

SCOTISH AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION
OPEN WATER SWIMMING COMMITTEE MEETING
NATIONAL SWIMMING ACADEMY STIRLING
SUNDAY 31ST OCTOBER AT 10:00 AM

PRESENT: Brian Bain (BB) National Convenor
 Andrea Gellan (AG) East District Convenor
 Alistair Forrest (AF) West District Convenor

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Doug Milne, Helen Murray, Alan Spalding, Morag Hughes and Lorraine Donnachie.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 29th May 2004 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

All Matters Arising are covered under other items on the agenda

4. Correspondence

The following items of correspondence have been received :

- a) Letter of resignation from Eian Prentice National Open Water Coach and Response
- b) Communication regarding Licensing of Open Water Events
- c) Letter of complaint from Barbara Brown and comments passed on to Elaine Mackenzie
- d) Invitation for National Convenor to attend Vision / Strategy meeting
- e) Notification of SASA AGM on 26/2/05 & Awards Dinner
- f) Notification of Admin Officer Appointments (Bryan Milton & Cindy Docherty)
- g) Invitation to meeting for introduction and briefing with Richard Gordon
- h) E-mail on 2005 British Open Water Grand Prix Series Format confirming reduction in Scottish Legs from 2 to 1.

5. Budget

2004 BB tabled a breakdown of the expenditure for the year. The final forecast shows an overall expenditure of £7825 against a budget of £8000

BB pointed out that the over expenditure on the Scottish Championships was largely due to the bulk purchase of numbered swimming caps made this year, there were enough caps to last for the next few years. AF stated that he still had the caps, which were to be used in the cancelled West

District Event and would either reimburse the Scottish budget or return them to AG.

BB stated that the national coach's expenses had been much more than expected and by agreement the coach had waived his Honoraria in order that the expenses claimed by the coach could be paid without compromising the budget in that area.

2005 BB tabled and explained the break down of the final budget proposal for 2005 and stated that this had been submitted to SASA and approved. This was a substantial increase over previous years and the committee was very pleased at the increased financial support for the Open Water discipline from SASA.

6. Scottish Championships 2004

The Lochore Meadows event could only be classed as a limited success since there were problems with the course at short notice due to "double booking" at the venue and the number of entries had been disappointing. Although the participation had been up on previous years, it had still been less than hoped for especially in the Masters and Novice categories.

Participation in the Loch Rannoch event was again down on what we had targeted. Again there were late problems this time with the availability and cost of safety boats which would have proved more difficult with a larger entry. In future years a limit on the number of participants will have to be set (unless they can supply their own safety boat) and some form of assessment / selection procedure established should the entries exceed the number of boats available.

7. Review of Performance in 2004

- a) **ASFGB National Championships**, Scottish swimmers took 7 out of 18 medals.
- b) **ASA Age Groups**, Scotland won 1 gold, 1 silver & 2 Bronze with the West District winning the team trophy.
- c) **Grand Prix Series**, 8 of 12 prize winners were Scottish swimmers
- d) **Dutch National Championships**, Scotland won 3 bronze medals. The trip to Tilburg for the Dutch National Championships and other events which was organised for the swimmers in the national training squad, it was self funded with a small subsidy. The standard of competition and numbers of competitors was generally much better than can be found in the UK. The debriefing confirmed that the trip had been a great success for both the swimmers and the management and future trips along similar lines should be considered.
- e) **French National Championships**, Scottish swimmers won 2 of the national titles. A team of three John Owen, Susan Black and Lynn Duncan (James Leitch having previously stated that he was not available) was selected to represent Scotland at this event. It was with some concern that the committee noted that Lynn Duncan subsequently declined her selection on the advice of her club coach. Jamie Forrest also indicated that he intended to self-fund his own entry to the event separate from the Scottish team.

- f) **GB Selection**, 5 swimmers (Jamie Forrest, James Leitch, John Owen, Susan Black and Jo-Ann McGarvey) were selected to represent GB in the LEN Cup 10km and 1 (Jamie Forrest) in the European Junior Championships all at St Affrique, France in August. James Leitch was again unavailable leaving 4 swimmers to take up their places. The costs for the four Scottish swimmers had to be paid from the SASA Open Water budget which had an adverse effect on this committee's ability to plan and fund other competitions with the St Affrique expenditure being an unknown until very late in the season. During the trip Jamie Forrest was withdrawn from the LEN 10km (his preferred event) by the team management because he had competed in the European Juniors over 5km the previous day.

