

## COACHES FORUM DISCUSSION AND IDEAS

### 1. Why create a coaches forum?

Coaches often work in isolation, especially with the geographical spread we have in the North District, and some coaches have suggested that we could better develop our coaching if we had the opportunity to share thoughts, experiences, ideas and practices with each other. Collaboration through a forum could make the considerable expertise and experience in the North District available to a wider range of coaches and other individuals, benefitting the whole swimming community.

In addition, a Coaches Forum could support the North District Swimming Committee. The North District Swimming Committee is formed annually and comprises individuals who have been nominated or co-opted to serve the District and to meet the objectives of the Committee. There are a few coaches on the committee and their contributions are essential. A Coaches Forum is seen as a means of engaging with and seeking input from a much broader range of coaches in an open and transparent way.

### 2. Key functions

The primary function of the Coaches Forum would be to share/gain knowledge and support each other by improving communication and by arranging seminars for coaches.

The secondary function would be to make recommendations for development opportunities for swimmers, coaches and clubs to North District Swimming Committee. Coaches would be expected to put forward ideas for development and when agreed, the Forum would support the Committee with their implementation.

It is anticipated that the Coaches Forum would also assist North District Swimming Committee with

- Calendar Planning
- Selections and recommendations for representative meets and teams
- Feedback on championships, meets and development opportunities

### 3. Composition

The Coaches Forum would be open to all coaches involved in swimming clubs in the North District and any business would be conducted electronically and through face to face meetings. Any meeting would be chaired by a coach appointed by the North District Swimming Committee and notes would be taken and distributed.

### 4. Key relationships

- North District Swimming Committee/Convenor
- Clubs

### 5. First Steps

- a) Consult as widely as possible through email and meeting so that a proposal for setting up the Coaches Forum can be prepared and put into effect for the 2015/2016 season with an initial consultation meeting at North District Distance Meet.
- b) Seek from the North District the funding necessary to put in place some of the agreed development opportunities. It is suggested that Swimming Committee (through the

Swimming Convenor), put forward a proposal to a North District Meeting to set aside a Development Fund for spending on swimmers, swimming clubs and swimming coaches. (See Addendum 1). This Development Fund would be held by the District and agreed at each North District AGM.

## 6. Specific Development Opportunities

- Sharing of Coaching Philosophies and sharing of ideas and practices
- Sharing of resources and information including training plans and co-ordination
- Seminars for Coaches - with a view to CPD all levels of coaches in clubs to be catered for with minimal cost
- Education for parents
- Mentoring opportunities
- Support for Calendar Planning – events, age groups and abilities
- Support for Training Planning – events, age groups and abilities
- Representative Competition Opportunity - North District training and meet – Geneva? Berlin? Luxembourg? Ireland?

## ADDENDUM 1

### The Rationale and a Proposal for a Development Fund

Within the North District, the majority of the SASA North District's income is generated by swimmers attending our meets and championships. Entry fees more than cover the expenses incurred in the meets and a profit is made annually which is used to support the activities of the District. Presently, the SASA North District has a high balance in the bank account which has grown significantly in the last financial year. This is not seen in a positive light by Clubs and members.

The cost of entries into District meets is set at Annual General Meetings. Whilst the cost of entry fees is solely within the control of the District, external pressures largely dictate their level even when the necessary expenditure has been accounted for - eg fees charged by clubs in order to generate income to support their programmes, fees charged by other Districts and perceived value and worth. It is acknowledged that the cost of attendance at meets in the North District can be significant to our members but whilst entry fees are a factor, they are not in themselves a barrier to swimmers competing. Any financial barrier that may exist is attributable to the high costs associated with travel and overnight accommodation made necessary by our geography and weather.

In order to maintain our bank balance at a reasonable level, it is therefore considered preferable to spend more of our income in the pursuit of our objectives rather than to reduce our income. North District Swimming Committee would like to give the money generated by swimmers back to swimmers, their clubs and their coaches in the form of development opportunities.

It is proposed that in principle, income generated by swimmers in the North District that is surplus to the requirements of the District should be used for swimmer, club and coach development. This would be called the Development Fund. It should comprise all the money that the District has not set aside in budgets to support its own essential functions, to support disciplines other than swimming or is held in a contingency fund for changed circumstances.

The Development Fund should be spent as North District Swimming Committee sees fit in consultation with the Coaches Forum and as agreed by the Executive. There should be no need to set a budget, nor to take specific proposals to District Meetings, but all monies will be accounted for to the North District and reviewed annually or by agreement.