



The Bracknell Senior and Masters Meet Saturday 5th March
The Biggest Secret in the World

The process of realising one's potential as a swimmer, or for that matter anything else, is really based on using wisely your power of choice. The choices that we make eventually define us, in terms of a life of success or failure. But how one comes to understand and learn how to make the right choices is something that we learn throughout our lives. Particularly as you get older, any improvement never comes easily. The time put in either to learn the smallest stroke change or attain speed may seem to take forever. But blessed by genes, there are some swimmers who acquire technique better and quicker and race or train better than others. Finally, you are in a race to see who will win, but at the same time alone against the clock, which ultimately gives you satisfaction or frustration. So, why are you doing all this?

The Senior and Masters Meet at Bracknell was somewhat over-subscribed, indicating a high standard of participants. A St Paul's Barnes Swim Team took up the challenge, achieving 4 golds, 6 silvers and 1 bronze.

Pip Bennett won a silver in the 30-34 Year Age Group 50 Fly just outside the magic 30 with a 30.04 – short course(25m). Pip swam the following day in the Surrey County Championships at Crystal Palace, which he did 30.11 – long course(50m), qualifying for the London Regional Championships.

When Pip first came to me to join the Senior and Masters Tri Squad I advised him to look elsewhere. I get lots of “Learn to Swim Triathletes” and those “beautiful people” who think that diving into cold water is a real hoot – providing that one wears a wet suit of course. Anyway, he kept coming back and insisting that he was good enough to be in this illustrious group of ours. His persistence paid off. I finally weakened. I have always had a sneaking suspicion that deep down I have liberal tendencies.

What we have now, in my opinion, is the hardest working swimmer in the whole club – and with relatively no competitive swimming career at all. One wonders what the “sportspeak” expressions “talent identification” and “pathway” really mean. Incidentally, Pip is doing his Phd on that very subject. To have such a swimmer in the squad is absolutely essential. He keeps the so-called talented swimmers honest. It's funny. The harder you work, the faster you get. Just like magic isn't it?.

The terms of "success" and "failure", particularly in terms of another favourite sport speak expression LTADP, are still not really clear. However, what is clear - and difficult for most of us to do - is to accept responsibility for our actions. After all it is easier to point the finger at your coach and say, "Look! Tony Pearce did this to me" than to look into the mirror and say, "Look! I did this to me!" Believe it or not the process of realising one's potential is defined along this “pathway” or as I like to describe it, “the road to self-actualisation”.

The Senior and Master Tri programme, as with every other programme in this club, does not change a person, it allows a person to make a choice. That is what really makes us go that extra mile - to see what is on the other side of us. This is the biggest secret in the world.

Tony Pearce, Head Coach