8. Format of Scottish Championships 2005

The preferred dates to hold the Lochore event which avoid clashes were discussed and AG agreed to contact the Lochore facility with a view to establishing which dates would be available where we would not encounter the same problems as last year mentioned above. The preferred option would be the middle of August with the alternative early July similar to 2004. It was agreed that the committee should try to finalise the main event dates before Xmas.

BB agreed to prepare a draft calendar for 2005

The format for the Scottish Championships this year would be changed to include a team relay this year. This type of event had been observed as very popular by the party in the Netherlands in 2004 and could attract new swimmers who are possibly put off by the longer distances. It was generally agreed that the programme would be :-

AM	5000m Individual Event
PM	4 x 500m Team Relay 1000m Novice Race 2000m Individual Event

9. Rules and Regulations

On reviewing the first year's competition under the new regulations, it was agreed that with one referee and six judges now formally qualified and the new SASA Open Water Regulations in place this area was going in the right direction. It remains to keep the momentum going by promoting further the qualification of more technical officials.

BB intimated that a minor change to the SASA constitution was needed to bring it in line with the new regulations in that there was no timekeeper qualification in Open Water only judges and referees being formally qualified.

AF stated that he was still concerned about how event organisers could discharge their responsibilities for water quality under the SASA Regs. As there was no clear method for establishing water quality and this factor had ultimately led to the demise of the West District event in 2004.

From Jan 2005 all SASA events need to be licensed including Open Water. If an event was not licensed by SASA then it would not be covered by SASA Insurance. This led to several questions :-

- a) Can SASA swimmers take part in an unlicensed event ?
- b) How does the open water committee administer licensing and what actions are needed i.e. will a Licensing Form, Licensing sub-committee etc be needed ?
- c) How do we police licensed events to ensure they meet the required standards and conditions and comply with the SASA Regs.
- d) How does this affect affiliated organisations who stage their own events in Scotland such as the BLDSA and YAABA.

BB will look at these issues in conjunction with Ed Adam where appropriate and report back at the next meeting in January with a view to having a system in place for the 2005 season.

10. Scottish National Training Squad

BB tabled the final qualifying points position for the squad as instigated at the start of the 2004 season. There was some discussion around ambiguities in the stated procedure for points calculations that would need to be ironed out for 2005 but it was agreed that these would not have had any effect on those selected by this method.

The 8 Senior swimmers and 4 Junior swimmers selected on points are :-

Senior	Susan Black John Owen Lynn Duncan Jamie Logan	James Leitch Jamie Forrest Brian Bain Carol Thain
Junior	Jo-Ann McGarvey Callum Prentice	Martin Kerr Martin Doherty (4=) Sian Sloan-Dennison (4=)

Since Brian Bain had indicated that he would not be taking up his allotted place, this would leave 3 places at the discretion of the committee. After discussing this topic it was felt that the clear choice based on previous performance and commitment to open water would be Emma Watson, Jenny McKie and Sinead Doherty.

Should any further swimmers decline their places then it was felt that replacements should come from Eilidh Scott, Sean Massey or Stephen Massey.

The squad training days would be Nov 28th, Jan 23rd, Apr 10th and a further date in May.

Since Eian Prentice had tendered his resignation as squad coach an advert with a view to filling this post would be published next week. It was not envisaged that a new squad coach could be in place for the first training day, therefore BB said that he would run the training on that occasion.

Agreement on the availability of squad kit cannot be finalised with SASA until January.

11. Safety Provision

The long awaited issue of the regulations/guidance from the ASFGB open water safety project is now expected before January. AF agreed to review these notes in conjunction with SASA's own rules and regulations and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

12. ASA / ASFGB Open Water Swimming

Grand Prix, BB enlarged on the letter from ASFGB notifying us that the Scottish legs of the Grand Prix were to be cut from 2 out of 8 to just 1 out of 7. The ASFGB's reasons for this decision were vague and seemed to stem from a reorganisation of the series to include a final in Nottingham for 2005 and having one event per region. In the committee's opinion these reasons did not stand up when you take into account the level of participation by Scottish swimmers and the fact that Scarborough (NECASA) appears to have retained its 2 legs of the series. In view of the above, and the fact that it is not significantly more expensive for the Scottish swimmers to attend certain events in Europe when compared to events in the South of England, the committee feel that it is questionable as to whether we should continue to support the Grand Prix series. BB was asked to seek guidance from the SASA management on our position on this matter.

