment when you thought, 'This is my sport'?"
3. "Who's the person (or people) who believed in you before anyone else did?"

#### AMBITIONS & MINDSET

4. "What's the dream that keeps you pushing through (5am trainings)?"
5. "What's the hardest lesson this sport has taught you about yourself?"

#### BEYOND THE POOL/DECK

6. "What's your 'secret skill' that would surprise fans?"

6. "If you weren't an athlete, what would you be obsessed with instead?"
7. "Who are you outside of the sport?"

#### TRAINING & SUPERSTITIONS

9. "What's the weirdest or most non-negotiable part of your pre-race / pre-event routine?"
10. "Coach tells you to take a rest day – what's your guilty pleasure?"
11. "What's one training drill you hate but can't live without?" / "If you could race any historical athlete, who and why?" (Swimming)

#### QUICK-FIRE FAVES

12. "Most played song on your training playlist right now?"
13. "What's the best advice you'd give your 10-year-old self?"



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## Pieter Coetzé (Swimming)

*"Backstroke Brilliance: Pieter's Rise to Global Dominance"*

1. My sister got me into swimming. She's three years older than me and was already a swimmer. I was about eight or nine, doing all kinds of sports, but I'd always watch her compete on weekends. My parents convinced me to enter some races too. I enjoyed it, and I was good at it. Slowly, I got more into it, trained harder, and here we are.
2. There wasn't one specific moment, but over time, I realised I was good at it. I remember my first 100m butterfly race – everyone warned me how much it would hurt; how tough it'd be. But it felt easy to me. I broke the age-group record (North-West, I think). That's when I thought, *Okay, I'm pretty talented at this. This is my sport.*
3. Definitely my mom, dad, and sister. At first, it wasn't about belief, they just got me to try it. But they saw my potential, supported me, and never missed a competition. Mom woke me for morning trainings; dad funded my trips. They were always there.

4. To win an Olympic gold medal. That's it.
5. To trust in God and the process. When things go wrong (a bad workout, a bad race), I used to let frustration take over. Now I've learned: *Whatever happens is right.* Just go with it.
6. I can move my ears and whistle without moving my mouth. That's about it!
7. Probably the gym, trying to get as big as possible, lift heavy weights. Still fitness, just a different way.
8. Just a relaxed guy. I hang with friends, play games, spend time with my girlfriend and family. Love normal things like anyone else.
9. I don't stress if things change, but I *used* to eat protein bars from the side for luck. Stopped that years ago, though.
10. Doing *nothing*. Scrolling Instagram, watching TV, couch all day. Perfect day off.
11. Generic answer, but Michael Phelps. His legacy – it'd be an honour just to be in the same race.



12. "The Rapture (Part III)"

13. Don't get lost in the noise. Distractions and hype will overwhelm you. Stay true to yourself, what works for you won't work for everyone else.

## Zalika Methula (Diving)

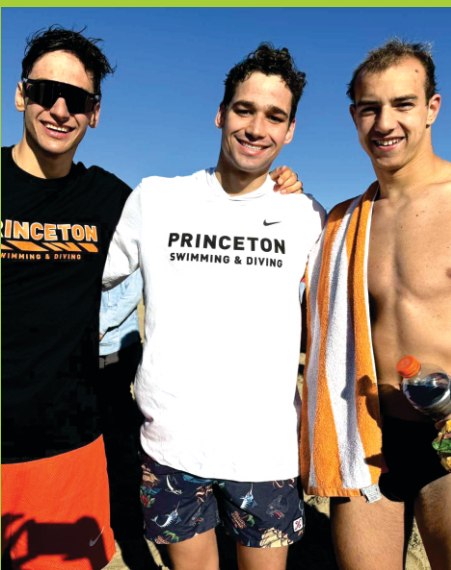
*"Defying Gravity: Zalika's Towering Triumphs"*

1. Honestly, my love for the water grew because of my dad. I'd always look forward to swimming with him. He'd launch me off his shoulders into the pool!
2. When my club coach told my mom about my potential. That's when I started taking diving seriously, setting goals, and realizing diving could take me far.
3. My family. They supported me even in those early stages when nothing was clear.
4. To represent South Africa at the Olympics – that's the ultimate goal.
5. Not to obsess over training setbacks. Progress takes time, and stressing in the moment isn't worth it. (Still learning this!)
6. I can *really* read people – it helps me understand their perspectives deeply.





