



JUNE/JULY UPDATE

HEAD COACH'S END OF SEASON STATEMENT

The 2013/14 season has been a breath-taking season for our club and we have many reasons to be proud.

It has been a pleasure to watch the fantastic progress that our swimmers have made at all levels of the club. We are fortunate here to have a brilliant swimschool with dedicated and passionate staff. It is easy to forget that our teachers and assistants are working voluntarily when you see them so focused on making our young swimmers the best that they can be. It was always inevitable that we would expand our swim school provision and we did exactly that in June this year and in our medium term plan we have ideas about how we can expand further once we are full again. A wholehearted thanks to all those in our small pool who make the magic happen week in week out.

Our juniors have made us all proud with their wonderful performances in galas and competitions this season. The Junior League is the premier competition for our youngsters and this year we have had a team to rival any in previous years. My mom, who has been here 34 years now, believes that this years team was Bilston's strongest ever and this does not happen by chance. It takes hard work and perseverance from swimmers, parents and coaches all working together. I am full of admiration and gratitude for the work that our coaches and teachers have done and grateful for the support of parents with the league galas this season. We were virtually at full strength for all the rounds and this is not the case at all clubs. Thanks also to Jack Cox and Megan Dean, our junior captains, who have taken the responsibility seriously and led by example.

The performance at the County Championships this season was breathtaking. So many of our swimmers performed at their best, the new kit looked great on poolside and we again improved our points score overall at the meet. Let's not forget that we also won the Staffordshire Swimming League for the second consecutive year and the club's B team performed so well that they were in the top 6 gala in round 3 of the competition. A huge thank you again to our parents and swimmers for supporting the club with this league and helping us perform so well. We must not forget the swimmers who attend just for the relays as they show tremendous loyalty to the team and are vital to the teams overall success.

This season saw 21 swimmers qualify for the regional championships. No club in the area had more age group qualifiers than ours. This achievement would have been unthinkable 3 years ago but with hard work, relentless determination and desire to continually improve anything is possible. On a personal note, my dream came true when one of our swimmers qualified for the national championships in December 2013. I knew it was only a matter of time before someone did but I didn't know who it would be and the event it came in (1500m) was a huge shock to me. Later in the year, the club was to gain its second national qualifier and I wish both the best of luck at nationals.

The problem with success is the need to continually improve on what has been done previously. 4 years ago we were a pay as you go club yet that seems unthinkable now. 4 years ago we averaged 6 senior swimmers attending a Monday and Wednesday and 4 senior swimmers on a Sunday. 4 years ago we offered 9 hours a week and the seniors trained in two lanes of 12 -14 on a Tuesday evening. Those who have been with us a while will remember those days and wonder how did we ever manage? This season, despite our continued success, I have been conscious of the need to keep a firm eye on the future. Our senior squad is young and our lanes are rather full most of the time. If we are to continue to be successful it is important that we make some changes to enable our swimmers at all levels to continue to make progress within our club environment. Whilst change is necessary, we must also remember that we are a swimming club and must always cater for swimmers of all abilities. Too much change and the club loses identity/direction. Too little change and we risk becoming stagnant. We must try and maintain a friendly feel and we must remember that whilst we want to produce super fast swimmers, we also want to produce super well-rounded young people. Some will want to be the teachers and coaches of the future and the club must continue to try and foster these ambitions also. Importantly, we must always be financially stable. Finances have been exceptionally well managed in recent years and this is why we have been able to offer a greater service than ever before whilst maintaining our fees below those of our comparable rivals. As I put plans to committee to make some changes to the club's current structure, I would like everyone to know that at the heart of everything has been trying to do what is best for the club. What needs to happen for the club to continue to do well? How can we best improve the club with the limited resources at our disposal? How can we maintain a good feel within the club whilst producing more regional and national level swimmers? These are the questions that continually reverberate around my mind. If/when committee agree to any changes to the current club structure, these will be communicated to you all. Rest assured that I remain as dedicated and committed to Bilston Swimming Club as ever and look forward to the challenges of the 2014/15 season.

Luke Trout
Bilston SC
Head Coach