Head Coach’s Report 2016

Welcome to my annual review of the Clubs swimming performances for this year.

As always following the summer break, the swimmers have an initial period of discomfort when they start back into their training; it’s amazing how much fitness these athletes can lose in such a short space of time. We try to offset this daunting task with the prospect of our Summer Training Camp at the end of September. With just over 5 weeks before we fly out to Cyprus, the swimmers work that little bit harder so they can be in the best possible shape they can be for this demanding Swim Camp. Every year the Camp will throw up something new that never ceases to amaze me and this year was no exception. The way the swimmers conduct themselves and show true determination in the face of pain and adversity is an example to us all. The parents that come along, who get involved and try new things that take them way out of their comfort zones, also achieve greatness, they get that fell good factor and rightfully so.

We entered into the local short course Graded and Open Galas on the run up to Christmas, culminating in the Regional then the ASA Championships. A good turn out by the Billingham Swimmers ensured the Club was represented in Finals with lots of swimmers gaining PB’s and medals. Steph Blakeburn and Sam Chell went on to the ASA Short Course Championships, held at Ponds Forge, Sheffield. One or two of our other swimmers just missed out on these Champs by the smallest of margins but show great signs of improvement and should get there in the near future. Steph and Sam had a good Champs by getting PB’s, making finals and winning medals.

Our very own Club Gala was a huge success with lots of PB’s and Club Records been broken. This is always very demanding on the swimmers due to the intensity of swimming in such a short space of time, but will always show a true level of fitness, skill acquisition and sheer determination.

Christmas Training rolled by with the Swimmers being taken to their limits of endurance and although most hate these sessions, they are a necessary evil and a vital part of their training plan.

The New Year started with our usual Long Course Open Galas then District Championships leading into the Long Course Regional Championships. With a good number of entries into these meets from Billingham, the most we have had for a few years, it was good to see us represented in finals and picking up medals.

We went to Tollcross, Glasgow for a 4 day Long Course Training Camp in February. With the swimming and Land Work being intense, I was sure we reap the rewards at a later date.

In the April, the British Swimming Championships which doubled as the Olympic Trials didn’t go exactly to plan. Steph Blakeburn didn’t swim to her true potential due to an illness in the early part of the year which took its toll on her, but lessons were learned from this.

At the end of June we went back up to Glasgow for the Scottish Open Championships where Billingham had its largest representation ever. All swimmers got PB’s and some made Finals, another huge encouraging success for the Club.

The Swimming year finished off at Sheffield with the Summer Championships. With more than 30 swimmers at the first weekend and Steph and Sam the following week it was a busy time for swimmers and coaches alike. Lots of PB’s, finals and medals won are always encouraging leading into the summer break.

So over the Swimming Year our swimmers have done the Club Proud.

Gillian, Lynn and Co, continue to encourage our younger members of the club into competing in the Junior League. Not an easy task and sometimes frustrating but it can be hugely rewarding when it goes well.

The Masters section has had a little re-organization this year and shown good representation at Galas. Starting in January with local meets including our very own Billingham Masters Gala in March (always a highlight of the year), and then up to the British Championships, with medals of all colours won. We even had representation at the European Masters Championships, held at the London Aquatic Centre; the venue used for the 2012 Olympics. This was the largest European Masters Champs ever with over 10,000 entries.

In closing I would like to thank all the coaches, teachers, helpers and back room staff for their unswerving loyalty and commitment to the club, which they give so freely. To Tees Active and all of Roy Broadbent’s team of staff here at the Forum and last but not least my wife for putting up with my passion for this Club and its success.

Thank you

Guy Fawkes.