7. How planes operate! I'd spend my free time geeking out over aviation.
8. Someone who values family time and *prioritizes* rest. Balance is key.
9. Repeating the *exact* same hype words to myself before competing.
10. Sleeping in and treating myself to something sweet!
11. Pike-ups on the bar. Pure torture!
12. "Cap Size" by FRIENDS and Emily Warren
13. Trust the process. You're capable of *so much more* than you think.



## Connor Buck (Open Water)

*"Conquering the Chaos: Connor's Open Water Odyssey"*

1. As with many competitive swimmers, I started young – lessons at two, proper training at seven. To be honest, I *hated* it at first. I remember crying before practice. But my parents wanted me active, and after my first club meet at eight, I was hooked. I loved the competitive environment and racing. So, I was pushed in initially, but I'm grateful for it.
2. Not really. Swimming's always been a part of my life. Even when I started enjoying competition, I never had an epiphany. It was just... there. I never questioned it.
3. I'm lucky to have incredible support. My family, friends, and coaches have been pivotal. My mom pushed me when I was too young to understand commitment; my dad's never missed a race; my grandpa's my biggest fan. At Princeton and back home, my coaches and friends keep me grounded.
4. Honestly, I ask myself this too. As a kid, it's 'Olympics!' or 'Represent my country!' But my perspective's shifted. Now, I focus on smaller goals and just

love the sport, the people, the process. That's enough to keep me showing up.

5. Detaching from outcomes. Progress isn't linear, and you can't control results, only your effort. It took years to accept that. Disappointments happen, but you keep training, trusting the work.

6. Fortnite dances. (*Laughs*)

7. Fishing or birding. I'm obsessed; I'm even secretary of Princeton's new Sports Fishing Club.

8. A work in progress. I procrastinate, complain, geek out over birds, then stress about races or school. I'm shaped by the people around me – teammates, classmates, family. Just a normal guy trying to figure it out.

9. I'm not superstitious, but I *hate* wearing paddles/fins in warmup, they feel awful afterward. Instead, I do fast kicking. That's my jam.

10. I usually sneak in an extra swim (*coach's nightmare*), but if I'm truly resting, I go all out on a disgusting meal.



Once, I made a donut sandwich: two donuts with bacon, cheese, sausage, and egg inside. Diabolical.

11. Low stroke count with high kick. Hated it forever, but it's forced me to improve my distance per stroke and leg drive – key for freestyle.

12. "Boombastic" by Shaggy

13. Don't compare yourself. In age-group swimming, progress varies wildly. Focus on *your* journey and building a foundation, the rest will come.





## Tayla-Jade van Huyssteen (Artistic Swimming)

*"Poetry in Motion: Tayla's Liquid Art"*

1. I've been a water baby since *birth*, literally! I attended my first gala at just *three days old* (obviously not swimming yet, ha-ha!). At seven, I started club swimming in East London. One day, my coach suggested trying this new sport called *artistic swimming*. I had no idea what it was, but that first session hooked me, it combined everything I loved: swimming, dancing, music, and creativity!
2. Absolutely! My first Level 2 competition at 13, performing my solo to '*Timber*'. The adrenaline, the crowd, I felt *completely* in my element."
3. My mom and my synchro coaches. Mom drove me to every practice, no matter how early, and never missed a competition. My coaches saw my potential before I did. Their support shaped my entire career.
4. To represent South Africa not just as an athlete, but as someone growing the sport. I want to show younger athletes that big dreams *are* possible with dedication, passion, and resilience.

5. That progress isn't linear. Some days you're soaring; others, you're sinking, literally *and* figuratively! Routines fail, goals go unmet, but setbacks aren't failures. They're part of the process. What matters is how you come back.
6. I scull *opposite* to every other artistic swimmer! Most palms face *up*, mine naturally face *down*, and it makes me *higher* in the water. Coaches always spot it, but it's my little superpower!
7. Dancing! I've danced since five and am a qualified teacher. Without synchro, I'd be teaching or performing – music and movement are why I fell for this sport.
8. A final-year Intermediate Phase teacher who *loves* working with kids. I also coach swimming/artistic swimming and teach dance. Inspiring youth through movement, in *or* out of water – means everything to me."
9. We use gelatin to secure our buns, but I must have a dab on my ear to pick off just before competing. Equal parts superstition and comfort!



