



# Craig Combe

## “Climbing the Career Ladder”

Activities and Facility Manager  
Olympos Burgess Hill (Freedom Leisure)  
Aged 26



### Can you describe your centre?

Olympus Burgess Hill has a leisure pool with indoor and outdoor rapids, flumes, an 8 lane x 25m Competition Pool with moveable floor. There are squash courts, studios, gyms and outdoor facilities.

### Can you briefly describe your role?

I manage all the activity programmes including the swimming lessons. I monitor usage of the facilities and ensure that it is maximised in all areas in order to meet participation and financial targets.

### How many staff do you now manage?

Operationally we have a team of 3x Duty Managers who in turn also manage 3x Senior Recreation Assistants and 15x Recreation Assistants.

I also manage a Course Administrator and the coaches/instructors that teach on our swimming programmes.

### Can you summarize your career and how you have moved between centres and the experience this has given you?

I started working at The Triangle part-time for 2 years whilst at college as a lifeguard, children's birthday party host and holiday club staff. After college I became a full time Recreation Assistant.

After 18 months I was promoted to a Duty Officers role at a nearby centre – my responsibilities increased and I also took on managing both the swim and sports courses programmes.

Within 3 years I moved to another local centre as an Assistant Manager before I was asked to also undertake a dual site role where I managed the programmes at both East Grinstead and Olympos Burgess Hill.

After a year of managing at 2 centres, I left East Grinstead to concentrate on Burgess Hill and took on the added responsibility of facility management. Although I only left college 8 years ago I have gained a vast experience and knowledge of all aspects of leisure.

### How did the Swim Up programme help your career?

The Swim Up apprenticeship programme gave me the first step into diversifying into sports coaching background and it taught me skills that have helped to develop my career.

I learnt to plan and organise in advance as well as how to identify strengths/weaknesses and effect change through development.

I also gained in confidence through leading lessons and learning to communicate with various types of people which is essential when in management.

### Would you recommend the programme to any of your own staff?

Definitely, it is an incredibly good programme that teaches you how to instruct an essential life skill and learn many other personal skills in the process.

### Do you still enjoy swimming?

Admittedly I don't get the time to swim but still enjoy teaching on our swim school.

I find it rewarding to help swimmers develop and progress, it also helps me to monitor our programme of lessons from the "shop floor" and interact with the staff and customers.

## Contact SWIM UK on:

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