

Wantage White Horses Swimming Club

Newsletter: Autumn 2008



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Courses

Timekeepers course

We have arranged to hold a course for budding volunteer timekeepers to be held alongside club training on Friday 7 November, starting at 5.45pm.

It will be run by two officials from outside the local area. There will be a 1 hour theory session followed by a poolside session where we run some practice races and test stopwatch skills.

The course is limited to eight people so please sign up quickly.

Safeguarding and protecting children course

A while back, we advertised a child protection course on the notice board and this received quite a bit of interest. We have followed this up and because we have achieved Clubmark accreditation, the course supplier can provide the training in Wantage.

The course has therefore been arranged for 28 November at Wantage Leisure Centre.

The Club takes child protection very seriously and expects anyone helping (or who wants to help) poolside to attend if at all possible.

Introduction

There is a lot going on at the club at present; both poolside and away from it.

We wanted to assure you that despite this, there is a lot of very positive activity taking place which is very focussed on swimmers. We hope this newsletter will show you this.

We want this newsletter to be a regular feature with future editions (either hard copy or online) possibly written and managed by the swimmers. We would love to get feedback (positive or negative) on the format of this and any suggestions for further releases.

Whatever happens at forthcoming club meetings we would like to say many thanks for your support and enthusiasm in recent weeks.

Happy swimming!!

Sharon, Andrew, Lisa, Angela, Stuart, Ian, Gary and Simon.

Club autumn championships

The club's autumn championships will be held on 15th and 22nd of November 2008 at Wantage Leisure Centre with a start time of 6:15pm.

The championships will feature races for boys and girls in all four disciplines over 50m and 100m and also the 100m individual medley.

We can report that we have appropriately qualified officials for this event and have confirmed with Oxon and North Bucks ASA that times will count for the 2009 County Championships.

Entry forms are on the noticeboard and need to be submitted by 7th November. We encourage all swimmers to take part in what should be a fun couple of evenings.

News

Success at Wycombe

Well done to the swimmers who swam for the club at the Wycombe District Swimming Club Open meet last weekend in their 50m pool.

Luke Mayor, who was competing in just his fourth open meet, came first in the 10 Years 100m freestyle; Todd Giles came third in the 11 year old 100m freestyle and Esme Gardiner received a bronze medal in her 200 IM. Murran Harvey and Georgina Sumner also competed and swam really well with Georgina getting a speeding ticket in the 50m freestyle race.

New joiners stampede ...

We are keen to bring on newer swimmers who will form the basis for a vibrant club for years to come. In the last three weeks, we have encouraged many new joiners to come and take part in trials. This has seen 18 new swimmers in the last 2 weeks alone. Although this means we have to look at the pool-time availability, we see this is a nice problem to have to solve. We are keen to talk to potential new swimmers at all ages; if you know of anyone please encourage them to come and watch a training session or the club championships.

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Level 1 Coaches Training

We have been liaising with the Institute of Swimming about running a Level 1 Coaching Swimming course in Wantage Leisure Centre for development of our lane helpers. We are hopeful that it will take place early in the New Year and details will be available nearer the time. Oxfordshire Sports Partnership are also running a disability awareness course in the next couple of months and we would be keen to hear from anyone interested in attending.

AGM and SGM

Important meetings

The Club has two important meetings scheduled over the next couple of weeks. It is important to get a high turn out at these meetings in order to achieve outcomes that represent the view of the majority of the club's members.

AGM

The club's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on 8th November at Wantage Leisure Centre. For those who have not attended before, we hire out the whole centre for the evening with free access for parents and children to all facilities (except the gym).

This is the main meeting of the year at which the incumbent Committee will step down and a new one is elected by the members present at the AGM. We encourage all members to attend this meeting as it is your chance to ensure that the swimming club is run as you would like it to be and also to elect those people you would like to see running it.

Of course we genuinely encourage all members to step forward as nominees for both the voting committee roles (9 in number) and also the equally important non-voting roles. If nobody volunteers,

Coach's corner

It has now been nearly a month since his appointment as the club's new head coach. We asked Simon to explain a bit about his approach and some of the initiatives under way.

Coach's report

Before running through the approach, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all lane helpers for their efforts in the last few weeks and also to parents who have provided so much valuable feedback.

I have tried to build this feedback into the structure of my coaching sessions as we seek a positive upward spiral, accommodating the wide and varying needs of all swimmers and make WWHSC a fun and stimulating environment.

