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Chief Coaches Newsletter

Let me start by saying welcome back to all swimmers and parents and in particular welcome to our new members who joined over the summer.

As you know this year we decided to run a single training evening (Thursday) over the summer period. It's always difficult to get the balance exactly right but in general I think it was successful. One positive knock on effect of this is that swimmers seem to have got back into the swim very quickly after the summer break rather than drifting back over a period of a couple weeks

Coaching staff

By this time many of you will have met, or at least seen, Lee Spindlow but I'd like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Lee back to the club. I say back because Lee is a former Newbury swimming club member. Having obtained a degree in Sport Science and Physical Education at the University of Wales, Lee has coached on a voluntary basis at Cardiff, has been chief coach at Merthyr Tydfil and is currently swimming development officer for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Lee will be responsible for B squads but he will also be helping me out with the newly formed A and club squads

Swimming Squads

A pre season coaches meeting was held on Friday 31st to discuss general coaching issues and the plan for the coming season. To summarise the main points resulting from this meeting:

1. The upper squads have been re-organised with A and club squads replacing A1 and A2. For swimmers to train in A squad they will need to:
 - a. Have a district base time or very close
 - b. Train at least 5 sessions per week
 - c. Do at least one morning session per week
 - d. Do Sunday land training and 50m long course training when required.

It's probably worth pointing out that as top squad requirements go, this is quite relaxed. In other words this is the bare minimum if you want to achieve your potential – food for thought!

2. B1/B2 squads remain as they were with one of the requirements for going into B1 squad from Challengers being a 200m IM county qualifying time. This emphasises the importance placed upon all four strokes at this early stage in a swimmers career as well as setting an important milestone for progression to A squad. However it should be borne in mind that

progression from B2 to B1 is always possible (and in fact encouraged) if the required standards are met

3. The lower squads – Challengers/Sprinters/Cruisers – are ever more popular and in fact as of this week we have had to impose a waiting list for club entry into Cruisers as we are currently at capacity. Progression through the squads is always an important issue for both swimmers and parents so we have tried to formalise this in a number of ways. Firstly squad moves are only decided at coaches meetings and then implemented at the start of the following month. This gives swimmers enough time to make the change and avoids coaches having to readjust their registers mid month, which can be a bit confusing. Secondly and importantly, we have set out a set of written criteria for squad progression. To some degree we've always done this, in fact squad requirements are currently on the ndsc web site. However we now intend to bring this much closer to the poolside. Coaches have a tick list but it's important to realise that swimmers are assessed against this list continuously not just in one formal test. Swimmers and parents are welcome to discuss the requirements with the squad coach at any time.

Competitions

Competitions are decided upon and reviewed at every coaches meeting. At the pre season's coaches meeting held on the 31st August the competition plan was set out up to and including Xmas. The remainder of the year was pencilled in pending confirmation of events and venues. This competition plan can be found as a pdf club download on the ndsc web site under club swimming. However please note that this should be regarded as a provisional plan. For events that have been confirmed please look on diary of events on the ndsc web site under latest news.

The clubs competition plan links in with the training strategy. This basically dictates that over the autumn cycle from September to Xmas the emphasis is upon building up stamina and endurance after the summer break with competitions kept to a comparatively low frequency. Apart from the Speedo league and the club championships we are committed to two open meets: a level 3 Meet at Tiger Sharks (Swindon) in November and a Level 2 Meet at Guildford in December.

Training Schedules

As I've often said a successful club needs coaches, swimmers and facilities (and of course money but that's a separate issue) and to progress all three have to move in unison. At the moment we are limited by facilities i.e. pools and pool time.

We are always reviewing training times to optimise pool time to fit the various squads' requirements. In reality pool time is not ideal – it's simply what we can get so we work with it. We have made a few changes on Wednesday evening:

- a. A squad swims at Hungerford from 6:30 – 8:30. This gives A squad one session on their own which I think is a minimal requirement for the top squad and something I'd like to develop further in the future. It also brings the finish time forward to 8:30pm which hopefully will make it easier for swimmers to get to the early morning session on Thursday. During the first hour A squad will share the pool with Challengers.

