

Meet the swimmer: Isabel Spinley



FACTFILE

Name: Isabel Spinley

Age: 16

Squad: Midlands Youth

Joined club: 2009

Pre-race meal: chicken wraps with mayo, lettuce and cucumber

Post-race treat: banana milkshake (a proper one, not from McDonald's!)

National events 2017: 50m, 100m and 200m butterfly; 400m IM

Q: What do you love about swimming?

It's a stress release. If you have had a bad day at school, even if you feel sluggish on the way to training, you do a session and it feels so much better afterwards.

Q: What is your favourite stroke, and why?

Fly – I've always liked it. It used to be free but something clicked a year or so ago so I hope it will stay like that now. It's only when you get older and your body grows that you know which stroke you will be best at.

Q: What is your least favourite part of training?

The social aspect. Swimming is 'head in the water' – you can do two hours without talking to anyone. It can get lonely.

Q: What's the best bit of advice or feedback that head coach Lynn has ever given you?

Lynn has been telling me for a while to relax, I can't go full out all the time at training. I only realised what she meant when I broke my elbow [Isabel broke her elbow at the end of 2015 just before she was due to swim at her first nationals]. I used to be a worrier – I'd go to a race, worry about swimming 400m IM, worry that everyone was bigger than me. But I've realised I really love swimming and now when I race I relax and enjoy every moment.

Q: What is your achievement aim at the 2017 nationals?

My goals are to work on the things that were brought to my attention in Israel [Isabel competed for Great Britain at the European Junior Swimming Championships] - faster fly

kicking off walls and into stroke quicker. Also, not going out too fast so I can maintain stroke rate and length at the end

Q: What was your most embarrassing incident at training or a gala?

In Israel, I was in a corridor near the toilets and changing rooms at the pool and I needed to go to the toilet. I wasn't looking at the signs and went right into the boys' toilet! I actually went to the toilet and only noticed when I came out and saw a boy shaving his legs and wondered what he was doing in the girls'! Then I realised. The coaching staff had a good laugh about that!

Q: What are your goals for the next year?

To work on the 400m IM – that's my goal. I feel there's a lot to improve if I get my other strokes right. I need to improve my back technique and my free back-end speed, to keep it going when I am tired. I also want to improve my fly to get back to the British Champs and the Commonwealth trials.

Q: What do you enjoy doing when you aren't in the pool?

There isn't much time! I enjoy athletics and I also like being creative. I like sowing – making bags.