

SCOTTISH AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION
OPEN WATER SWIMMING COMMITTEE MEETING
DEWARS ICE RINK, PERTH
SUNDAY 21st OCTOBER 2001 AT 10:00 P.M.

PRESENT : Doug Milne (DM) National Convenor
 Andrea Gellan (AG) East District Convenor
 Brian Bain (BB) North District Convenor

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Douglas Brown and Alison Smith

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting of meeting of 1st April were not available

3. Matters Arising

Not Applicable

4. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received since the last meeting

1. Open Water Budget Status as of 31/8/01 from S.A.S.A. office.
2. Nomination forms for S.A.S.A. office bearers in 2002-2003. The committee requested clarification on the reason why these forms were being sent to them via the convenor when it was there understanding that nominations had to be made by Districts.
Action: BB to discuss with office.
3. Nomination forms for Awards
4. A copy of the ASFGB disciplinary code
5. FINA Newsletters for May, June and July. It was noted that committee members used to receive these newsletters but no longer did so.
Action : BB to clarify with S.A.S.A. office.
6. Notification of National Planning Seminar on 2nd September 2001.
7. Memo regarding application for international travel permits
8. Memos reminding committees to provide comments on award of Scottish Caps. It was noted that none of the committee members had received the original memo of 7th June and that without this it was difficult to respond properly to the request.
Action : BB to clarify with Paul Bush and revert to the committee.
9. Delegate nomination forms for the A.G.M.. As with item 2 it was noted that this did not seem to be the responsibility of the committee.
Action : BB to clarify with S.A.S.A. office.
10. Memo from Paul Bush thanking the committee for their efforts in organising the Loch Lubnaig event which he attended.

11. E-mail from Denise Yeats relating to Safety provision at Loch Rannoch (see item 6 below)
12. Various Guidance notes and regulations from the Health and Safety Committee including
 - Accident Report Form
 - Provision of Food at Events
 - Control of Photography at Swimming Events (see item 17)
13. Notification of procedure for applicants for the post of S.A.S.A. Director of Technical Services.
14. Notification of dates and venues for S.A.S.A. roadshows
15. Various items of correspondence relating to the purchase of safety equipment and the related grant from Sportscotland.

5. **Budget Status**

DM tabled a spreadsheet detailing the income and expenditure for the current year. It was noted that the amounts under the various headings differed from those given in the records received from the office. These were mostly allocations to the wrong budget codes although there remain some amounts allocated to open water which the committee do not consider should be allocated to them. This includes £159 (Travel Leads) from December 2000 and £95 for the hire of meeting rooms at Perth. Despite this, we currently have an available budget of £814.63 with only the costs of holding the current meeting still outstanding.

6. **Scottish Championships 2001**

Loch Lubnaig

This was considered to be a successful event. The standard of swimming was an improvement on previous years particularly in the senior events. This was partially due to the inclusion of the event in the Grand Prix series. Safety provision was good with support from Stirling and Kirkcaldy canoe clubs. It was noted however, that confirmation of the number of canoeists each of the clubs could supply did not take place until a few days before the event. This resulted in additional work to source alternative safety cover and threatened to force us to reorganise the races with the additional possibility of swimmers not being allowed to compete. The event was attended by Paul Bush, Sandy Brunton and their wives and also by Donald Brown of sponsors DNV.

Loch Rannoch

Although most aspects of the running of the Loch Rannoch event were satisfactory, there were a number of issues which caused problems.

- There was difficulty in getting sufficient numbers of suitable boats and boatmen. This resulted in one swimmer in the senior race being accompanied by a canoeist rather than a boat.
- There was insufficient numbers of canoeists to allocate one to each of the swimmers in the junior race.
- The late arrival of the S.A.S.A. rescue launch at the venue resulted in the day's proceedings running approximately 1½ hours late.

- The course for the junior event had to be changed in view of the water conditions. This meant that the actual length of the course was about 800 metres.
- One of the swimmers in senior race, Denise Yeats, suffered badly from a case of hypothermia and there were delays in returning her to the shore. She subsequently wrote to BB in his capacity as an organiser to express her concerns regarding safety provision at the event.

Mike Hemmings of the ASA and ASFGB Open Water Committees accepted an invitation to officiate at the event. This also afforded him the opportunity to assess the suitability of the venue for hosting a British Open Water Championship from 2002 onwards.