10. Ice cream! Specifically, Kristen's Kick Ass or The Creamery. My boyfriend and I go for double scoops of honeycomb crunch, the perfect treat."
11. Eggbeater sets with resistance bands. Pure *torture*, but they build the strength that makes everything else possible.
12. "*Don't Stop Me Now*" by Queen – energetic, uplifting, and the *ultimate* pre-training vibe!
13. Be *patient*. Growth takes time. You won't have it all figured out yet but keep showing up. Trust the process, your hard work *will* pay off.

## Shakira January (Water Polo)

*"Trailblazing Captain: Shakira's Legacy of Leadership and Grit"*

1. My parents. (*Laughs*) I was *never* a water baby! In Grade 7 they decided I needed to learn to swim, so they forced me into lessons. Now? I've basically lived in water since...
2. When I made the provincial A-team in Grade 8, my *first year* playing water polo, competing against girls with 3 years' experience. I was shocked... and so proud of myself.
3. My parents and aunt. They pushed me from Day 1 to be my best, and they're *still* my biggest motivators today.
4. Knowing one day, today's kids will be on the international stage competing for even bigger opportunities than we are now.





5. That I'm my own biggest critic.
6. I'm a *great* singer. (Though for some reason, everyone else seems to disagree! Ha-ha!)
7. Baking! My TikTok is just cake decorating and sweet recipes.
8. A full-time psychology student (Honours year!), future sports psychologist. Guess I can't escape athletics!
9. *Must* drink beetroot juice. And yes, I'm a *little* superstitious...
10. All-you-can-eat sushi... and yap.
11. Not a drill, just *swimming*. I *hate* straight swimming, but it's essential for water polo.
12. "You're the One" by Kaytranada (ft. Syd).
13. Be brave. Get comfortable being uncomfortable. When you think '*I can't*,' push through anyway, that's where growth happens.

As we wrap up these incredible conversations, one thing is clear: **Team SA's future is brighter than ever.** To Pieter, Connor, Shakira, Tayla-Jade, and Zalika – thank you for sharing your journeys, quirks, and dreams with us. Your dedication, resilience, and passion are what make South African sport extraordinary.

Here's to the early mornings, the hard-earned milestones, and the unforgettable moments still to come. **No matter the pool, the pitch, or the platform – we'll be cheering you on every splash, stride, and somersault.**

Go chase those dreams!

#TeamSA



## Upcoming Events

"Mark Your Calendars!"

### June 2025 Preview

- **World Aquatics Open Water Swimming World Cup (Stop 3)** – Setubal (Portugal), 14–15 June 2025
- **World Aquatics Men's U20 Water Polo Championships** – Zagreb (Croatia), 14–21 June 2025

### July 2025 Preview

- **AUSC Region 5 Games** – Windhoek (Namibia), 4–14 July 2025
- **World Aquatics Championships** – Singapore, 11 July–3 August 2025
- **University Games** – Rhine-Ruhr (Germany), 16–25 July 2025

**More exciting events are on the way!** Follow us on our website and social media to stay in the loop.

## General – Poolside Chat

- Click **HERE** for **Latest Rankings**! For any questions or concerns, please reach out to your respective affiliate. Thank you!
- **Social Shoutout:** @ValentinoWaterboyVergotine for completing **SSA's Level 1 Online Coaching Course**!



- Swimming South Africa is proud to announce Team SA's outstanding performance at the "50 Years of Independence" international tournament hosted by the **Angolan Swimming Federation in Luanda!** Our team made waves with dominant performances, bringing home a haul of medals and showcasing the strength of South African swimming on the continental stage. **Matthew Caldwell** and **Jarden Eaton** bagged seven medals a piece while **Gizelle Maritz** and **Caitlyn Dube** secured five and three medals respectively. These remarkable achievements highlight the **depth of talent** and **dedication** within our swimming community. [WATCH HERE](#)
- Congratulations to **Ishvara Skosana** and **Amahle Mbele** on their incredible performances at the **International Zadar Open Diving Competition** in **Croatia!** Ishvara made an impressive debut on the international stage, placing 7th in the 1m and 5th in the 3m diving events for her age group, an outstanding achievement among competitors from over 10 countries! Meanwhile, Amahle showcased flawless composure and grit, embodying the heart of a true competitor. Both divers represented Kingsmead and South Africa with pride, talent, and true sportsmanship.



Your Feedback is  
**IMPORTANT** to US!



## Contact Us

We value your feedback and inquiries. Please reach out to us through the following channels:

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**Follow, Share, Engage!** Let's grow swimming together.

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