Endorsement & Selection for International Competition, Following his attendance at the recent ASFGB meeting BB reported on the new ASFGB proposals for endorsement of swimmers competing abroad. To summarise, in order to be selected for GB, you would need to be in the top 10 in the world championship this year and selection for the European Junior Championship would depend on your 1500m and 800m pool performance, no open water performance would be considered. The criteria for selection in the LEN cup will be "tightened up" but have not yet been published.

In the committee's opinion this would mean that no open water swimmer not currently selected for the world championship would be able to meet the new criteria and therefore removes part of the incentive to do well and does nothing to help in the development of the younger swimmers.

As far as the ASFGB endorsement policy for competing abroad this would be restricted to those swimmers coming in the top 5 in this year's British Championships. This policy would apply to anyone wishing to take part in any other country's national championships or any other event and would apply whether the swimmer was self funding or not.

The committee believe that strictly enforcing this policy would be detrimental to Scotland and our attempts to promote open water swimming and develop the young swimmers since, for example, it would not allow us to repeat our successful trip to the Netherlands in 2004 and is in effect putting barriers up in the way of swimmers trying to enjoy their sport. The legality of this policy was

also questioned and a comparison to marathon runners was made many of whom frequently go abroad to compete and further their own aims in their sport without the need to meet draconian measures imposed by the governing body. It was also pointed out that there will be a probable clash in dates this year between the British Open Water Championships and the Scottish National Championships in the pool, therefore any of our swimmers who opt to compete in the pool will in effect be excluding themselves from open water competitions overseas for 12 months.

BB was again asked to seek advice from SASA management as to the way forward on this issue and whether the ASFGB could legitimately enforce these proposals.

13. Qualification of Open Water Swimming Officials

This topic was covered under (9.) above and it remains to thank John Bruce and Brian Bain for the hard work they put in to arrange the officials' training sessions and the setting and marking of the examination papers.

14. Communications

BB stated that the next Open Water Newsletter was due to be issued in February and that he had submitted an article for the next issue of the SASA newsletter (Splashnews).

BB asked that the area convenors review and update their sections of the swimmer database.

The new SASA web site was imminently due to be launched and discussions were ongoing with J Pearson regarding the content of the open water section.

15. Nominations for Convenorships and Roles of Individuals in 2005

BB confirmed his intention to stand down as National Convenor as of Feb 2005. In the search for a successor, Tony Black had expressed an initial interest in taking up the post. BB will follow up on his possible recruitment.

Morag Hughes has also indicated her intention to stand down as North District Convenor. At this point in time a successor has not yet been appointed.

With a view to spreading the administration workload across a wider number of individuals the following people had been approached and offered to help out :-

Doug Milne	Safety and Course Advisor
Lesley Prentice	Technical Officials
Janet McLean	Editor of the Newsletter
Alistair Forrest	West District Convenor & Assistance with Rules and Regulations etc.
Andrea Gellan	East District Convenor & Assistance with Scottish Championships
Elsbeth Black	Specific Tasks
Anne McGarvey	Specific Tasks

16. SASA Award Nominations

Four swimmers had been nominated for the Dennis Sullivan Memorial Award, Jamie Forrest, Jo-Ann McGarvey, John Owen and Susan Black. After some discussion, choosing the winner proved to be a very difficult decision as all 4 candidates had a good case, however in the end it was decided that the winner for 2005 should be Susan Black in recognition of her outstanding long distance performances during this season.

17. Any Other Business

With this year's SASA Awards dinner being held in Glasgow in February, the possibility of arranging for an "Open Water Table" was put forward. This was not possible last year in Aberdeen since very few individuals were able to attend.

In order to afford the swimmers the opportunity to gain qualifying times for the British Indoor 5000m championship we would need to co-ordinate efforts better this year with the organisation of the annual 5000m swim usually held at Tollcross in February. BB agreed to find out how best to achieve this.