

Jo Jackson and Rebecca Adlington clash should be benchmark, says British Swimming

Dennis Pursley, Britain's national head coach, says Jo Jackson and Rebecca Adlington's awesome 400 metres freestyle clash will "have a huge impact on the rest of the swimmers".

By Anita Lonsbrough

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Pursley said the race at Ponds Forge on Monday in which both beat the world record "increases the belief" among other team members.

"It didn't surprise me that they can swim that fast but I didn't expect to see it this early after Beijing."



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Pursley, a former head coach of the American team who took over the British job five months ago, wants significantly more medals in a wider range of events at the 2012 Olympics.

Of the championships as a whole he feels that "the overall depth is improving dramatically".

He believes the US and Australia will fill the top two places on the medal table in London and that Britain will strive to break away from that group of nations challenging for the third position.

When Pursley was first approached about becoming head coach of Britain he admits "I had little interest" but the more

he looked into it the more he became interested. He knew that there would be a “strong foundation laid down by Bill Sweetenham”.

Pursley knew that Sweetenham had had many a battle during his time in Britain but had turned the ship around and made a positive impact on the sport and that “much of the success now is due to him and his leadership.”

The tough Australian believed that British swimmers and coaches had the talent and Pursley admits, “since I have been here I have realised that is the case.”

The five intensive training centres, which were Sweetenham’s idea, are now up and running and crucial to the sport. But he also believes that the athletes who do not wish to leave their home environment must also be catered for.

There is room for individuals and personalities but on camps the various groups ie medley, sprint and distance, must come together and train together and be tightly bonded.

On the swimsuit he believes that FINA “are addressing the issue” but it could be a two or three years before the situation is resolved. He is against the new generation of suits because he believes they “enhance performance” rather than “maximising” it as the previous generation did.

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