AGM – West Coast Swimming Club Coaches Report

After a long extended successful season for all swimmers we are rapidly moving into the competition cycle and start of the 2013/14 season. For coaches it is the time to plan ahead for the coming season and the long term (four year) plan for the squads.

The success of our club and program is its people. We are successful because we are athlete/swimmer focused and supported by strong leadership within the club. The positive attitude of parents and swimmers and the support and genuine pride every parent and swimmer takes in the team is what we are all about. We are only as strong as the parental involvement that supports our swimmers. The club has been extremely lucky to have had long term support; strong presidents and committees who have always looked for solutions to anything that arises with a can do positive attitude. It is never negative and always focused on progressive solutions, this has been essential this season because of the increase in regulatory requirements in sport. We started with a strategic plan and have systematically checked and worked through all regulatory requirements and are now in a position where annual reviews are all that is required.

The volunteers behind our club are the mechanics that ensure the wheels keep turning, Anne-Marie keeps our bathers, equipment and grants up, Lea our computer tech, Matt (Mr Fixit), Bernie (facts, figures, spread sheets and now finances), Nardine competition entries. Sonia our Web guru; the work Sonia has done on the Web site and Facebook links has been the single biggest step the club has taken and is invaluable. It has lifted us to a whole new level. Lyn (registrar) quietly works in the background. There are many others that work quietly in the background but are essential to the clubs operations. Meagan has been our very wonderful treasurer for three years without having children involved in the club, the true meaning of a volunteer in sport.

**Coaching**

WCSC’s program is swimmer focused and coach driven, our young squads are ‘directed’ and supported by coaching staff, the older athletes move from being coach directed to being self-directed as their maturity develops. Swimmers need to understand their personal best times and keep a record, training to develop and improve speed is based around PB times – Aerobic up to pb plus 12 while speed work is pb plus 2 – 4 seconds pace. If they do not know PBs they cannot train at the level they need to improve times. Sonia has a program for smart devices that swimmers can update themselves; Bernie has done the PB spread sheets and goal times for State, Country and National qualification. Our top swimmers goals are time based and record based.

We have obtained funding to enable Swimming SA to deliver both the coaching qualification necessary to Club coaches and Officials training. This will all be held on the last weekend of the school holidays, the coaching course is a three day course that will be funded by the club. Succession planning with coaches is essential for swimmers future and the future of the club. Swimming coaching is not like other sports, there is a high degree of technical knowledge and sessions are daily. More coaches mean that the load is spread, however it is the necessary focus on our future. I have committed 1991 – 2000 and 2005 - current; 17.5 years, Jane and Kathy are much the same. We must plan for the clubs long term future. Officials also are now a requirement of every competition, which means that if we do not have officials at every competition we attend our swimmers’ will not be allowed to swim. Competitive swimmers will need parents available with officials training, it is not arduous but is important. I will resend course information for coaches and officials and forms. Once coaches are trained we will organise designated coaches to gain experience to specific squads on designated days that will allow the load to be spread across coaches/sessions. Designated coaches will allow me to focus on our country, state and national squads, and cover me for when work commitments mean that I need to be absent, however it is also about long term succession planning. The coach that believes he or she is irreplaceable and fails to plan for the future of their athletes is not only arrogant and egotistical but fails in their primary responsibility, the future of the athletes themselves. Sonia and Matt have stepped up and I have no doubt that should she wish it Sonia will be the future of the Club because of her passion and expertise, which makes me extremely happy because I know that the future of our club and swimmers is secure.

**Countries**

Country championships are the Clubs major meet, January 2014 it is at Murray Bridge and preparations are well under way. Currently swimmers who are qualified or (within 5 seconds) close to qualified at this stage are Bri, Levi, Luke, Lily, Annabel, Kendall, Sheridan, Tash, Nik, Brooke, Henry, Max, James, Coen, Kelly, Gerard, Mia, Tommy, Harrison, Henry Nel, Kalani, Yemaya, Xanthia, Alleigh, Keiran, Jade, Ellie, Hanna Z, Chris Bawden, Moet, Jassie C, Jesse R, Jaime, Izzy, Victoria, Emma H, Demi & Adele Lynch, Asha, Ania, Maddy Mc, India C, Lauren N, Brooklyn, Tyson L, Cameron A, Cooper P, Stuart M, Kasper C, Sophie. (These are the swimmers Bernie and I have checked against times, sorry if I have missed anyone). Superfish are combination of swimmers under 12 that have not made times or have made a few times. Bryce Hammond looks like being our youngest along with Jango. Planning is essential, relays are based on our fastest combinations and the focus of the next few months is making times, relay combinations and individual swimmers results. Entries are due in December. I will send out PB list and goal times after the AGM.

We need our swimmers to look at what hoodie designs they would like for the countries team and to look at team sponsors. Swimmers are still proudly wearing last year’s team shirts and as team member names are on the shirts we need to know who is committed

**Leisure Centre**

We also need to thank the Leisure Centre and staff for the support they continue to give the Club and the wonderful staff themselves. Tony and staff are always on hand to help and go out of their way to support our swimmers, Kathy and swim school staff continue to work closely with the club to enable smooth transitions from swim school to club.

**Coaches Awards and Best and Fairest**

The coaches’ awards are given to reward commitment, consistency and effort. Open Carnival awards are based on results from open carnivals, Championship awards – national, state, country, state short course, national short course (Championship meets). Pointscore awards are individual age improvement awards. Club Champions are based on results of Championship and Open Carnivals. The Eagle Boys Best and Fairest is based on carnival results, pointscore results, attitude to training, consistency, leadership, sportsmanship and daily training interaction with swimmers and coaches, the coaches were balanced between two swimmers and were unanimous in their final decision. The Patrons inaugural award is for sportsmanship and team support.

**Conclusion**

While I have needed to be away both for work commitments and personal commitments more than is usual this season (the next month I have heavy work commitments in NZ and SA metro/regional) the situation has meant that parents have been wonderful in showing a dedication to coaching and supporting our swimmers. The swimmers themselves are in general an extremely good group of young people that I am very proud of and certainly a wonderful social group. Once I have the swimmers registrations for the new season I will look at squad groups and sessions for the best outcome for all swimmers. As a sport swimming is black and white, every stroke has rules, teams are based on personal best times and the club is meticulous in supporting a transparent selection system. This is the only way a club can operate effectively as it is fair, not based on friendship or personality and is always completely transparent. Swimmers get out what they are prepared to put in, if they make a mistake they accept it and move on which shows strength and resilience. Our swimmers and families are a team we can be extremely proud of I know that I am.