

Female Underperformance at Summer Meets 2016 – 2019



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Only 2 female events progressed compared to the Qualifying Window

- 50 Free and 1500 Free
- with the overall regression for Female events at -0.41%
- 10 out of 13 (77%) of male events progressed from the Qualifying Window, by an average of 0.14%
- This is the first year that any Female event has shown Progression (data incl 2016, 17 & 18)
- **Female Breaststroke** was the worst performing stroke, with **Male Butterfly** the best performing Stroke

Day by Day Analysis

- Both genders saw their performances steadily fall away from Day 1 to Day 6. Males managed positive overall progression on 5 of the 6 days
- Females were regressing right from Day 1.
- Interestingly both Male and Female results picked up during the middle of the meet.
- For Males Day's 4 and 5 saw a mini surge before dropping off again on day 6. Female results also rose during days 3 and 4 only to drop further on days 5 and 6.
- The Regression in 2018 did not drop as low as in previous years with the lowest being Females on day 5 in 2017 at -0.83%
- In fact the Female scores are higher for each day compared to 2017

Female Results

Females show regression at each age group.

The 15 age group being the worst performing

17-18 age range the best performing Female group

The statistics for Female clubs have improved in 2018 however there continues to be a gap in how clubs performed comparing Male and Female swimmer

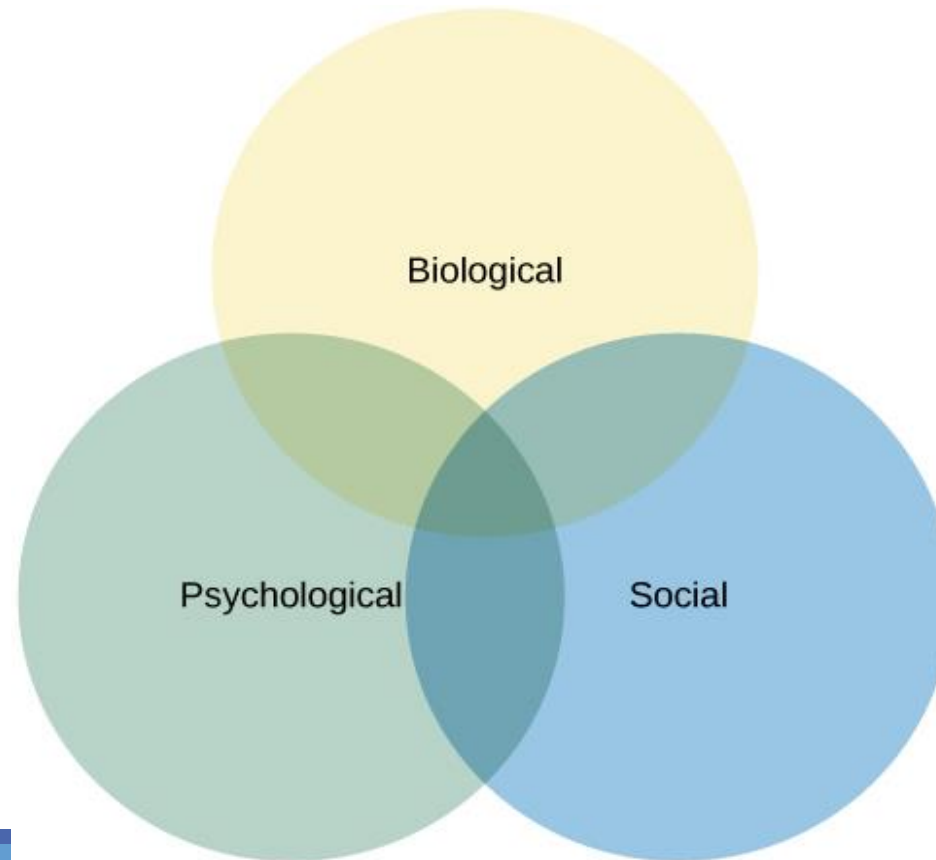
Female Swimmers Considerations

- Lots of debate about coaching male & Female swimmers
- Evidence programmes deliver Gender neutral programmes
- Differences between Males & Females
- Physical Capabilities (biological)
- Psychological
- Interaction (Social)

Summary Swim England document : Supporting Female swimmers a multidisciplinary perspective

Female Swimmers Considerations

Bio-psych-social Development Model (Eagle, 1977)



Female Swimmers Considerations

BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES:

1. Hormones
2. Muscle mass
3. % body fat
4. bone length.
5. Females more resilient to fatigue
6. Onset of Physical Maturity