Review of Safety Arrangements

The incident involving Denise Yeats at Loch Rannoch indicates that the standard of safety provision is lower than was previously assumed. In particular there was an unacceptable delay in the rescue launch becoming aware that she had retired and in reaching Denise's safety boat. BB had, prior to the meeting, discussed the incident with Denise and Mike Hemmings. DM had also discussed the incident with other persons present at the event including Donna Milne and Dr Julie Murdoch. Dr Murdoch was present at the Loch Rannoch Leisure Centre where Denise was brought ashore but was there as a spectator rather than in an official capacity.

The salient facts of the case were as follows;

- About 2 ½ hours into the race Denise succumbed to hypothermia and this caused her to black out temporarily.
- She was taken onboard her safety boat and dressed.
- The safety boat motored towards the Loch Rannoch Leisure Centre near the end of the course.
- After a significant delay, estimated by Denise to be an hour, the rescue boat reached Denise's safety boat.
- Denise was reluctantly persuaded to transfer to the rescue boat which took her to the Leisure Centre.
- After returning to her home, Denise visited her general practitioner as she was still experiencing some effects of the hypothermia she had suffered.

The committee consider that none of the above points are in dispute. Denise also had a concern about the apparent lack of equipment on the rescue launch and the ability of the crew members (Donna Milne and Mike Hemmings) to deal with the situation. Having heard accounts from a number of people who saw Denise after she was transferred to the rescue boat, it appears that she had made a significant recovery between the incident occurring and being transferred to the rescue boat. It was not apparent to the rescue boat crew or persons at the Leisure Centre that Denise was in need of medical attention nor did she request this.

The following were noted

- Arrangements had been made with a local general practitioner to deal with any incidents of this nature and that their telephone number was available.

- Radios were available onshore and in the rescue boat to summon rescue services if necessary.
- Dr Murdoch was available to give medical assistance at the point where Denise came ashore. It is acknowledged that Dr Murdoch was present as a spectator and not in an official capacity and that Denise would not necessarily have been aware of the presence of a doctor.
- Thermal blankets were available in the rescue boat but that this might not been apparent to Denise since they were stored in the forward hatch.

It was the view of the committee that the members of the rescue boat did not act inappropriately. The main issues to be addressed are

- That the onset of hypothermia was not detected at an earlier stage in her deterioration, notwithstanding that the deterioration may have been particularly rapid.
- There was an unacceptable delay in the rescue boat reaching the safety boat.
- The standard of the boats available for hire was not as high as we would expect.

There was discussion on ways in which the safety provision could be improved. The main points are summarised as follows and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

- Main organisers to be at Loch Rannoch the night before the event to check boats and have them in position for the following day in order to ensure racing can begin on schedule.
- Try to select a date to avoid main holiday period and other open water events which might deplete the number of available boatmen.
- Improved training for boat crews and canoeists. This may include written guidance, more detailed briefing of canoeists and boatmen new to this activity. Possibly a short pre-season training course.
- Provision of adequate boats at Loch Rannoch.
- No canoes to be used in future events for the senior course.
- More radios – preferably one in each safety boat. This may require formal training in their use. Mobile phones are a possible option but they may not work in the area.
- Provision of two fast rescue craft to cover different halves of the field and thereby improve frequency of visits to swimmers and time to reach them when retiring. DM has made enquiries into the use of a boat from Royal Naval Reserves
- Restriction on the course swimmers may use so that rescue boat(s) do not have to move laterally across the loch to check on their condition. This would probably mean restriction to being less than 200 metres from north bank after the first three miles of the race.

- Provision of safety support by road to monitor progress of swimmers and alert rescue boats if there is a problem. Could also be used to collect retiring swimmers and return them to leisure centre.
- Provision of alpha flags, whistles and throw-buoys to become compulsory. Either swimmers required to supply these or S.A.S.A. purchase a supply and hire them out.
- Arrange for medical presence at the course and ensure that we have someone to deal with swimmers who are returned to shore after retiring.
- Improve the way that briefings are undertaken. In particular, have pre-prepared checklists available to ensure relevant information is covered and try to conduct briefing in a setting/venue where it is easier to maintain control of proceedings.

It was noted that the current limitations on funding made many of the above harder to achieve.

