



# Annual Report

April 2014 to March 2015

## Chairman's Report

Over the past year the staff and Management Board of ASA East Region have endeavoured to steer the organisation to best serve its clubs and members. Freed from the ASA's priority of increasing participation, we are able to focus on providing support to clubs, running high quality regional competitions and developing our athletes and workforce (both volunteers and paid).

Although managed by volunteers, we do have a small, but dedicated team of paid staff who work extremely hard to make sure that ASA East Region is an efficient and effective organisation. Our Divisional Office Manager, Kelly Stannard, is often the first point of contact for clubs and members and always endeavours to help those who need our support.

The Regional Club Development Officer, Leanne Brace, constantly strives for excellence for our region, identifying where problems exist and finding solutions to them. It is widely acknowledged that, pivotal to the development of all aquatic disciplines, is maintaining a highly skilled coaching workforce to ensure that our athletes have the skills to reach their potential. Over the past year Leanne has worked with officers of the ASA to develop better working practices over coach education and we are starting to see the benefits of these. As her job title implies, Leanne provides support and advice to clubs and, together with the ASA Club Development Officer, Dean Walker, makes sure that we have strong and sustainable clubs in the region. Dean, a former member of our Management Board, joined the ASA club team in February and we wish him every success in his new role.

We are fortunate to have an excellent working relationship with our ASA Divisional Business Manager, Mark Burgess who keeps us up to date with developments in the ASA and, together with our ASA Sport Governing Board representative, Ian Mackenzie, makes sure that the East Region is able to influence policy development at the national governing body.

The ASA East Region is reaching its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, having been created when the ASA moved from districts to regions. Over this period we have seen a decrease in ASA staff working on developing aquatics in the East Region as posts have been redeployed to focus on Sport England's priority of increasing adult participation in swimming.

Although we are relieved not to be involved in this seemingly impossible task, the Management Board is concerned that the lack of focus on development across all disciplines is impacting on the region's ability to move forward. The Management Board sets an annual budget in February, which is based on the plans put forward by each discipline committee. Although we plan to spend our income a pattern of under-spending has meant that our balances continue to rise. The Management Board has therefore taken the decision to employ a Regional Development Support Officer, who will work with our volunteer managers and discipline committees to

develop and implement robust development plans in partnership with ASA talent officers. Following open recruitment, Amy Bryant was recently appointed as Regional Development Support Officer and we welcome her to the East Region team.

In June, the Regional Office will be relocating to more suitable premises. Our current offices are unsuitable for meetings and courses and consequently we have taken the decision to move to more modern offices on the same site. The improved premises will accommodate the East Region staff and also provide a base for meetings and courses.

In finalising this annual report I am reminded by how much our volunteers do to support aquatics in the region, whether it is at a regional, county or club level or, in some cases, all of these. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated people who are prepared to give their time and expertise so that our athletes can continue to enjoy their chosen sport. I know that, at times people feel overwhelmed and undervalued but the sport could not function without this volunteer army and I thank them for their services to the region.

Joan Wheeler  
Chairman  
13 May 2015

## Finance Report

The figures below are our current view of what we will be submitting to the Independent Examiner. The full set of accounts will be published separately once they have been seen by the Independent Examiner.

	2014/15	2013/14
Income	252,116.17	153,474.68
Expenditure	182,413.94	174,041.80
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>69,702.23</b>	<b>(20,567.12)</b>

Fixed Assets	5,926.64	8,941.72
Current Assets	339,736.70	266,814.98
Current Liabilities	5,638.78	753.41
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>340,024.56</b>	<b>275,003.29</b>

The considerable difference in income between the two years is down to the way the ASA handled the collection of Affiliation Fees on behalf of the Region. The date the Region received the fees has changed between March and April on a regular basis. No fees were received during the financial year 2013/14.

If the payments are attributed to their due years then the comparable figures are shown below. The payment will now always be received in April.

	2014/15	2013/14
Income	252,116.17	238,474.68
Expenditure	182,413.94	174,041.80
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>69,702.23</b>	<b>64,432.88</b>

## Club Development Group

This year the Club Development Group (CDG) has grown from strength to strength. Its main focus is still to promote good practice within clubs, provide development opportunities and to support clubs through the swim21 accreditation process. It has now also grown to enhance the educational development of the workforce of clubs by developing opportunities for learning and sharing best practice. The group has a Regional Club Development Officer in post to assist clubs in the region within these areas and has, very recently, seen the appointment of a Regional Development Support Officer who will prioritise her workload to support the discipline committees in achieving their development plans.