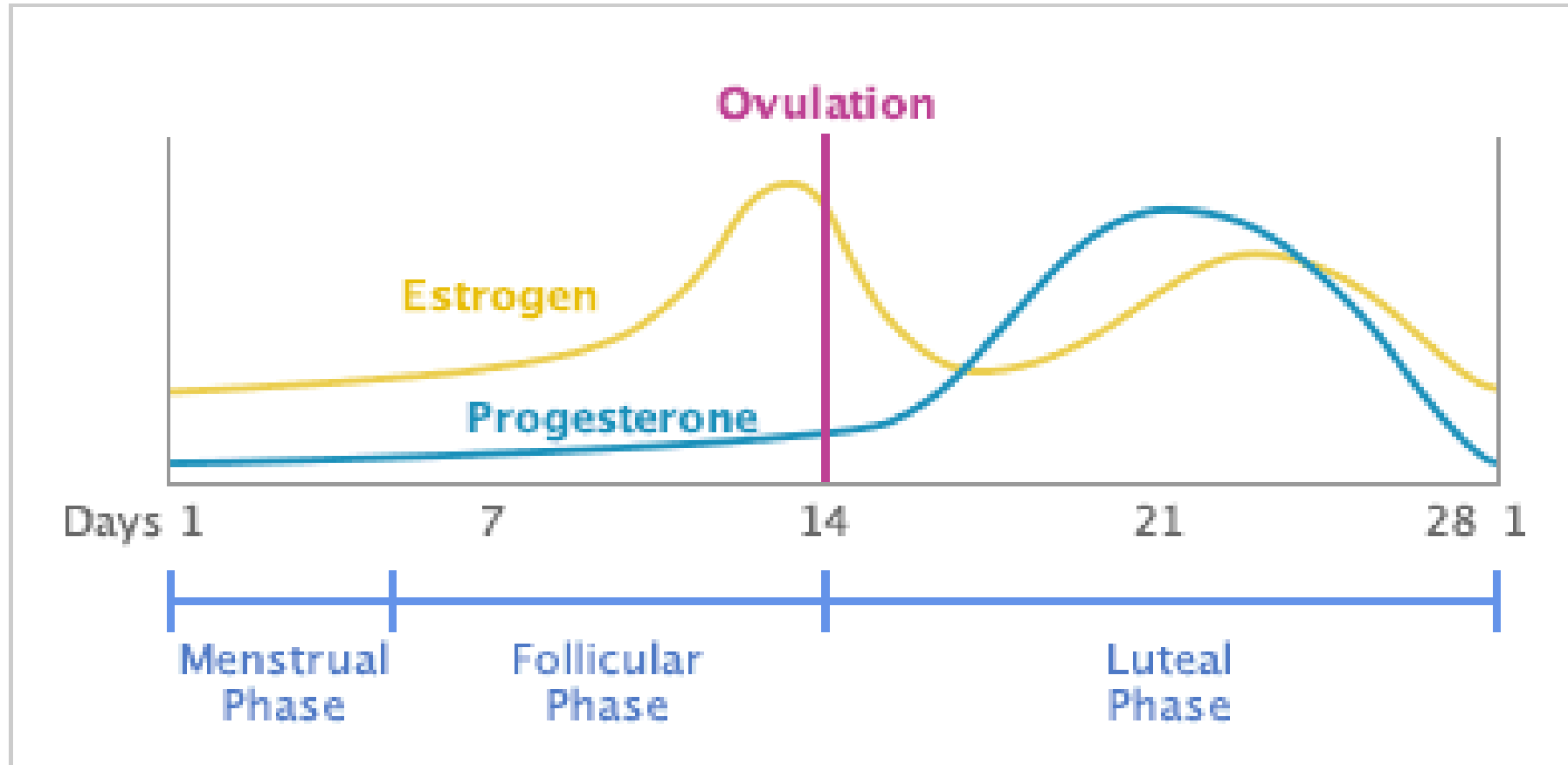
Female Swimmers Considerations

PSYCHO-SOCIAL DIFFERENCES:

Less clear

1. Generally more Empathetic
2. More concerned with other peoples & Relationships
3. Social Pressure relating to body image

MENSTRUAL CYCLE



Practical recommendations for Coaches

Swimmers should be encouraged to:

1. Monitor Cycles – document performance effects
2. Cycles can be tracked using practical apps (free app FitrWomen or Clue)
3. Menstruation should be discussed openly & regularly to remove taboo's
4. If Male is uncomfortable discussing - use female member of staff or senior swimmer
5. Management Strategies discussed with age group swimmers before their periods start

NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Many Female swimmers who are growing/ going through puberty under fuelling
2. Fear gaining body fat
3. Embarrassed about changes & how they look
4. Not wanting to eat more than their friends outside who don't exercise