Development Swimmers

With the younger swimmers (first session Friday and Sunday), we are at the beginning of creating a structure that offers a rotation of technique coaching on all aspects of swimming and variety to maintain motivation.

Competition involvement is an area that we are keen to encourage. As you will have seen from the notice board, we are actively looking for more opportunities to attend open meets and involve as many swimmers as possible. Our club championships (15 and 22 Nov) and the Swindon Tigersharks open meet (23 Nov) will be a great starting point for new swimmers. We hope to get many new and existing swimmers to compete and join in the camaraderie. I am sure this will have the swimmers buzzing for weeks and help them set their own goals for the future.

Squad swimming for older swimmers

I have started to discuss the varying aspirations of our swimmers with them and with the feedback, I intend to create a structure that accommodates the majority or, perhaps to identify groups with different aspirations and review how this can be done within the pool time available. I will be looking to introduce this structure during November ahead of the 13 week build up to counties which starts early December.

In the mean time, I am attempting to install a reasonable level of discipline into the training sessions which will maximise opportunity and set strong examples to younger swimmers (e.g. arriving on time, staying in the pool even when the going gets a little tough, focusing on what the squad coaches and lane helpers are saying and achieving correct rest breaks and timings). Not to sound like a military operation but as a competitive club, there are some basic expectations, whatever the aspiration of swimmer. The young swimmers are looking on and I would like the elder swimmers to set an example both in discipline and swimming achievement that younger swimmers look up to.

Relationships

Relationships with other local clubs is something I feel strongly about as a means to assist Wantage in turning to an upward growth and development cycle.

Swimmer retention is a difficulty with many clubs at certain ages, which varies from girls to boys. As swimmers lose interest, it can become infectious. Creating stronger ties with other local clubs creates opportunities to get more local swimmers of the same age group together which really helps motivation and moral.

This has become evident on our Wednesday session which we have opened to Kidlington while their pool is closed. The training moral is strong with more

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we have no swimming club. Please write names up on the forms on the club notice board. Nominees, proposers and seconders can be any full or associate member of the club who is over 18 years old.

SGM

More imminently, a Special General Meeting (SGM) has been convened on 23rd October. Ten members had written to the club Secretary requesting the SGM to consider the Committee's conduct in appointing Simon Senior as Head Coach. Again, the club encourages members to attend this meeting, listen to the questions and answers and to vote as you deem appropriate.

Swim21 news

As you may have seen on the notice board, our accreditation for Skills Development under Swim21 was announced in August 08.

New constitution required

As part of our commitment to Swim21, which is the ASA's preferred development toolset for swimming clubs, we have to change our club's constitution to one recommended by the ASA.

The proposed new constitution, which will be voted on the AGM in early November is attached to the club's notice board. If you would like an electronic copy to read or have any questions on the proposed rules, please email the acting club secretary, Andrew Gardiner, at andrewsgardiner@btinternet.com.

More news

Celebrating the Club's 30th Anniversary

As you know, the club has reached its 30th birthday this year. We are planning an event later this year or early in the New Year to celebrate this. Watch for more information in the next few weeks.

Coach's corner (continued)

swimmers in the pool and new swimmers to talk to and measure against. Another example which I hope to nurture is the possibility of running skill workshops in rotation with other clubs, particularly in the ages where we have retention difficulties. To date, we have a very good relationship with Kidlington and Oxford and I will start to have open discussions with Didcot and Abingdon.

As a result of our closer ties in recent weeks, Oxford opened up their club championships to Didcot, Abingdon and us. I understand that most of our swimmers were stimulated by the warm friendly atmosphere and started to identify others in their own age groups in the other clubs – some cracking swims also with lots of pb's tumbling. Well done to the 20 swimmers who took part.

All this said on relationships; while it can provide access to shared resource, it is important that we retain and build our identity as a club. On this point, all swimmers should pride themselves on wearing the Wantage hats and T shirts and hoodies. I may even wear a Hoodie myself but will probably miss on the hat – not much hair to protect!!!

Fun

An important aspect of building a team. How do we incorporate fun within the sessions? Here I seek feedback. Some months ago, I introduced the widths session on the last Friday of each month and this seemed popular with swimmers; far better than I expected. Widths sessions are widely used by many other clubs and respected coaches as it provides fun but also good practice in relays, starts and turns and disguises hard work.

Peer groups

The young swimmers are evidently motivated by older swimmers and so I am looking to get older swimmers mentoring groups of younger swimmers possibly through the creation of internal teams. This mentoring can extend to support at galas / open meets. I hope, with more feedback, to get something going in November.

