Head Coach Report

I want to start this report by thanking the committee, coaches, teachers and helpers, who have worked tirelessly over the past year, in making this club one of most successful swimming clubs in the Northwest region.

It’s difficult to know where to begin, as the clubs has achieved so much over the past year. Below are some of the things we have achieved at both club and individual level.

1. North Midlands Champions
2. 5th Over club at the Cheshire Championships
3. 11th Position at the Northwest Regions
4. National Age Groups Relays, in the 400/800m Freestyle and the 400m Medley
5. 5th top 14 year old boy at the National Championships
6. Winners of the Arena B final
7. Swimmer selected onto the British Long Distance Level 2 camp
8. Swimmer qualified for the British International Meet at Leeds in March

**National Championships 2012**

Representing Winsford at Youth level, were Vicky Cunningham and Jessica Gallimore and at Age Group level, were Ashley Hogg (Individual and Relays) Sam James, Brandon Sharkey and Cameron Jones (Relays)

Both Vicky and Jessica had made excellent starts to their championship campaign with a semi final place for Vicky in the 200mFreestyle and for Jessica, who managed to equal her long course personal best time in the 100m Backstroke having entered this event on a 25m time.

Ashley, was the busiest of all the swimmers taking part in these Championships, when he competed in 7 (seven) individual events plus three relays. His individual performances was outstanding, which gave him a 5th place overall in the BAGCATS points system.

The relays saw Winsford compete in three events, the 400m & 800m Freestyle plus the 400m Medley. Having qualified at the Regional Championships, their placing was to be determined by times achieved by clubs from other Regions.

Despite their low ranking position leading into these championships, the lads were positive about their outcome and with a great performance in all relay events, their ranking had improved dramatically.

We started the 2012/13 season with a great deal optimism and wanted to build on our end of season success. Our first major challenge of the season was going to be in the Arena Premier division. The first gala didn’t go that well for us, as were in the first phase of our training cycle, which meant that the swimmers were lacking speed. With a few changes to the team, our performance in the second gala was much better and after the points had been calculated from other gala’s, we found ourselves going into the third gala (B final) as the top team.

With swimmers buzzing with excitement and the prospect of winning the B final at our first attempt, this was enough to motivate our swimmers to perform at their very best.

We knew it was going be tight as the points between the top four teams were very close. Throughout the gala, the points had changed on a number of occasions between, Blackpool, Satellite and us.

Towards the end of the gala, it was apparent that we were going to win by a reasonable amount of points and as the final race was completed, we were able celebrate, in what was a great all round performance.

I want to give mention to all those who have supported the club throughout our league gala programme, as this was a massive team effort.

**Progress**

The club has gone and will continue to go through changes, all in the name of progress; this has been made possible with the addition of Michal Secker. Michael’s enthusiasm and his determination to improve our teaching section along with his willingness to take on the Transition Squad, has taken this club into another tier of training excellence

My assistance coach Dan Goodwin, has transformed the Development Squad and the Competition B squad into a formidable performing outfit. He continues to improve on their skills, while at the same time, making them more competitive.

With Dan’s support, we have seen this club grow from strength to strength and hopefully, with our continuing support for him, it won’t be long before we could see Dan in a more prominent position within this club.

**Success**

Looking back over the past year or so, progress has seen us win the North-Midlands Championships, and then to go on to achieve its highest ranking in both the County and Regional Championships in this clubs history.

The success we had at the 2012 Nationals along with other events is, just goes to show, that with hard work and dedication, anything is possible.

We have witnessed some fantastic swims in both team events and individual swims and with one of our swimmers making it onto the British Distance Level 2 National Talent Camps, l can honestly say with confidence that we have a club and a coaching team that can make all the difference.

**Low point**

I have to admit, despite the successes we have had as a club, on a personal note, I have gone through some difficult times. Dealing with issues, that I feel were not fully understood, has left me judging my own ability to lead.

It is extremely hard to contend with matters that could end up influencing your decisions; therefore, it is so important for members to understand that any decisions I make on coaching, training and competitions are based on my professional judgments and not personal ones.

**Captains**

I want to take this opportunity to thank our captains for their time and effort in supporting our younger swimmers at galas etc and to be around to support the coaching staff as and when required, but I would just like to say a special thank you to James Shanley. James has taken his captaincy job to another level, James is a true club captain. Well done!

**Future**

All I want is to see our swimmers succeed; we have a pool of talented swimmers, a great coaching team, a forward thinking committee, enthusiastic parents and a Development and training programme that can equal anything in the Northwest Region.

They success breeds success, this is true to a certain degree, but at the end of the day, success will only comes to those who truly wants it, as they say, you can lead a horse to the troth, but you can’t make it drink the water

**Final**

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the swimmers, young and old for their loyalty. I know I can be very demanding and sometimes, may appear to be lacking compassion, but my heart will always be in the best interest of the swimmer.

I’ve been coaching for many years at both club and International level; I recognise talent when I see it, but I have to say, I still get extremely frustrated at seeing talent go to waste, especially when we have the resources and the structure to enable athletes to reach their full potential.

I’m please to see some of our parents now putting themselves forward for officiating; this will help out when we hold our next Development Meet and any future galas.

We had a visit from Fred Furness (The North of England Talent Officer) the other week. His visit was to enable him to assess the level of coaching and swimming we do at this club.

Having visited many clubs over the Northwest Region since he took over for Dave Evitts in October 2012, Fred’s assessment of this club was very positive, he was very impressed with the way in which we train and how well disciplined the swimmers were. Great job guys!

Yours in sport

Dave Pettengell

Head Coach