



EASTERN GAUTENG AQUATICS

EASTERN GAUTENG AQUATICS (EGA)



XCEL HIGH PERFORMANCE SQUAD PROGRAM 2026/2027 SEASON

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION FOR CLUBS, COACHES AND PARENTS



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INTRODUCTION

Eastern Gauteng Aquatics (EGA) is proud to introduce the Xcel High Performance Squad Program for the 2026/2027 season.

The program has been developed to provide a structured and objective pathway for swimmers who demonstrate strong performance potential and a commitment to excellence within the sport of swimming.

The purpose of the program is not simply to reward performance, but rather to provide additional opportunities for athlete development through specialised clinics, workshops, training camps, educational opportunities, and exposure to higher levels of competition. Importantly, the Xcel Programme is designed to complement the work being undertaken by club coaches and is not intended to replace club training programmes or coaching structures.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The EGA Xcel High Performance Programme adopts a holistic athlete development model that focuses on three key areas:

Technical Development

- Stroke efficiency
- Underwater skills
- Starts, turns and breakouts
- Race pace execution
- Video analysis and race review

Physical Development

- Core stability
- Strength and power development
- Mobility and flexibility
- Injury prevention
- Endurance and athletic development





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Mental and Lifestyle Development

- Goal setting
- Race strategy
- Confidence and focus
- Pressure management
- Nutrition and hydration
- Recovery strategies
- Leadership and accountability

The overall objective is to assist swimmers in progressing successfully through provincial, national and potentially international levels of competition.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Xcel Squad Program uses World Aquatics (WA) Points as the primary selection tool.

Selection is based on:

- Long Course (50m pool) performances only
- Official World Aquatics Points
- The swimmer's highest WA Point score achieved in any individual event during the qualifying period

The minimum entry requirement for consideration is: **500 + WA Points**

This system has been selected because it:

- Creates a fair comparison between swimmers competing in different events
- Recognises excellence across all strokes and distances
- Includes sprinters, middle-distance, distance and individual medley swimmers
- Aligns with national and international swimming performance systems

An "Open Door" provision will apply throughout the season. Should a swimmer achieve the minimum qualifying standard after squads have been announced, the swimmer's coach may apply in writing for the swimmer to be considered for inclusion in the appropriate squad.





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GRADE 12 SWIMMERS

The Xcel High Performance Squad Programme is designed as a season-long athlete development initiative requiring ongoing participation, commitment, and engagement throughout the swimming season.

As many Grade 12 swimmers will be preparing for Preliminary and Final Examinations during the season and will typically depart the District to pursue tertiary studies from January 2027, EGA acknowledges that it may be challenging for these athletes to commit fully to the program for its entire duration.

Accordingly, swimmers currently in Grade 12 will not be considered for formal squad selection for the 2026/2027 season. This decision is not performance-related and does not diminish the achievements of those swimmers who have attained the required World Aquatics Points standards.

EGA remains committed to supporting these athletes and recognises their contribution to the District. Grade 12 swimmers who achieve the relevant WA Points standards will therefore be invited to attend selected Xcel Squad clinics, workshops, and educational sessions where appropriate.

This approach allows EGA to maintain continuity and commitment within the squad structure while still providing development opportunities to our senior athletes during their final year of school.

UNDERSTANDING WORLD AQUATICS (WA) POINTS

World Aquatics Points (formerly known as FINA Points) are an internationally recognised performance measurement system used throughout the swimming world. The points system compares a swimmer's performance against the current World Record in that event and assigns a numerical score.

WA Points allow swimmers, coaches and selectors to compare performances objectively regardless of stroke or distance.





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As a general guideline:

WA Points	Performance Level
500+	Strong Provincial Level
600+	High Provincial / National Development Level
700+	Strong National Level
800+	Elite National Level
900+	International / World-Class Level

XCEL SQUAD STRUCTURE

The program will consist of four progressive squads:

Velocity Squad

- 500 – 550 WA Points

Elevate Squad

- 551 – 600 WA Points

Edge Squad

- 601 – 650 WA Points

Ignite Squad

- 651+ WA Points



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Each squad will generally be limited to **approximately** 10–15 swimmers to ensure:

- Individual athlete attention
 - Better coach-to-athlete engagement
 - Effective quality control
 - Meaningful access to resources
 - High-quality athlete development
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COMPETITIVE FOCUS

The program is intended to support swimmers targeting:

- SSA Grand Prix Series events
- SA Senior National Championships
- SA Short Course Championships
- International competitions and training camps where appropriate

EXPECTED ATHLETE CHARACTERISTICS

Swimmers are expected to demonstrate:

- Strong technical foundations
 - Coachability and willingness to learn
 - Commitment to training and competition
 - Consistent effort and professionalism
 - Positive attitude
 - Competitive resilience
 - Leadership qualities
 - Accountability and responsibility
 - Respect for teammates, coaches and officials
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PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

To remain in good standing within the program, swimmers will be expected to:

- Compete at the EGA Summer Championships
- Participate in approximately 90% of District Age Group Galas
- Maintain approximately 80% attendance at training
- Demonstrate commitment and effort in training
- Respond positively to coaching feedback
- Set and review seasonal goals
- Support team culture and sportsmanship
- Adhere to the EGA Code of Conduct

Failure to meet these expectations may result in a review of squad membership regardless of performance level.

