

# Coaches Report For Annual General Meeting Dec 2017

2016 ended on a high with Biddulph getting promotion as Champions of the Arena League Division One something that the Club has never achieved before.

The County Championships saw some excellent performances in February with a lot of swimmers achieving personal best times making finals and winning individual events. We also did very well in the relay team events.

The success we had from the County Championships resulted in a big Squad of swimmers qualifying for the Midlands Regional Long Course Championships in May at Coventry. We had Harrison Barber, Daisy Jones, Jade Cartlidge, Hannah Hussain, Olivia Cheetham, Jess Copeland, Ben Finney, Annabel Blainey, Scott Pattyson all either making finals or top three finishes.

In March we took a young Squad to swim at Uttoxeter in a Junior Sprint Gala with over 50 swimmers aged between 9 years and 12 years some competing for the very first time. In April also took Squads to both Long Course Level One Meet at Ponds Forge Sheffield and a Level Three Meet at Fenton Manor at both events we did very well.

The Biddulph Open Meet in July was very popular again and attracted a high number of entries from other Clubs with the distance swims on the Friday night giving swimmers the opportunity to compete in the long distance events on a separate day.

Harrison Barber qualified for both the British and English National Championships in August in six events. The pick of his events were making a final on 400 FS in the British event with a personal best time of 4.17.51 finishing 8<sup>th</sup> and in the English event on 100 FS again making a final with personal best time of 56.61. Hannah Hussain also qualified to swim at the English National Championships for the first time on 50 Back and did a time just below her personal best this completed a very successful year for Hannah who broke numerous records on 50, 100 and 200 Back at various competitions.

In October we competed in two events the North Midlands District Championships held at Macclesfield with considerable success for the younger swimmers and a Level One Long Course Meet at Nottingham which some of our older swimmers found tough with some very average swims. This was mainly through poor preparation with low levels of attendance from the beginning of the season in September leading into this competition.

November saw the Club Championships which were excellent and very competitive Leek Swimming Club made it a joint event and I think there was a really good atmosphere at all the sessions with over 120 swimmers competing. There were a lot of Club records broken which gets more difficult each year as the standard at the Club has improved a lot over the last 5 years.

We also took a young Squad to Coventry in November for a Level Three Long Course competition which gave quite a few of our swimmers their first opportunity to compete in a 50 metre pool they did very well over a variety of swims achieving 12 Golds 18 Silvers and 13 Bronze medals.

December will see us compete in the B Final of the North West Premier Arena Final at Blackpool to try and retain our Premier League status in what we have found to be a very challenging league with some big fish in it !!!

## **Coaching & Training Group Structure**

This year has seen a significant increase in the numbers joining the Club at Junior Group level with over forty swimmers below 10 years old. To accommodate this we have made changes to Thursday night giving six lanes for the younger swimmers rather than four as in the past. There will be extra pool time given to the Junior Group in the New Year as I am fully aware we have a very keen group of swimmers at this level which bodes well and is very important for the future of this Club.

Friday nights have changed during the last year also with the Academy Squad swimming for 2 hours at Chesterton with myself and the Junior / Development Group are now training at New Horizons with Andrew and Holly. This is working well and there has been a number of swimmers deciding to move up to the Academy Squad recently which is a credit to Andrew & Holly who are both doing a great job.

Saturday mornings and Sunday evenings has seen Sophie Pyatt join the coaching team to work alongside Darren and myself. Sophie is very keen to pass on her recent experiences. Sophie was a top Age Group swimmer who represented Great Britain on numerous occasions at Junior Level.

Andrea, Jennie and Natasha are also doing very well with the coaching on Thursdays and Sundays. We are in a very healthy position for coaches at the moment which is very important as we continue to grow. The idea of involving current or past senior swimmers who have come through our system and know what the objectives are for certain training sets and why we do specific drills to improve stroke technique is working very well.

## **Aims & Objectives**

To increase the number of swimmers at the Club to over 140 this will be done by having a big recruitment drive offering places to suitable young swimmers in the New Year from various lessons. It is important not to stand still and if the merger with Leek goes ahead we should be aiming for a membership of over 200 within 2 years. If we can achieve this then the future of the Club will be very bright and we would be in a very strong position locally.

Challenge and encourage talented Squad swimmers to maximize their opportunities and reach their potential by increasing their pool time as they get older into the 14hrs to 18hrs per week bracket which is essential to compete at the higher level of Age Group Swimming. To do this we need to make sure we continue to offer prime time pool sessions both morning and evening with reasonable numbers in the sessions to enable swimmers to specialize on certain strokes as they get older.

To be competitive at County, Regional, National and Open competitions throughout the year. We should be aiming for all Academy swimmers to have County qualifying times with the ability within the Squad and that is achievable if swimmers are prepared to be committed and focused.

Continue to produce our own swimmers by giving them access to quality technique based sessions between the ages of 8 years and 12 years old which are the really important years in laying the foundations for their development.

**Peter Abbott**  
**Director Of Coaching 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017**