



# PROMISING ATHLETES PROGRAMME

## GABRIEL GIL - Swimming

Gabriel's connection to Crook Log Leisure Centre spans his entire life. He began in the pool as a baby with his parents and entered the Learn to Swim programme at age 3. While he was progressing rapidly by age 7, the pandemic halted his momentum. Like many children, the long absence from the water meant he had to spend a significant period post-lockdown in lessons to re-acquire his skills and technical "feel."

Once he regained his foundation, he joined Bexley Swimming Club in March 2022. Since then, his rise has been meteoric. Now 13 and a student at Bexley Grammar School, Gabriel has transitioned from a "Learn to Swim" student to one of the top 15 backstroke swimmers in the country. He is a multiple County and Regional medalist, currently training toward a podium finish at the British National level.

# OVERVIEW

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## **What other hobbies or interests do you have and are you involvement in any charity work?**

I am very dedicated to my studies at Bexley Grammar School. Within the swimming community, I enjoy volunteering at junior club galas to help the younger children who are just starting out in the same 'Learn to Swim' lanes where I began.

## **Who has been your role model and why?**

Leon Marchand. His training attitude is insane—he shows that to be the best in the world, you have to be willing to work harder than everyone else every single day. I try to bring that same 'insane' work ethic to my own sets, especially when the training gets tough

## **What type of training facilities do you use or need?**

I need consistent lane space for my 12–15 hours of weekly training. As a national-level athlete, having access to the gym at Crook Log for strength and conditioning is the 'missing piece' I need to build the power required for my backstroke and distance freestyle

## **Why did you select the sport you have?**

I've practically grown up at Crook Log. After the pandemic, I had to work hard to re-learn everything I'd lost during the lockdowns. That challenge made me realise how much I loved the sport. Joining Bexley SC in 2022 turned that dedication into a passion for competing at the highest level.

## **What Awards and Accomplishments have you achieved so far in the sport?**

My key achievements include:

- National Level: Ranked 13th in the UK for 100m Backstroke and 15th for 200m Backstroke at the Swim England National Summer Meet.
- Regional Level: Silver medalist (200m Back) and Bronze medalist (100m Back) at the London Regional Championships.
- County Level: Most recently at the 2026 Kent County Championships, I won Silver in the 200m Backstroke and Bronze in the 800m Freestyle.
- Current Goal: I am currently on track for the Next Gen Nationals, which is limited to only the Top 20 swimmers in Great Britain

## **What other sports or activities do you enjoy?**

Outside of the pool, I am a Black Belt in Taekwondo, having trained for years under Sir David at the Tan'Gun Taekwondo Academy. The discipline required to reach a black belt has definitely helped my focus in swimming. I also love music and am currently learning to play the guitar, where I enjoy experimenting with new sounds. I used to cycle competitively, but I had to give that up due to the time demands of my swimming schedule; however, I still love heading out for leisurely Sunday rides through the Kent countryside to stay active and relax

## **What does being part of the Promising Athlete Programme with Parkwood Leisure mean to you and your future success?**

It's a full-circle moment. I started at Crook Log as a baby, re-learned my skills here after the pandemic, and now I have the chance to represent the centre as an elite athlete. This support gives me the tools to focus on the marginal gains needed to move from Top 15 in the UK to the national podium

# OVERVIEW



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