The Region began the year with 61 clubs accredited with swim21 and ended the year with 63 clubs accredited. There are also a number of clubs working towards swim21 that have started the process over the last year.

Some of the group's achievements in the past year include;

- 58 people attending Team Manager training
- 29 people attend Time to Listen workshops
- 81 people attending a Helpers course supported by £300 provided to clubs to enable delivery of the course
- 24 Young Aquatic Organiser Award
- 43 people attending East Region delivered Safeguarding and Protect children workshops

- 15 young people complete a Young Aquatic Leaders course
- 18 attending Positive Behaviour and Keeping Safe in Sport Workshops
- 2 County conferences delivered
- 52 clubs completing the swim21 health check
- 13 new clubs accredited with swim21
- £2960 of funding paid to clubs to assist in increasing membership of 5- 19 year olds
- The library of best practice case studies on the website downloads now stands at 11,891
- 16 coaches supported through the Region's bursary scheme
- 41 coaches attending talent workshops presented by the England Talent Team
- Setting up a mentoring list for coaches and committee personnel to see which clubs have an 'open door' policy to learn and share ideas
- Funding agreed to support 2 tutors through the tutor trainee programme for coaching swimming

For the forthcoming year, the group will work more closely with the disciplines to deliver development opportunities within the region, enhance the education programme for our members and also fine tune the communication methods currently in place.

## Disability Swimming

### Competition

The Regional Disability Championships took place in May, which offered an early chance for classification and for swimmers to set times to qualify for events later in the year. Technical issues led to the results of the evening being delayed but the gala was successful in terms of attendance and swimmers setting early times. The May date also allowed the swimmers, especially those who had been classified, to attend the London Regional event, held at the London Aquatics Centre in October. A large East contingent saw Ryan Crouch, break the long standing (S9) 200m Freestyle record at that event.

ASA East Region took a strong but young team to the inaugural combined short course championships in Manchester in November. There were British Record swims from Grace Harvey (200m IM) and Ryan Crouch (100m Free). There was a mix of established swimmers and those with less experience in the relays, who combined to add a further two British Records to the tally. The relay of Suzanne Warren, Helen Dolphin, Elise Martin-De-La-Torre and Charlotte Ryan combined well to claim the record that Team East had, due to a technicality, been unable to claim the previous year. The S14 team of Katie Nesbitt, Charlotte Hartin, Jessica-Jane Applegate and Daniel Hartin claimed the 200m Medley Record.

Overall the team came a very close second to a very strong Scottish team which was an outstanding achievement for such a young team and was testament to the outstanding organisation of the management /coaching team of Liz Christian, Janet Warrington, Carol Jellings and Dawn Applegate.

### Records

As well as the records listed above, there were other records throughout the year for, Grace Harvey (long course 200m IM), Suzanne Warren (long course 400m Free and 200m Fly), Jessica-Jane Applegate (800m Freestyle), Jaxon Simmons (1500m Freestyle) and a short course 100m Fly record for Elise Martin-De-La-Torre. In all, swimmers from the East claimed 11 British Records throughout the year.

## **Talent**

The following East Region swimmers were selected for the ASA Development Programme:

Anya Falkus (Wisbech), Ellie Challis (Colchester Phoenix), Finlay Middleton (Stowmarket), Grace Harvey (Hoddesdon), Jaxon Simmons (City of Peterborough) and Elise Martin-De-La-Torre (Ipswich). In addition, Charlotte Mills (Hoddesdon) and Bethany Levett (Stowmarket) were selected for the ASA Spotlight Programme.

## **Development**

There have been two training days for swimmers to attend, with the addition of a development lane, or session, to allow those swimmers just below the talent level to come along and develop their skills and have their skills assessed. The first was held in November, at Bishops Stortford, and included a land based session as well as a pool session, with 21 swimmers attending. The second session was held in February, as part of the Hertfordshire Coach Education Week, and was attended by 20 swimmers. During the morning, teachers and coaches were educated on "A Guide to Para Swimming", using Hoddesdon Swimming Club as a case study for ideas on making swimming clubs more inclusive. During the year Brentwood Swimming Club has been added to the network of hub clubs in the region.