Actions :

- 1) BB to write to Denise Yeats thanking her for her input and informing her of the committee's discussion and intentions for improving safety provision.
- 2) All committee to consider options for further discussion at next meeting

7. FINA World Swimming Marathon - London

Report prepared and circulated in advance by BB (team manager). This was a very successful event for James Leitch who stayed with the leading pack for three quarters of the race and finished in fourth place less than 2 minutes behind the winner. His time was more than five minutes inside the qualifying mark for consideration for subsidy to compete in the French 25km championship in June 2002 as the basis of selection for the European championships. Katie Sowersby and Janet McLean were both disappointed with their performances but justified their selection.

It was noted that as a result of budgetary constraints, the ASFGB do not intend to host a FINA marathon swim in 2002.

8. Performance of Scottish Swimmers in events outside Scotland in 2001

The performances of Scottish swimmers competing in England and further afield were noted.

- James Leitch gained selection to represent Great Britain at LEN events in Saint Affrique (France) and Scarborough. His performances fully justified his selection and will hopefully lead to further representative honours. He also had a number of victories in Grand Prix events in England which enabled him to finish as joint leader in the series.

- Colleen Blair completed the Manhattan Island swim and gained 12th place in a field of 30. She was the fastest of the British swimmers. She also competed at Lake Windermere and Lough Erne in Northern Ireland.
- A group of swimmers from Scotland (Sarah & Morag Hughes and Andrea & Andrew Gellan) completed in the international event at Sluis (Netherlands).
- Katie Sowersby had a good season in England with a particularly notable victory in the A.S.A. junior 3km championship
- Sarah Hughes and Mhairi Murdoch were first and second respectively at the BLDSA Junior Coniston Championship. Billy Smith, Morag Hughes and Greta Gall all competed successfully at BLDSA Coniston veterans.
- In masters events Brian Bain and James Leitch won their respective categories at the A.S.A. championships while Andrea Gellan was second. Brian also won the 35-44 category in an event in Brazil.

9. 2002 Scottish Open Water Swimming Calendar

Dates for Scottish and District Championships were discussed. Provisional dates are as follows

Scottish Senior and Junior 3¾ mile and Juvenile 500 metre Championship at Loch Lubnaig – 13th July (with 20th July as an alternative). Post meeting note – 13th July may clash with A.S.A. North-East Counties championships which are also in the Grand Prix.

Senior 9½ mile and Junior 2 mile championship at Loch Rannoch – 10th August.

East District Championship – Loch Ore : 29th June

North District - 6th September (13th September as Alternative)

Forth Estuary – 13th September (6th September as Alternative)

Proposed dates for Midland District were not available. It is expected that there will be an intention to hold events at Tay Docks, Loch Earn and Loch Tummel.

BB advised the meeting that he had a contact for the organisers of a event in the Clyde Estuary at Greenock who might be interested in using this as a West District Championship. It was agreed that this should be pursued.

The possibility of the Loch Rannoch Senior event being used as a British Championship in addition to a Scottish Championship was discussed. BB reported that he had discussed the possibility prior to the meeting with Mike Hemmings, his colleague on the ASFGB committee, who had attended the 2001 event. He had agreed in principle that the option could be pursued. The committee agreed that with the increase in status of the event it would be

necessary to improve access to facilities at Loch Rannoch and to incur additional expenditure to ensure that the event ran smoothly and Safely. It is assumed that some additional finance will be available from the ASFGB budget.

It was agreed that we should again apply for Loch Lubnaig to be included in the British Open Water Grand Prix Circuit. BB also proposed that we should seek to have a further event in Scotland included in the series. He suggested that this could be a senior district championship and that this could be rotated among the districts. For 2002 he proposed the North District Championship be the selected second Scottish event. It was agreed that this could be pursued but would be subject to approval from the North District.

The current sponsorship agreement with DNV is now completed. It was agreed that we should seek to have this extended by a further period at hopefully an increased level.

Actions : BB to action the following

- Liaise with ASA/ASFGB on dates for main events in Scotland.
- Apply for Senior Loch Lubnaig championship to be in GB OW Grand Prix Series.
- Seek approval from North District to make application for N.D. Championship to be in GB OW Grand Prix and apply if successful.
- Contact DNV with a view to reaching a sponsorship agreement for 2002 & 2003.
- Make contact with organisers of Clyde Estuary event with a view to it becoming a West District Championship.

