

Alsager Swimming Club

Newsletter

September 2021



Chairperson Report

As we look forward to a new swimming season, this one feels full of more potential than ever before. Reflecting on the last 18 months we have endured challenges both as a club and individually. However, it now feels like we are on the brink of returning to a new normality for the club, a normality that we all have an opportunity to define.

The easing of lockdown, a new timetable from ESAR and a new swimming season has given us the perfect opportunity to look at the progression and development of Alsager Swimming Club. By now you will have seen communication from Phil Balcombe, head coach, and from the committee, around the new squad structure. We believe this new structure will allow us to continue to support swimmers to go from strength to strength. It also allows us to keep our team mentality at the heart of what we do, something I am personally very passionate about.

We have taken the decision to upweight our coaching staff. The future development of our coaching team is part of Phil's 5-year plan for the club and we want to continue to invest in the next generation of coaches. It would be remiss of me not to remind you that we would welcome anyone as volunteer coaches. If this is something that would interest you, please let myself or Phil know.

We will continue to put the safety and well-being of all of our swimmers at the heart of our decision making. We want every swimmer to feel safe coming to training. Please work with myself, Phil and Gemma, our welfare officer, if there is anything we can do to help swimmers transition through this change.

I am extremely proud of everyone at the club. Be it the swimmers, coaching staff, committee or every parent and carer who helps their swimmer achieve. I could not ask more from each of you. However, I am delighted that we have recently received recognition broader than the swimming club. Phil Balcombe has been shortlisted for the Everybody Coach of the Year Award for 2021, recognising coaching activity and leadership over the last year. Poppy Maskill has also been shortlisted for the Everybody Disabled Athlete Award recognising her achievements in the sport. The awards night will be held on 15th October. I am sure you will all join me in wishing them the best of luck. Whatever the results on the night they are already winners in the club's eyes.

So, this chapter isn't written yet. The start of the swimming season is a new page and a new story for us all to write together. We continue to go from strength to strength as a club and I look forward to seeing our potential in the pool this season. More than that I look forward to seeing everyone having fun in the pool, as one team. Alsager swimming club remains a team above all, above all a team.

Rebecca Oliver-Mooney, Chairperson

Welfare

Please let our Welfare Officer, Gemma, know if there is anything that might be affecting your swimmer, either in the pool or at home (e.g. injuries, family illness, bereavement). If it matters to the swimmer, it matters to us, and our knowing enables us to better coach and support them. Please contact us via the Welfare Officer email address - welfareofficerasc@gmail.com

Platinum, Platinum Transition, Gold & Silver squads:

We will not have a committee member or coach signing these squads in or out. Therefore, please ensure you are on time to collect your swimmer. We understand that on rare occasions parents/ careers may be delayed due to traffic or breakdowns so, if the swimmer leaves the building to find that there is no one to collect them please ask them to make their way back into the leisure centre and return to poolside where one of the coaches can assist them.

Bronze and Bronze Transition squads:

A committee member or coach will sign these squad out. Please ensure you are on time to collect your swimmer, and ask them to be considerate of how long they are spending in the changing room after the session.

Gemma Pilbury, Welfare Officer

Committee Update

Wendy Brunt has been a key part of Alsager Swimming Club for a number of years with her most recent role being the Chairperson before stepping down in 2018. Wendy continued to support the club and in 2019 took on the role of SwimMark co-ordinator. I am delighted that Wendy has re-joined the committee, taking on the role of Club secretary. Her wealth of knowledge is invaluable to the club.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sam Pickford for his work as Secretary. Sam is not going far and remains part of ASC as a committee member. Again, Sam has a wealth of experience having swum for the club, coached for the club and held a number of committee roles. He is also an invaluable liaison with ESAR. I am grateful for Sam agreeing to continue to support ASC as part of our committee.

You will have seen communication from the club around volunteering. ASC is made up of a completely voluntary committee and a number of volunteer coaching staff. The continued success of the club is dependent upon people continuing to volunteer. If you would like to consider supporting the swimming club, we have a number of roles including coaching, time keeping and judging qualifications. Please reach out to myself, Phil or Gemma if you would like to discuss further.

Rebecca Oliver-Mooney, Chairperson

Membership Reminder

Can all parents & carers please ensure that the club has an up-to-date address and contact number for all swimmers?

Club Kit

Anyone wishing to purchase club kit can do so via the Swimzi website (www.swimzi.co.uk). Swimzi can help with any sizing or order queries so please contact them directly.

Head Coach Report

Many questions have arisen from the squad restructure as well as many positive comments. Change is always difficult. More so when there are several at once. Changes to the timetable were impossible to avoid. Our post Covid pool bookings look very different to pre-pandemic and were outside of our control.

We are however looking forwards rather than backwards so here are just a few of the benefits that I see coming from the restructure:

- More space for the swimmers because we will train in a 4-lane setup rather than a 5-lane setup
- More qualified teachers, trainee teachers and lane assistants on deck giving more individual feedback to swimmers
- Clearer objectives for each squad and greater visibility for parents on what is required to move on
- Structure within squads and between squads so that you can see your children progress
- A level of training offered to every swimmer that suits their physical and technical development along with their ambitions and needs

These changes will not all occur overnight. For example, more teachers take time to put in place. You will however see a few new faces around poolside over the next few weeks and I am looking to strengthen and broaden the team further. It will take a while to sort each squad into the correct lanes so some swimmers may be moved from one lane to another while we get a full picture on comparative ability. That has been missing for the last 18 months because we had to keep swimmers in bubbles. We will also be looking at swimmers to make sure they are in the right squad.

Longer term I firmly believe this restructure will lead to a higher standard of swimming in the club. Not just in the form of competitive results but in technical ability and stamina. I never lose sight of the fact that we all put our children into swimming lessons to learn a life skill. Competitive swimming is a later addition. Technical ability and stamina are vital ingredients in both.

I also firmly believe that sharing knowledge is a vital tool in developing understanding. The lower squads will all have access to a zoom meeting once a month where we will discuss a topic about swimming. This is aimed at parents, but the swimmers can join in as well. The higher squads will get one zoom session per month on areas about sports science. These sessions are aimed at the swimmers, but parents are welcome to join in. Topics will be wide and varied and I welcome suggestions about things you want to cover. I plan for the first one for the lower squads to be about an introduction to competitions and galas, how to enter and the terminology around galas.

Phil Balcombe, Head Coach

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Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat, determination and a hard-to-find alloy called guts - Dan Gable