## **Summary**

The year has seen the development of the discipline continue with new swimmers, teachers and coaches added to those attending competitions and education opportunities. More are planned for 2015, with additional support for those clubs / networks looking to provide taster sessions and opportunities for swimmers with a disability.

We were sorry to see Janet Warrington stand down from the position of Head Coach for the East Region Disability Team. Janet has overseen many of our winning teams attending national championships. She has developed and mentored many new coaches at competitions and development days, as well as coaching British Record holders within her own programme and being selected as GB National Coach for Special Olympics. She will be a very hard act to follow as she is responsible for much of the development and success of Disability Swimming in the East. The swimmers and coaches are extremely grateful and thank Janet for everything she has done and continues to do for the discipline.

## **Diving**

This year our region saw some fantastic achievements in diving with a real array of talent and results to show for it. The achievements were not only seen on the boards, but also through the dedicated volunteers behind the scenes.

### **National Elite Age Group Championships – 28<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> May 2014 Plymouth**

Nine divers attended from the East Region, representing three clubs, showing the growing spread of elite talent in the region. The championships saw Connor Van-Dal of Southend Diving Club strike gold. Connor, and his diving partner Alfie Brown, together topped the standings in the boys' 9-13 3m synchro with a score of 210.12. Connor also gained a silver medal in the Group C 3m Springboard final (338.95 points). Duran Omer, also from Southend Diving Club, finished third in the boys' Group A 3m event with a score of 474.85. He later also won bronze in the Group A 1m Springboard with 440.60 points. Cambridge Diving Club's Ben Cutmore won a silver on the final day by scoring 304.25 in the Group C 1m Springboard event.

### **British Championships – 6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Sheffield**

Three Seniors attended from Southend Diving Club. Congratulations go to Oliver Dingley who, in placing 2<sup>nd</sup> on both the 1m and 3m springboards, gained selection for the Commonwealth Games Team 2014. Duran Omer placed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in the finals of 1m and 3m respectively. Jessica Riley missed her new dive, a reverse 2 ½ somersaults on 1m, to just miss out on a final place.

### **Commonwealth Games 2014**

At the Commonwealth Games this year, Southend diver Oliver Dingley won a bronze medal by fighting back admirably after standing in seventh place after two rounds of the men's 3m Springboard final to finish with a total of 425.20 for his six dives.

### **British Gas Diving Championships 2015**

Duran Omer of Southend Diving Club finished seventh in the final of the 3m event at the British Gas Diving Championships in Plymouth. He had qualified in fifth place in the preliminaries, while Olivia Reeve of Beaumont Diving Academy was 14th in the preliminaries of the women's 3m event.

### **ASA Recognition for Services to Diving**

Huge congratulations go to Derek Beaumont, a veteran diving coach from Hertfordshire, for winning the BBC 'Get Inspired Unsung Hero Award' for the East Region of England. In receiving the award, we heard that, for over 50 years, Derek has given his heart and soul to diving and produced nine Olympians out of the Hatfield Swim Centre along the way.

At the British Gas Senior Diving Championships in June, Derek Beaumont and Ian Macleod were jointly presented with the Amateur Swimming Association 'Malcolm Taylor Quaid' Award. The award was made in recognition of their contribution to both diving coach and diving officials' development over their many years of voluntary service at regional and national level. Congratulations to both Derek and Ian.

### **Regional Age Group Event- May 2014**

The two day regional age group event held at Southend was a great success and attracted ninety five age group entries from East Region clubs. The variety of club representation was great to see and the hard work and dedication of the volunteers which made the event possible was very much appreciated by all. Guest divers from the London Region took time to compliment the Events Team afterward and expressed their appreciation of a well-run and an excellently presented event and the welcoming and enthusiastic ambience.

### **ASA Beacon Programme**

In terms of development, we are fortunate to have two diving Beacon Programmes within the region, one at Southend and one at Luton. Both are part of a four year ASA programme using Sport England money, which allocates funding until 2017, subject to continued performance against a development plan and targets.