Early morning training (EMT)

I have been involved with early morning training as a swimmer for 12 years. The numbers until a year ago were very low. It's a far cry from the situation now where numbers, particularly on Saturdays where the pool is overflowing with swimmers. So how did we do this? Two simple innovative measures. 1 – Open a lane for parents (more likely to bring the kids) and involve masters swimmers in the session. 2 – We all hit Sainsburys for breakfast afterwards; the thought of a full fry up with their mates really does drag the most resistant swimmer out of bed!

EMT's on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday are also doing well with some keen swimmers attending. Bob Harrison covers Wednesdays and Saturdays and is a fantastic asset to EMT swimming and very knowledgeable on all fronts. If you are interested in attending these sessions please ask me or some of the EMT swimmers about it and come and give it a try – the extra pool time really helps build stamina and reduce times.

First Tuesdays

In an earlier coaching stint with the club, I introduced a group feedback session with swimmers which I held for 15 minutes after training on a Tuesday. This was a useful session where we were able to exchange ideas (and the odd joke).

I will be starting this again with the first meeting to be held on Tuesday 4 Nov. All Tuesday swimmers are encouraged to attend.

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More news (continued)

Web-site

We are working on a refresh of the club's website.

The refreshed site will include sections on news and announcements, key dates for open meets and championships, entry forms for events, lots of information resources for swimmers (e.g. links to technique articles, training routines, tips on nutrition) to help them with their training and if we get the technology right, a coaches' blog.

We will look to involve swimmers (they are the internet generation after all) in creating content for the site and in keeping the new site very up to date.

....stop pressWWHSC in Waitrose token scheme starting 25 October

The club has been selected for the Waitrose Community Matters charity scheme. Customers at the Wantage branch are given a token at the checkout which they are able to drop into a container choosing from one of three local "good causes".

At the end of a month the tokens are counted and £1000 is divided proportionally between the 3 organisations, depending upon the number posted for them.

Therefore, if you're shopping in Waitrose please put your token in the swim club's pot and encourage your friends & family to do the same!

Coach's corner (continued)

Feedback to parents

This is how we are going to succeed in growing, by working together. If anyone has any suggestions on forward direction or specifically for sessions, I am very keen to hear. I am always at the pool early on Friday and Sunday. Sharon Jenkins has also started a sterling job on communicating with young swimmers and parents so please do not hesitate to grab either of us on any issue.

I want to keep the communication flowing on what we have and hope to achieve on the coaching and team building front.

Dates for your calendar

Please note the following dates:

General

- SGM - 23 Oct – 8:30 pm - Wantage Leisure Centre
- Timekeeper's course - 7 Nov – 5.45 pm – Wantage Leisure Centre
- AGM - 8 Nov - 8:00 pm – Wantage Leisure Centre (centre open from 6.30pm)
- Child protection course – 28 Nov - Wantage Leisure Centre

Open meets and competitions (through to early Jan 09 – for a full list please see the club's notice board)

Event	Event date	Closing date for entries
WWHSC Club Championships	15&22 Nov	7 Nov
Tiger Sharks (Swindon)	23 Nov	9 Nov
Boldmere (B'ham)	22&23 Nov	24 Oct
Coventry	29 Nov	29 Oct
Oxford SC	6&7 Dec	24 Oct
Abingdon Vale	4 Jan (tbc)	(tbc)
Basingstoke	4&5 Jan	(tbc)
2009 county championships	Feb/Mar 2009	26 Jan 2009

Hoodies

We are close to placing the first order for club hoodies (black with yellow lettering).

Sizes are as follows: Chest sizes 28"; 30"; 32-34"; 36"; 38"; 40"; 42-44"; 46"; 48" & 50-52"(apparently they are "generous" in size).

The cost of these hoodies is £17.50 each. Cheques for £17.50 per hoodie should be made out to "Burton Trading" writing on the back of the cheque, the name(s) of the swimmer(s), the sweatshirt size(s) and the name(s) to be printed on the back of the hoodie.

As 2008 is the club's 30th anniversary, it has been suggested that as an alternative second design, we print a "30" on the back of each hoodie with the number being made up of all club swimmers names (in small text rather than solid print). Please would you also indicate therefore if you would like the "30" incorporated on your hoodie(s). There is an extra £2.50 charged for this design.

Please give cheques to one of the lifeguards (Angela, Stuart or Gary). Be quick .. the order is going in soon.