

Hampshire County ASA – Annual Council Meeting 2008

Swimming report

Summary

This has been a mixed year for competitive swimming in Hampshire. At the lower end of age group swimming, standards continue to improve. However, Hampshire is a net “exporter” of swimmers in older age groups and the overall standard is disappointing. For the first time ever, Hampshire finished in the bottom 6 of the Inter County Championships in Sheffield and is relegated to the second tier competition in 2009.

The highlight of the year was the HCASA Centenary event. Hampshire hosted an Inter-County competition at The Quays, Southampton and were comfortable winners.

The development of elite swimming in the County continues to be supported by Hampshire County Council, but development at lower levels will be adversely affected by the decision by the ASA to discontinue support for the Partnership Swimming Development Officer.

The long awaited opening of the new 50m pool at the Mountbatten Centre in Portsmouth is an important addition to the swimming facilities in the County.

Hampshire County ASA Centenary

The association celebrated its centenary on 27th September 2009 with a festival of swimming, followed by a reception in Southampton. Hampshire hosted an Inter-County Swimming Competition at The Quays and hosted teams from Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Wiltshire. Hampshire entered 2 teams. The Hampshire Black team was clear winner with Kent in second place.



The reception that followed the competition celebrated a century of swimming in the County. Attendees included past County Champions and Olympians.

The photograph shows Katy Sexton with two backstroke swimmers from the past, Catherine Beer, who won her first County Championship in 1949 and Yvonne Glover, County Champion in 1931!

Championships

The Hampshire County Championships continues to go from strength to strength. In 2009 628 swimmers achieved the County qualifying times in a total of 4179 events. It is worth noting that Hampshire sets tougher entry times than those recommended by the ASA. This is necessary to

ensure that the competition can be completed within the time available. The Championships are spread across three weekends, at Aldershot, Waterlooville and Southampton. Changes to the programme to reduce overcrowding at Aldershot achieved their objective. The programme for 2010 is likely to be broadly the same as in 2009.

There were more than 40 new Championship Best Performances, mostly in the Age Group competition.

Development Competition

The Development Competition was introduced to encourage swimmers just below county standard and in 2008 attracted 2898 swims from 483 swimmers.

The event was extended from 2 to 4 days in 2007. In 2008 it was not fully subscribed, which meant that no eligible swimmers were rejected. The competition met its financial targets and the relatively uncrowded pool deck was very popular with coaches.

The format in 2009 will be the same as in 2008.

Inter-County Competition

The 2008 Inter-County Championships in Sheffield was not good for Hampshire. Injury and the loss of a number of senior swimmers to neighbouring counties meant that the Hampshire team was much weaker than in previous years. As a result, Hampshire finished in the bottom 6 and was relegated to the second tier gala for 2009.

Unfortunately, Hampshire has continued to lose older swimmers to other counties, and the 2009 team will need to be at its very best to get promoted back to the top tier.

Facilities

At long last, the County has a new long-course pool with the opening of the 50m pool at the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth. HCASA has contributed to the provision of electronic timing equipment for the pool and has secured access to the pool for County competitions.

The County Championships distance events will be held at the new pool in 2010.

This is timely, because arranging competitions at the 50m pool at Aldershot remains a challenge and as the 2012 Olympics approaches, time at that pool will get more difficult to secure.

The County also plans to continue to use the pools at Waterlooville and Southampton for County Championships.

Development

Following the pattern set in previous years, a training camp was arranged for the top swimmers in the County (based on National Rankings at the end of August 2008 on Olympic events). Swimmers selected to represent Hampshire in the 2008 Inter-County competition were also invited to participate. Our thanks go to Stewart Crowe for taking the lead in this activity.

At lower levels, the loss of ASA funding for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership Development Officer will adversely affect events for those youngsters considering competitive swimming and building links between schools and clubs.

Mike Lambert

4th June 2009