10. 2002 Budget Proposal

DM and BB reported that they had had a meeting in June to discuss the proposed open water budget for 2001-2002. A copy of the proposal is attached to these minutes. No information on the budget for next year has been received to-date.

11. Revision of Open Water Regulations and Plans

- Creation of S.A.S.A. Rules of Open Water Swimming

FINA have changed the rules of open water swimming and these will apply forthwith. The main change is that drafting (slipstreaming) between swimmers is now allowed. The proposal to allow wet suits in certain circumstances was defeated.

There is an increasing need to formally establish SASA rules of Open Water swimming prior to next season. Ideally this should be done in conjunction with ASA to ensure compatibility of rules for the whole of Britain.

Actions : BB to forward copy of FINA rules to DM. DM to use these to assist in the formulation of SASA rules. BB to establish who is dealing with this in ASA with a view to liaising to ensure consistency.

- Revision of S.A.S.A. Open Water Swimming Regulations

The SASA Open Water Regulations are now out of date and need to be re-written from scratch. Discussion was deferred to the next meeting where it will be higher on the agenda.

- Revision of Open Water Development Plan

Action : BB agreed draft a revision to the development plan for agreement at the next meeting.

12. Training Squads

Availability of Stirling Facility

It is expected that the National Swimming Academy pool at Stirling will be available from December. BB has contacted Elaine MacKenzie, who is dealing with pool allocation, to discuss progress. Pool allocation has not been progressed since initial timetable issued by Martyn Woodroffe in Spring. Standing Committees are being requested to forward their requests for the use of the pool as soon as possible.

Scottish National Open Water Training Squad

The formation of a Scottish Open Water Swimming Squad was discussed. The following was concluded.

- We should aim to have a squad of eight covering junior and senior swimmers. Nominally this would be four male and four female although this could change if, say, the fifth best swimmer in one gender was clearly more deserving than the fourth best in the other.
- There should be three training weekends in the close season. This would probably be limited to two weekends in the first year of operation.
- There should be some subsidy for members of the squad to travel to an international event close to the beginning of the season.
- Selection would be based on performance in the preceding season.
- Weekend training camps would be at the NSA and we would need 2 lanes.
- A squad was provisionally selected but would not be announced publicly or to the swimmers concerned until arrangements for training weekends were more advanced. The committee would reconsider these selections at later meetings.
- The provisional squad is as follows
Men : James Leitch, Brian Bain, Andrew Davie, Paul Metcalfe
Women : Janet McLean, Katie Sowersby, Shona Douse, Sarah Hughes

Great Britain Training Squad

BB reported that there were provisional plans to develop a Great Britain Training Squad which would be based at two locations on covering North of England and Scotland and the other covering South of England (and possibly Wales). No further information had been received and current intentions were unclear. It had been the intention for the North squad to be located at the NSA and it was

agreed that if this was to be the case it would be preferable to run “GB” training and “Scotland” training at the same time.

Open Water Training Day

The possibility of a further training day along the lines of those staged in 2000 & 2001 was discussed. It was agreed that we should plan for a training day at the NSA in March/April with Chris Martin as the coach.

Specific Training for James Leitch :

BB reported that James Leitch had qualified to be considered for a subsidy to compete in the French National 25km championships as an opportunity to gain selection for the European Open Water Swimming Championships. If this was confirmed it would be preferable for James to get the opportunity to swim long distances in the pool over the winter and spring period. This would require access to pools for long periods. It was agreed that the committee should seek to support James in getting such access. It was further suggested that James could be attached to one of the National (pool) training squads if this was acceptable to the organisers of that squad.

Actions : BB to action the following

- Liaise with Elaine Mackenzie on access to NSA for National Squad training and “Open Day”
- Contact ASA/ASFGB to discuss progress of GB development squads
- Contact Paul Bush regarding possibility of James Leitch being attached to a national squad
- Progress training arrangements as necessary in discussion with DM

13. Qualification of Open Water Swimming Officials

DM has had a meeting with the STO to discuss the needs of open water for the qualification of officials. The current understanding is that the STO will assist where they can but that the Open Water Committee would be responsible for the administration of the system. In particular, the Open Water Committee would have to provide training, set and mark exams and provide certificates to successful candidates.

Action : DM to draft plan for implementing the system, including proposals for training, setting examination papers and providing venues to sit exams.

14. Open Water Database

A number of open water participation declaration forms had been completed during the season by swimmers not currently registered in the SASA members database.