## **Masters Swimming**

The 2014 British Masters Long Course Championships were held at Swansea in June 2014 with 57 East Region swimmers, from 20 clubs, making the long journey into the principality. They won numerous silver and bronze medals and a total of 27 gold medals between them. Lawrence Palmer of Putteridge SC lowered the British Record for the Seniors Age Group (18/24) in the 50m breaststroke.

In August 2014 the FINA World Masters saw 14 East Region swimmers competing in Montreal with Lee Peterson from Braintree and Bocking breaking British Records for the 40/44 Age Group in the 100m and 200m breaststroke events.

The ASA East Region Open Masters and 18-24 Age Group Championships took place on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at Newmarket Leisure Centre. The star of the show was Zoe Cray of teamipswich, so when she stepped up to the mark for her favoured event, the 50m backstroke, anticipation was high. Rightly so as, when the time of 29.84 came up on the scoreboard, not only did this time set new British and European records but Zoe had also taken .12 of a second off the World record. In total, Zoe had broken three British, two European records and a World record during the course of the day. Overall 22 East Region records were broken during this popular event, which saw swimmers competing from far and wide, including a return visit of an enthusiastic group of competitors making the long journey from Spain.

A large number of swimmers, approximately 130, from the East Region competed in the ASA National Masters Short Course Championships in Sheffield at the end of October 2014. Collectively, they had an extremely successful weekend winning many medals and breaking scores of East Region records. Two British records were broken by Lee Peterson (Braintree and Bocking), with Geoff Thwaites (City of Cambridge) and Lawrence Palmer (Putteridge) both adding another British record to their collections.

The East Region heat of the annual Masters Inter County Team Competition took place at Newmarket Leisure Centre on Sunday November 16<sup>th</sup> 2014. With the return of Cambridgeshire, this year the event saw all six counties from the East Region competing for our own trophy locally and, once all the regions in the country had submitted their results, against all counties nationwide. Bedfordshire were the East Region winners for the first time with Norfolk receiving the runners up shield. In the national competition Bedfordshire finished 11<sup>th</sup>, Norfolk 12<sup>th</sup>, Cambridgeshire 14<sup>th</sup>, Hertfordshire 17<sup>th</sup> Suffolk 18<sup>th</sup> and Essex 19<sup>th</sup>.

The end of 2014 saw Stephen Mavin (March Marlins) finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in the men's and Liz Woolner (Flitwick Dolphins) 9<sup>th</sup> in the women's British Swimming Masters National Decathlon competition, which is an annual competition for masters swimmers who try their hand at competing in races across a range of strokes and distances. The Decathlon competition has two main aims: one is to encourage greater participation across the different swimming events, and the other is to encourage competition across the different masters age groups. Congratulations to South Beds Masters Swimming Club, who finished 8<sup>th</sup> overall in the women's competition.

Masters swimming in the East Region has started well for 2015 with Sally Winter (Bishops Stortford) achieving two British long course records in the 55/59 age group when competing at Crawley in early February. We look forward to a positive year and, in addition running to our usual competitions, plan to hold a Masters Development Day in September with the support of the ASA Masters Officer.

## **Open Water Swimming**

Open water swimming continues to attract new interest nationally, and here in the East Region we see this reflected in a steady growth in swimmers either trying this element of the sport for the first time, or returning to the sport after a break away. At our regional championships participant numbers have increased year on year. Reasons for this continued surge of interest within our region are difficult to identify, but may possibly be due in part to the quality of the event provided, the wonderful venue used, the enthusiasm of the events support team, and the initiatives taken to introduce this discipline to club



swimmers at a county level. That some participants go further and say that the East Region event is their favourite of the ASA's regional competitions, which is very gratifying to hear.

The championships in 2014 were our best supported to date, and for the most part we managed to hold a very successful competition, until the final wave of the 1500m, when every open water event's weather fear came true, and a thunderstorm called a halt to proceedings. To say that this was a ferocious storm is maybe an understatement. It began with an almost impenetrable wall of rain and went on to give a spectacular lightshow, which included ground strikes within close proximity at one point.