Practical Recommendations for Coaches

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Practice good nutritional habits
2. Creating open communication between swimmer- coach
3. Team culture that allows athletes to share & support
4. Good performance does not necessarily mean a healthy individual

ACTIONS

Remind swimmers to eat carbohydrate immediately after session Nutrition for recovery & re-fuelling for training

Give girls time

Avoid comments on body shape

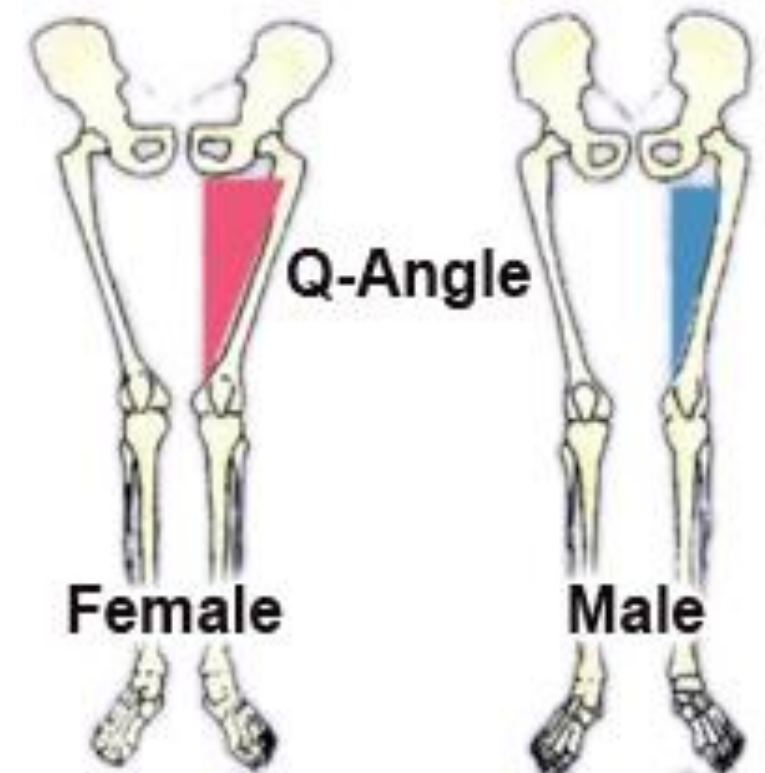
Consider consulting sports nutritionist

S&C for Females:- Practical Recommendations

1. Body image concerns may influence engagement in S&C
2. S&C Focus on improving strength not ↑muscle size
3. Could consider optimum time in menstrual cycle
(luteal phase)

Females Greater Risk of Injury - Why

- Changes Oestrogen levels can alter ability to repair, regenerate & adapt
- ↑level hormones alters ligament laxity
- ↑Q angle increases risk knee injuries



Practical considerations to reduce injury risk

1. Regular resistance training
2. Emphasis on ability to move well on land as well as in water
3. Maintaining mobility key area internal rotation, Lat dorsi length,

Recommendations for helping Stress Levels

Females athletes report feeling less in control in pressure situations than males

Link between feelings less control & anxiety

Process goals related to attendance, technique smaller components of their races to help girls feel in control

Work on building confidence by using evidence of previous success

Help to build self esteem- focus on the positive things achieved

Developing visualisation techniques

Coping strategies

We Must do Better – How ?

Identify the Issue

Plan to rectify

Evaluate Window performances

Be Brave in training cycle between Window & Event

Carefully plan Individual Taper / Rest

Monitor Performances with Regular Sets & Record

Test Record & Evaluate

Examples of Test Sets

20 x 100

1- 5 @ 85

6-10 @80

11-15 @ 75

16 - 20 @ 2 mins progressive TT + 12 - +0 by 3 sec intervals

Suggest 50 % of 200 Pb as Target

9 weeks out – 5 weeks out – 3 weeks out – 1 week out

Prepare Psychologically & Physically

Any big block of work followed with a no warning stand up Swim

EG 10 x 400 with minimal rest followed with

100 swim Target last 100 of 400 free (Rate – Count – Time)

Mix of Sectional Work leading to A broken swim + 1 unexpected Challenge Swim

6 x 200 kick – 4 x 300 Pull – 2 x 200 Drill – 100 All out challenge time

Taper

Be brave during lead in period

DO maintenance sets as sectional or different stroke

Work main event(s) at Race Pace or similar

Be careful of Over Resting

At the Competition

Train during the events at quiet times

Be prepared – have Equipment

Swim Down

Pre & Post Pool Land work