CLINICS AND WORKSHOPS

The program will include a series of educational clinics and workshops throughout the season.

Proposed Frequency

- Approximately one clinic every 1–2 months

Delivery Format

- In-person sessions
- Online educational workshops

Expected Attendance

- Approximately 80% attendance by squad members

Estimated Cost

- Approximately R250 – R500 per clinic
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DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The clinics and workshops may include:

Technical and Tactical Development

- Underwater skills
- Race pace execution
- Stroke refinement
- Starts, turns and breakouts
- Race analysis

Physical Conditioning

- Strength and conditioning
- Mobility and flexibility
- Injury prevention
- Athletic development

Mental Performance

- Sports psychology
- Nutrition and hydration
- Recovery strategies
- Competition preparation
- Leadership development

Interactive learning opportunities may include:

- Guest speakers
- Video analysis sessions
- Competition simulations
- Coach education integration





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TRAINING CAMPS AND TOUR OPPORTUNITIES

EGA is exploring several future development opportunities, subject to interest, logistics, coaching availability and financial viability. All international opportunities will be self-funded by participating swimmers and their families. Potential opportunities may include:

Ireland Tour

- Irish National Championships
- Proposed: December 2026
- SANJ +

Florida, USA

- High Performance Training Camp
- Florida State Championships
- Proposed: August 2027
- SANJ +

Italy Training Camp

- Treviso Cup / Pesaro Championships
- Proposed: July 2027
- 14 & Over

Local High Performance Training Camp

- All squads

TOUR MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

To ensure the safety, wellbeing and effective management of all participants, EGA has established the following principles regarding domestic and international tours:

Participation on all EGA tours and training camps will be limited to:

- Swimmers eligible for the tour or camp
- Registered coaches accompanying the squad
- EGA-appointed Team Leaders

To maintain a high-performance environment and ensure effective athlete supervision, tours are not intended to operate as parent-accompanied group travel experiences.





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Team Leaders

EGA will appoint Team Leaders for all official tours and training camps.

Team Leaders will be responsible for:

- Athlete welfare and safeguarding
- Tour administration and logistics
- Communication with swimmers, coaches and parents
- Team discipline and adherence to EGA policies
- Emergency and contingency management

Where necessary, Team Leaders may be interviewed and formally approved by EGA prior to appointment. All Team Leaders will be required to complete recognised safeguarding training before participating in any tour.

Coach Participation

EGA strongly encourages the coaches of participating swimmers to accompany tours and training camps where possible.

The involvement of club coaches provides continuity of athlete support and contributes significantly to the overall success of the programme.

All coaches travelling with the squad will be expected to uphold the standards, values and policies of Eastern Gauteng Aquatics throughout the duration of the tour.





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ROLE OF CLUB COACHES

EGA recognises that club coaches remain the primary coaches responsible for swimmer development.

Accordingly:

- Club coaches retain responsibility for swimmer training programs.
- EGA clinics are intended to support and enhance club coaching.
- Coaches are encouraged to attend and participate in clinics where possible.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities may be offered through the program.
- Coaches are encouraged to work collaboratively with EGA to maximise athlete development.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Swimmers must be registered with EGA for the current season.
- A Squad Convenor will be appointed to manage planning, logistics and communications.
- Formal squad agreements may be implemented between EGA, swimmers, parents and coaches.
- Swimmers who choose not to participate should formally advise EGA.



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SPONSORSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Eastern Gauteng Aquatics is committed to creating meaningful opportunities that assist talented young athletes in reaching their full potential both in and out of the pool.

The Xcel High Performance Program provides swimmers with access to:

- High-performance clinics and workshops
- Specialist coaching and technical development
- Sport science and athlete education
- Leadership and personal development opportunities
- National and international exposure
- Training camps and competition opportunities

While EGA strives to keep participation costs as affordable as possible, many of these initiatives require significant financial investment.

We therefore invite businesses, organisations and community partners to support the development of our young athletes through sponsorship of the Xcel High Performance Program.

Sponsorship contributions may assist with:

- Coaching and specialist instructor costs
- Venue and facility hire
- Training equipment and resources
- Educational workshops and athlete development programmes
- Training camps and tour-related expenses
- Athlete support initiatives
- Subsidies for deserving swimmers

Sponsors will be provided with opportunities for recognition and exposure through EGA events, publications, digital platforms and programme activities.

By partnering with EGA, sponsors play a direct role in developing the next generation of swimmers, leaders and ambassadors for South African sport.

Organisations interested in supporting the programme are encouraged to contact Eastern Gauteng Aquatics to discuss sponsorship packages and partnership opportunities tailored to their corporate social investment and marketing objectives.



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CONCLUSION

The EGA Xcel High Performance Program represents an exciting step forward in creating a structured pathway for swimmer development within Eastern Gauteng Aquatics.

The program aims to provide swimmers with opportunities to develop not only as athletes, but also as leaders, role models and ambassadors for the sport.

By working together—swimmers, parents, coaches, clubs and EGA—we can create an environment that promotes excellence, encourages growth and prepares our athletes for success at every level of competition.

We look forward to a successful season with our new look Xcel Squads.



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