Fortunately the evacuation procedure safely retrieved all swimmers, officials, and safety team well before the full force of the storm hit; but one or two did still get rained upon. This was the first time in the experience of the majority of the officiating team that an evacuation procedure had been put into practice. The officials training and swimmers briefing preparations worked as they should have as far as the removal of people off the water was concerned, however the results process could not match the recovery, and as a consequence this gave rise to an inaccurate set of results for this event. Subsequent adjustment resulted in corrections being made, with those that were unable to gain a result reimbursed. The whole process surrounding emergency evacuation has been discussed at length, both within the region and also at a seminar for open water officials at the ASA Nationals. This has enabled adjustments to be identified and incorporated in the national procedures adopted by all ASA/BS open water officials, and these procedural refinements will be in use nation-wide as a result from now on.

For those competitors that were lucky enough to complete their swim, there were some very fine performances across the board. The calm water and lack of wind earlier in the day gave just about perfect swimming conditions, and the gathered crowd of spectators were treated to some very spirited swimming. As previously, individual winners within age group were able to go forward to compete at the National Open Water Championships without need of a pool qualifying time, which a number of our regional swimmers elected to do. At the Nationals, East Region athletes gave a good account of themselves, though a special mention should go to Nathan Hughes – Hatfield (1<sup>st</sup> Boys 14yrs 1500m), Caleb Hughes – Hatfield (1<sup>st</sup> Boys 17/18yrs 3000m), Tilly Anema – Norwich Swan (3<sup>rd</sup> Girls 12yrs 1500m), and Philippa Shuttleworth – Hatfield (3<sup>rd</sup> Girls 17/18 3000m). There were an additional 17 East Region swimmers in the Age Group and Youth Championships who all deserve congratulations for getting to compete. One interesting point of note is that of the 21 Age Group and Youth swimmers from the East Region clubs, 10 had not competed at the regional championships!

In the masters events at the Nationals, the region had its share of success. Sudbury swimmers Stuart McLellan and Terence Mansi came 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the 65/69yrs age group, Jo Mitchinson from Stevenage was 1st in her 35/39yrs age group, Melanie Chapman (East Anglian) 2<sup>nd</sup> in her 40/44yrs age group, and Sharon McLellan (Sudbury) and Valerie Cummings (St Ives) were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the 55/59yrs age group.

We have also had successes in officials' education. Dave Robinson completed his Open Water Judge Level 2, and 7 new officials commenced the route towards joining him by completing their Open Water Judge Level 1 theory training, and most of the practical element too. It's hoped that all OWJL1 candidates will return to complete their practical evaluation this year (2015). So far this year a further 5 OWJL1 students have commenced the road to gaining this qualification.

## Swimming

During the reporting period, the Swimming Committee has run its three core regional championships. The Youth Championships were held at Inspire; Luton Sports Village in May, the BAGCAT Championships at Sportspark, UEA, Norwich in June and the Winter Championships, at Luton in December. All were well organised and saw some fantastic swimming from our athletes across the region. The Swimming Committee decided to award a trophy in memory of Don Neate, and this was won by the top BAGCAT swimmer for 2014, Nathan Hughes.

The region's season was completed by the ASA East Region Inter-county Competition, hosted by Essex ASA at Basildon. In a closely fought competition in July, where Essex, Hertfordshire and Suffolk could all have taken the title, Suffolk ASA were crowned 2014 East Region Champions. All our six counties were also in action at the British Gas National County Team event held at Ponds Forge in October, where Hertfordshire finished in 12<sup>th</sup> place in Division 1 whilst Suffolk finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 2, gaining promotion to Division 1 for 2015.

The Commonwealth Games, held in Glasgow in July, saw many East Region swimmers competing for their home nations. We congratulate all those swimmers on their performances. Particular mention goes to Adam Brown of Hatfield, who missed the birth of his first born child whilst representing England. Adam has subsequently retired from competitive swimming and we wish him well for the future.

In the 2014 Annual Report we reported that, in March, British Swimming had announced a review of the competition structure. The conclusion, announced following a period consultation, had far reaching implications for national, regional, county and licensed meets. The Swimming Committee has had a challenging year reviewing its arrangements for regional competitions, in the light of the new competition pathway requirements. As a consequence the Winter Championships return to Short Course Championships and, after discussion with coaches, we are trialling a new format for the Long Course Summer Championships which more closely mirrors the national championships.

