

SURREY COUNTY ASA
AGE GROUP SUBCOM – COACH'S FORUM
13TH March 2023 (ZOOM)

PRESENT

Committee: Alan Thurlow (AT); Diane Gamble (DG); Hannah Davies (HD); Justine Ryan (JR); Carole Chaplin (CC); Amanda Partridge (AP)

Coaches: Richard Garfield (GCSC); Sean Bailey (FSC); Caroline Findlay (LSCL); Pete Baldry (CASC); Jim Walker (SCSC); Ellie King (EPSC); Kier Graham (SCSC); Tamami Tsujimura (MMSC); Helen Reynolds (HSC); Tyrone Beckett (DDSC); Tom White (GODS); Jaz Strudwick (DORS)

Apologies: Paul Hurley (KRSC)

Purpose of meeting: Feedback re: Surrey AG champs 2023 and discuss plans for AG Champs 2024.

Club feedback from 2023 Championships

Positive:

- Championships held over 2 weekends and avoiding school half term was well received by clubs, swimmers and parents.
- Championships held earlier in the year was generally well received as this allows for the training cycles for regional and national qualifying windows.
- Holding all events at SSP was generally a good thing despite the general lack of space.
- Intermingling the 50m events through the programme generally well received.
- Well organised and good atmosphere

Negative:

- Concerns that some key events had small numbers of swimmers in certain age groups; possibly linked to QTs or to event programme.
- 50m finals held late in the day after long distance events means swimmers often at the pool waiting for lengthy periods without warm up.
- Generally, warm ups not long enough and not often enough throughout the programme.
- Spectator areas very overcrowded, which made it difficult for swimmers and coaches to move around.
- Pool deck overcrowding during the 50M events.
- Concerns about the programming of long-distance events and how they affect swimmers for other events.

Presentations

All agreed that whilst space and time is restrictive, medal presentations are an important aspect of the Surrey Age Group Championships and should be returned to the programme now that we are fully post covid. **GCSC** suggested that these be handled similarly to nationals and swimmers go straight to medal ceremonies after their final. **JR** advised that this had been discussed for 2023 but with space restrictions and marshalled swimmers for the next event, this would be difficult to manage. It was suggested that medal ceremonies could be run just for juniors but **HD** advised that this should be held for all or none. All agreed but with the proviso that coaches ensure that their swimmers arrive in time for ceremonies and suitably attired.

ACTION: AG sub-com to include presentation ceremony time into 2024 programme for all age groups.

2024 Championships (Ex relays)

Proposed dates TBC: 20/21 Jan & 3/4 Feb (pending conf. from SSP)

AT advised that there had been a discussion at a recent regional meeting of a combined county (2 max) championship event for 50M races which would allow use of the LAC, as the costs could be shared. **GCSC** suggested after checking on the likely number of additional swimmers vs the number who competed this year at our intermingled championships, this wouldn't be advantageous from a number of swims point of view. **JR** mentioned the advantage of LAC for spectators. Discussion followed that if we want a more inclusive Championships, the LAC is the best option with larger numbers but **AT** advised that this would effectively be a lower level meet as the QTs would have to be adjusted down accordingly.

A straw poll of all present suggested that no one is keen to return to LAC. **No further action**

DDSC advised that he was unhappy with the scheduling of the longer distance races early in the day and would prefer these to be at the end of the day. He also suggested splitting the days by gender AM & PM.

ACTION POINT: AG sub committee to look closely at scheduling

It was noted that the County Championships have changed format every year for the past 5/6 years, covid aside. It would be prudent to run them as they have run in 2023 with fine tuning to QTs, scheduling of events, medal presentations and longer days, in response to the negative points raised re 2023.

AT praised the club competition secretaries who were very efficient with their entries allowing the closing date to be so close to the first day of competition. This will be repeated for 2024. **JR** advised that if presentations and more/longer warm ups are to be included, there would be a requirement to start earlier and requested **GCSC** to allow an earlier start instead of their Saturday morning training session. **ACTION POINT: JR to follow up with GCSC**

Surrey County AG relay events

As agreed in the Coaches forum 2022, this years relay gala will be held on 10th September 2023 at K2 Crawley, short course, in preparation for the new season and Arena League.

Some coaches suggested that this will be impacted by either older swimmers going away to university or university swimmers not being back at university. As this was agreed at 2022 forum and is now timetabled, this will run as published for 2023.

LEAL suggested that it would be better to have the relays gala as an end of season summer finale rather than early in the new season. **AT** said that for 2024, the relays could be held in July 2024, if a weekend can be found. **JR** notes many schools break up early in July and exam students have often broken up long before.

ACTION POINT: Discuss dates for 2024 relays post Sept 2023 relays.

County Development meet

CASC noted their disappointment that the County development meet discussed at the coaches forum in 2022 had not materialised. **AT** advised that whilst it had been agreed to run this meet, some of the county's larger clubs were already holding open meets during the summer 2023 which left very little pool time available for this to be scheduled and also concern that any development meet would not be well supported. It was also noted that after covid, open meets are a strong source of income for clubs.

Agreed that a 1 weekend Development County meet would be well received by most clubs. **GCSC** advised that they would not support.

ACTION POINT: AG sub committee to look at Q4 2024 for possible dates for short course development meet. **JR** to contact Spectrum re: dates. **HD** to contact Westcroft re: dates.

AOB

DDSC noted that having a coach's forum at 6pm on a weekday is inconvenient due to training sessions and coaching although other coaches felt that this wasn't an issue. The committee feel it is important to try and have this meeting soon after the championships whilst it is fresh in the minds of both coaches and organisers. In 2024, we will arrange for this meeting to be held the week following the championships and will give plenty of notice to allow cover for training sessions.

AT asked if coaches were happy for contact to still be through competition secretaries. All agreed.

MEETING CLOSE