

**SASA North District AGM – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2014**  
**Water Polo Convenors Report**  
**Neil Kennedy**

Introduction

It has been a number of years since there has been a Water Polo Convenor in place and as such this report will provide an update on the current levels of water polo participation in the District as well as details of notable events and achievements from the last year.

Participating Clubs

Currently there are two water polo clubs within the North District - Aberdeen ASC and Inverness ASC.

The water polo section of Aberdeen ASC currently trains twice a week at the pool of the International School of Aberdeen. Current memberships levels are between 30-40 players, with a mix of men, ladies and juniors. Aberdeen ASC do not currently participate in any Scottish Swimming National League competitions, however, teams have been entered into all leagues (men, ladies, U18 & U14) for the 2015 season.

At the time of writing this report, little information is known about the water polo section of Inverness ASC. Although they are believed to be an established club, they do not currently participating in any National League competitions.

With regards to the Scottish Swimming National League competitions, these are currently held at central venues such as the Royal Commonwealth Pool and the National Swimming Academy. The distances involved in travelling to these venues is a prohibitive factor to North District teams entering such leagues. At this time it is unclear whether any pool time could be obtained to play National League games in the District – currently the Aberdeen Sports Village Aquatics Centre is the only suitable venue to hold such games.

Out with the established clubs, significant efforts have been made throughout the year by the Scottish Swimming Water Polo Development Officer (Neal Rayner) to provide water polo 'taster sessions' to clubs within the District. However, to date, there has been no clubs out with Aberdeen and Inverness which have started water polo sections.

Development

As mentioned above, the Scottish Swimming Water Polo Development Officer has been making regular visits to the District in order to try and introduce water polo at clubs, as well as visiting many schools.

The Water Polo Development Officer was responsible for initiating the establishment of a Water Polo Academy in Aberdeen following the opening of the Aberdeen Sports Village Aquatics Centre. The Water Polo Academy concept has been run by Scottish Swimming for a number of years at the Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh.

The Aberdeen Academy is run by Aberdeen Sport Village and has been operating since May 2014. It is held every Friday evening in the 25m pool and is open to all children between the ages of 12 and 18. Numbers attending have stabilised at around 20-30 each week.

A number of players from the District have also trialled successfully for Scottish Junior Team Squads and currently there are three players in the Girls Squad and four players in the Boys Squad. This provides players with the opportunity to train and play at a higher level. There are currently plans for the Scotland Junior Boys Squad to hold a weekend training camp in early January at the Aberdeen Sport Village Aquatics Centre.

### Achievements

A number of North District members have been selected to represent Scotland at tournaments during the last year:

- Suzy Lewis, Aberdeen ASC – Scotland Ladies Team (Tri-Nations Tournament, Glasgow)
- Colin Wood, Aberdeen ASC – Scotland Boys Team 98+ (Tri-Nations Tournament, Swansea / 5 Nations, Czech Republic / ASA Inter-Regions, Sheffield)
- Fergus Kennedy, Aberdeen ASC – Scotland Boys Team 99+ (ASA Inter-Regions, Walsall, BWMF II Tournament, Andorra)
- Mark Speed, Dumfermline WPC/Aberdeen ASC – Scotland Mens Team (Tri-Nations Tournament, Glasgow / 5 Nations, Limerick / Commonwealth Water Polo Championships, Aberdeen)

### Notable Events

In April 2014, the Commonwealth Water Polo Championships was held at the Aberdeen Sports Village Aquatics Centre over a period of nine days. This was the first event held at this venue and took place before it had officially opened to the public.

Although water polo is not an official Commonwealth Games sport, the CWPC is an official associated Commonwealth Games Federation Event. Teams from eight Commonwealth countries participated, with seven mens teams (Scotland, England, Wales, South Africa, New Zealand, Singapore, Malta) and five ladies teams (Scotland, England, Wales, South Africa, Canada)

The Championships was widely regarded as being a success for both Scottish Swimming and for the Aberdeen Sports Village Aquatics Centre. The event was well attended with strong attendances at the preliminary games, and sell out full houses for the finals.

The medallists in the mens competition were England (1<sup>st</sup>), Malta (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Scotland (3<sup>rd</sup>), with Scotland defeating South Africa in a close bronze medal game. The medallists in the ladies competition were England (1<sup>st</sup>), Canada (2<sup>nd</sup>) and South Africa (3<sup>rd</sup>), with Scotland being defeated by South Africa in the bronze medal game.