- b. B squads and Club will swim from 6:00 to 7:30 at Northcroft. The objective of delaying the start time to 6:00pm is to enable more people to attend.

Both of the above will run for a trial period. There is some possibility that we could get extra pool time on Wednesday to accommodate Masters and/or separating club and B squads into separate sessions. We are looking into it – nothing firm at this stage

Land Training

Land training had to be stopped towards the back end of last season when I was unable to take it. I'm glad to say that it's restarted this year as of last Sunday (September 9th). This year Lee will also be taking the land training so together with Dennis and me we should have ample coaching cover to keep the programme going. Land training is an important addition to the swimming training programme and an essential one if you wish to progress through B to A squad. So swimmers please come along. It's a break from the swimming routine and you may enjoy it more than you think!

ndsc web site

Firstly, a reminder to use the website www.ndsc.co.uk for diary of events, gala reports, results downloads and other club related issues.

Secondly there are a number of changes that have (and will be) taking place on this front so let me try to summarise them:

- a. We have changed the ndsc hosts from Demon to fasthosts. There were a number of reasons why we had to do this which would take the rest of this page to explain but basically it adds up to simpler, quicker, cheaper and better.
- b. Although this transition was not straight forward and takes a period of time to take effect, it would have been more or less invisible to the user (you). However we took the opportunity to start making a number of improvements to the web site so we went through a period where some people were seeing the old site and some were seeing the new site. A bit confusing but that should be settled now – everyone should be seeing the new site.
- c. The main changes at this stage are in the menus and how the site is arranged. We think it's more logical and provides a firm base for further enhancements later. However an important feature implemented now is that, like diary of events and news reports, Announcements (the scrolling bit on the home page), Club Downloads and Results Downloads are all controlled by users with an administration login. In other words if I get run over by a bus tomorrow you'll still get your news and gala results. Nice to know! But seriously this means that meet and gala information should never be out of date because there is a whole list of people who can upload it to the web site. At the moment this all tends to be Neville Glanville so this is probably a good time to encourage others to contribute. Want to write a gala report or news item – contact me and I'll give you a login and password!
- d. Over the next few months we (and when I say we I really mean Adrian Carley who is the site author) will be setting about updating the rest of the site in a similar way. So for example club captain's page, coach's page and contacts page can all be updated by designated users with an administration password. In other words the site should always be up to date or we've only got ourselves collectively to blame!

Club data base

We use the HYTEK Team Manager (TM4) software package for storing club membership details. TM4 is administered by Neville Glanville and holds amongst other things, an up to date list of club members. Neville passes up dates to the coaches at regular intervals and I for one take the contents as gospel. In other words if the data base says that Santa Claus is in Cruisers then as far as I'm concerned he is. The point of all this (in case you were wondering!) is please make sure the Neville has your latest contact details including email. For instance this news letter will be sent to an email list obtained from the data base so no email address no news letter!! Actually I'll put it on the web site as a club download, but far better to get your own copy emailed to you personally!

And finally **Swimming** – oh that! Yes sorry not too much of the nitty gritty in this news letter but hopefully I can get another news letter out quite soon and we can talk about the excellent performances that you're all going to put in. And whilst talking about performances lets just highlight a few events coming up:

- a. Speedo league round 1 13th October. We can do better than last year, we are better than last year but we can only do that if people show up right?
- b. Round 1 of the club championships Sunday 7th Oct. Entry forms out soon
Round 2 of the club championships Sunday 14th Oct
Round 3 of the club championships Sunday 4th November

Best of luck for the coming year

Derek Carley (Chief Coach)

Distributed (via email) to: Squad reps, members with email