



Munster Performance Pathway Committee Report 2008/09

This season's regional PPC members were Mick McCormack (Chairman), Eddie Downey, Kevin Wilson, Stephen Phelan, Mike O'Connell and Tom Cross. Ex-Officio members of the regional PP were Sarah Fether (Munster Regional Pathway Development Coach), John Scowen (National Centre (Central Head Coach) and Mary Phelan (Sub-committee Chair).

The committee was particularly strong in terms of experience, sharing of ideas and knowledge, and willingness to assist in the development of the region's athletes at all levels. The PPC held a total of 5 meetings between April 2008 and February 2009 with most of these meetings taking place during fundraisers at competitions in US Arena but also at the Elmurrag Hotel. Communication channels via telephone and email have been utilized effectively within the group – a group which is generally limited in terms of face to face meetings due to the nature of the member's roles as coaches.

The Munster Regional Squads which consisted of the Skills Academy (Level 1, ages 13-15), the Development Squad (Level 2, ages 14-17), and the Pathway Group (Level 3, ages 18+) held their various camps/days in US, throughout the season and they were very well attended by coaches from around the region at all levels which was a welcome change to recent years. Another successful overnight camp was held at the end of December in US, and the coaches reported some great focus and attitudes from the group although the absence of the more senior swimmers from the Pathway group this year was felt and their positive influence at last year's camps was missed this year.

For the first time, the Munster Skills Academy group held a camp day outside the US Arena in January. The entire group travelled to Lark where Dolphin Swimming Club kindly donated their pool hours and time as they hosted 30 young athletes in Mallow Sports Complex for a day of pool work, dryland and nutrition seminars. This initiative was suggested at a Regional PPC meeting last season and brought to the National Performance Advisory Group by the Munster Representatives for approval in May. Other regions will also follow suit and we hope that other clubs within Munster will come on board to facilitate similar external camp work.

The Regional Development and Pathway swimmers travelled to Glasgow in June 2008 to compete at the Scottish Nationals LC. Coaches from the region were Eddie Downey and Michael Whelan who acted alongside Sarah Fether. This was a successful meet considering the swimmers were in the middle of a heavy training block as they prepared for the Irish Summer Nationals in July, but the team atmosphere was fantastic, and the coaches and swimmers worked particularly well with the Scottish team.

The Munster PPC meetings this season have been quite positive in many respects. One topic which consistently emerges at our meetings is that of Regional Development and Qualifying times and the structure around same. With the new term Ireland Terms of Reference for committees and sub-committees now coming into effect, it will allow greater cohesion and communication between each region's sub-committees to work together on a wider range of aspects which affect the athletes and the coaches throughout the region. We would encourage that initial discussions involving all sub-committees will commence on topics such as qualifying times and meet formats very soon with a view to optimum buy-in from all parties and subsequent improvement among the regional athletes.