With qualification for national championships now being based on ranking position, rather than a set qualifying time, it is vital that we give East Region swimmers the best opportunity to qualify for either the British Championships or ASA National Championships.

Our clubs and counties have also been busy running competitions for a range of swimmers in the region. The review of the competition structure has made significant changes to the calendar for competition and, consequently, county championships will move forward to January and February and many clubs, who have developed a tradition of holding open meets at particular times of the year, are having to review when the meets are held and what the target audience is.

The East Region Swimming Coaches Forum continues to play an important role in coach liaison and partnership working. Working with the ASA Talent Team, we have developed a programme of coach education to up skill coaches from clubs across the region. We have been increasingly frustrated at some of the barriers that prevent aspiring coaches from accessing formal coach education. Having identified a shortage of tutors in the East Region specifically for coaching swimming courses, we have decided to offer bursaries to two coaches to become tutors.

As well as developing coaches, ASA East Region has also worked in partnership with the England Talent Team to deliver swimmer development. Many swimmers from the East Region were selected by the ASA England

Talent Team to attend national swimming camps. In January, we held a successful weekend regional training camp at Culford School, Suffolk. 40 age group swimmers from clubs across the region, selected from their results at the 2014 regional championships, took part and enjoyed two days of sessions that included pool and land based training as well as seminars. We thank those coaches and team managers who helped us deliver this development opportunity.

## Swimming Officials

The East Region continues to enjoy success in the numbers of volunteers applying for technical officials' courses and those qualifying during the year. Counties continue to support the region in the theory and practical training of officials from Timekeeper to Starter. The number of newly qualified at Judge L1 was 129 (compared to 117 in the previous year). The turnover of officials still continues to be an issue. As swimmers leave the sport, in the main, their parents, who are officials, also leave. Consequently, the importance of clubs continuing to train officials is vital as ever particularly as, since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015, the new ASA Licensing Criteria requires that for gala level 3 licences, the minimum level of official is a Judge Level 1 in training, who has passed the timekeeper poolside assessment for Inspector of Turns.

East Region officials' licensing has continued to increase during the year from 587 to 593 licensed officials (JL1+). This is a further improvement from last year, where the numbers increased from 570 to 587, and bucks the national trend where there has been a drop off of officials renewing their BS Licences. Overall, we improved in gaining 30 more officials (JL1+) in total, 859 for the year, compared to 829 for the previous year. There is still room for improvement and, although there will always be some officials who do not wish to licence, we must continue to encourage more officials to become licensed.

Nationally, we continue to be one of the top performing regions. In March 2015, across the eight ASA regions, there were 3761 (4629 – March 2014) Judge Level 1's or above. The East Region has 859 of those officials, which represents 23% overall.

Five candidates from the East Region passed the British Swimming Referees examinations held in and November 2014.

<b>Technical Officials Training 2014/15</b>				
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Applications Received</b>		<b>Qualified during the year</b>	
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Timekeeper	274	326	286	229
Judge Level 1	243	250	129	117
Judge Level 2	58	63	55	64
Judge Level 2s	29	29	17	22

The Swimming Officials Group continues to offer training and support to our volunteer technical officials during the year, together with support from our county volunteers. The courses we offered were: -

- British Swimming Referee training for new trainees
- British Swimming Contemporary Issues 2011 CPD
- British Swimming FINA Rules 2013 updates
- British Swimming Disability awareness officiating training CPD
- British Swimming Mentoring of Officials
- British Swimming Open Water Judge Courses

Officials from the region continue to support the British Swimming, ASA National and the Disability Sport England championships. It is pleasing that we continue to have a large representation on the deck. The region is fortunate to have all its swimming championships continually well supported by technical officials. This is certainly not reflected in other regions.

Three officials from East Region were selected to officiate at International Paralympic Committee (IPC) competitions, they are:-

Bob Outtram (Team Luton) – IPC Asian Games - Korea

David Metcalf (Biggleswade SC) – IPC European Championships - Eindhoven

David Harman (Modernian SC) – IPC European Championships – Eindhoven

In addition, Paul Kendall (Dereham & District SC) was selected for FINA Open Water Events and Tom Baster (Basildon & Phoenix SC) was appointed as a FINA Official from 2015. We offer our congratulations to these volunteers.