Action : BB to forward forms on to SASA office.

There is also a need to update the Open Water Database used for as a mailing list for information. This will include removal of swimmers no longer involved in the discipline.

Action : AG to update database and distribute to the committee for further alterations.

15. Communications

Newsletter

It was agreed that we should aim to issue the next Scottish Open Water Newsletter by end November. Post meeting note – this was subsequently changed to January 2002.

Swimming 2000

Coverage in Swimming 2000 had been very good with the most recent edition devoting approximately 7 pages to open water. This was rather more than for pool swimming. The aim is to have at least 2 pages worth of material in each edition.

Internet Web Site

BB has written a brief introduction to Open Water for the SASA Web Site. He has been in contact with Sarah Birrell to obtain more information on how the site would operate and how we would update information in it. There is a need to provide information to populate the site and a lot of this material may come from that being prepared for Swimming 2000 and the Newsletter.

Actions :

- BB and AG to continue to provide articles for Swimming 2000.
- AG to co-ordinate production of next newsletter with contributions from other members of the committee.
- BB to liaise with Sarah Birrell on the web site when we had collated sufficient information.

16. National and District Convenorships Nominations for 2002

DM, BB and AG confirmed that they were prepared to continue in their respective positions for 2002. It was not known whether Alison Smith (Midland) and Margaret Hodgart (West) would be standing as district convenors.

17. Any Other Business

Photography at Open Water Events

The issue of unauthorised photography at swimming events has been discussed by the Health and Safety Committee of which DM is also a member. Ideally Open Water should instigate some procedures at National and District events to control unauthorised photography. This may include adding a notice to entry

forms informing that spectators need prior permission before they can take photographs. This is to be discussed in more detail at the next meeting. It was noted that there are likely to be practical difficulties in implementing any regulation at outdoor venues.

Nancy Riach Memorial Medal

It was decided to nominate James Leitch for the Nancy Riach Memorial Medal in recognition of his achievements during the 2001 season.

Action : BB to prepare and submit nomination form.

Open Water Trophy

There was discussion on whether a trophy should be purchased for annual presentation to the outstanding open water swimmer of the season. This was agreed in principal with funding coming from the open water budget. It was agreed that in the event that a new award could be instigated, that this would awarded to James Leitch for the 2001 season. Ideally the trophy should be presented at the annual awards dinner. Such an award would require amendments to the SASA constitution and bye-laws.

Action : BB to progress with SASA

Co-opted Members

BB reported that Morag Hughes (Lochaber A.S.C.) has expressed an interest in being co-opted onto the committee. She believed she had a contribution to make in promoting and publicising open water events and, to a lesser extent, in raising funds through grants. It was agreed that at this stage in the year it would be inappropriate to formally co-opt Morag onto the committee. However, she could be invited to the one remaining meeting before the next S.A.S.A. A.G.M. as a preliminary to being co-opted for the 2002-2003 session of the committee.

Date of Next meeting

11 A.M. Sunday 27th January at the Scottish Swimming offices in Stirling.

S.A.S.A. OPEN WATER SWIMMING - DRAFT BUDGET 2002

International - Contributions to expenses

Senior	FINA World Marathon Cup - London	6 people @ £150 each	£900
	International in Continental Europe	4 people @ £400 each	£1,600
Junior	Junior International - Redon, France	4 people @ £200 each	£800

Scottish Championships

Event	Income Fees	Sponsorship	Expenditure	
Loch Lubnaig	£350	£250	£600	£0
Loch Rannoch	£250	£250	£475	-£25
Contribution to ASFGB Grand Prix Series Prizes				£200

Training

National Training Squad	Two Weekends at £300 each		£600
Open Water Training Day	Income (30 people @ £15 each)	£450	
	Expenditure	£600	£150
Contribution to S.A.S.A. participation in A.S.A. Development Weekend			
	2 swimmers & 1 official @ £150 each		£450

Safety

Training of personnel in handling S.A.S.A. Dory	2 @ £50 each	£100
Ad. Hoc. Equipment		£150
Maintenance to S.A.S.A. Dory		£150

Officials

Training Course for Officials		£200
-------------------------------	--	------

Promotion

Distribution of Newsletters (3 issues @ £75 per issue)		£225
--	--	------

Committee Expenses

4 meetings @ £150 per meeting		£600
-------------------------------	--	------

Total **£6,100**