Competitive swimming relies on the continued support of our dedicated volunteer trainers and technical officials, who give their time freely to help others. We record our thanks to all our volunteers.

## **Synchronised Swimming**

Synchronised swimming in the region has had a successful year during 2014/15. Official's courses, skill level assessment days and regional championships were all run and the talent development team has continued to progress.

A competition was held in March 2015, in Stevenage, under the latest version of synchronised swimming competition licensing rules. This was the first competition held under national licensing rules and meant that changes to entry categories and content were necessary. However, more entries were received than anticipated and it provided an excellent opportunity for newly qualified judges to practice their skills after the course they had attended in the region several weeks beforehand.

A Basic Skills Assessor course was also held in the region in February which was very well attended. Seventeen out of the twenty attendees, all from the East Region, passed the exam to become a Basic Skills Assessor. Their qualification will be valid for four years as long as they assess at least once a year over that four year period. The newly qualified assessors then had the opportunity to act as assessors at a regional skill level assessment day at the end of February in Hertford. The day was hugely popular with a total of 70 swimmers registering. Some of those swimmers were from other regions, which helped to ensure there were enough participants for the day to run. Not all of the swimmers from the East Region passed their assessment as there are very high standards for skill levels, but some then attended a skill assessment day in Reading a month later, where they did pass. This was partly down to the support of several coaches who travelled with an assessor so that the swimmers could receive coaching for elements they were allowed to retake, advice which cannot be provided by assessors.

The regional talent development squad had to change format and is now based in Clacton. Swimmers have been split according to the skill level they are working on. The change resulted in the loss of a few swimmers from the group but several replacements were found. The squad for 2015/16 is expected to be running at full capacity. Even though there have been changes to the squad it has been producing great results with 75% of the swimmers in the squad obtaining a skill level this year.

Excitingly, three swimmers now have the correct skill level for their age-group to qualify for the National Age Group competition in Gloucester in December. There are still opportunities for several more swimmers to qualify too, which is fantastic news for the region.

Synchro hopes to maintain its success and progression with a similar timetable of events for 2015/16 with the addition of some development opportunities for coaches and swimmers.

## **Water Polo**

The year started badly at national level when UK Sport withdrew all funding for GB squads and the National Performance Director's post. Despite this setback, we have continued our focus on developing the region's clubs and junior players. The ASA's recent strategic review and appointment of a new National Water Polo Manager is very positive and will set our future direction.

The region's newest water polo club, Bedfordshire Lions, is now up and running at Inspire; Luton Sports Village with the help of Sportivate funding. Watford WPC has been promoted to Men's Division 3 in the British Water Polo League and Bedford have joined Cambridge in Div 4. Basildon & Phoenix SC plays in Div 5 and has continued to recruit young players from Essex and Suffolk clubs as a development opportunity. Iceni WPC has registered 40 women and girls to play in British Water Polo League and has also competed in London League Ladies' and Girls' events.

27 East Region junior players have been selected for the 2015 England Talent programme in U15 to U19 age group squads. The nationwide total is 270 so this is a significant achievement for us and brings great credit to the region's clubs, coaches and regional training centres.

The highlight of this year's Inter-regional competitions was our East Angels team winning the inaugural U14 Girls Inter-Regional Championship in November in a field of 7 entries, while our U14 Boys team came 5<sup>th</sup> of 8. Our U18 Boys competed in July and finished 5<sup>th</sup> of 10. A rearrangement of the ASA calendar saw the same age group competing again in February, when our Boys finished 8<sup>th</sup> of 11 and our Girls team, missing several key players, came 10<sup>th</sup> of 10. There were no U16 Championships this year – our teams will be competing in July 2015.

Our own Inter-County Junior Championships were won by Suffolk Girls and Hertfordshire Boys, while Essex retained the Senior Men's and Women's Championship titles.

We have run more courses for Grade C and D referees and regional table officials. Many of the candidates have now completed their practical assessments and gained their qualification, notably the region's youngest referee James Poole who achieved Grade D just three weeks after reaching the minimum age of 16. East Region officials are now a common sight at many national events.

As always, the region's water polo has been underpinned by the efforts of many volunteers and supporters and we are very grateful for their contributions.

**End**