

COACHES REPORT: MAY 2016

After another very successful year with Breifne Swim Club I want to thank the parents and swimmers for their ongoing support. Without this support Breifne Swim Club would not be able to function.

The Club was set up 20 years ago and has gone from strength to strength over the years. After seeing the potential in Cavan I decided to form a committee of parents to set up a swim club. Both the committee at that time and myself worked extremely hard to put Breifne Swim Club and Cavan on the map. Constitutions were set up, gear was carefully designed and selected, and a lot of research was done on how to run the club. The committee and myself spent tireless days and nights travelling the roads to ensure Breifne were legally bound in all aspects as an organisation. Our aim was to ensure as an organisation we would be successful and thrive to be one of the best clubs in Ulster.

From this Breifne have certainly put their stamp in Ulster and brought swimmers of all levels from leagues, to having swimmers represent us at Ulster Championships and becoming All Ireland champions on many occasions. Breifne Swim Club should be very proud of what has been set up by its committee, parents and coach.

It is vital we work together with a positive attitude to help our club continue with our success.

THE COMMITTEE:

Breifne Swim Club committee are a group of voluntary parents who work extremely hard to ensure we comply with all the relevant information set up by Swim Ireland and Swim Ulster. The committee representatives include our very active secretary, chairperson, treasurer and committee members, some of whom work with myself on a daily basis to ensure we run a successful club. Without these endless hours Breifne would be nonexistent.

Breifne Swim Club are fortunate to have Liz Darriba (Competition Secretary) who remains with us at present long after her children have left the club. Liz has stayed with us to help ensure Breifne can continue to function as a competitive swim club and will be there to pass on her expertise to the person who next takes on the role. Other members such as Evelyn O Reilly and Mary McKeever also continue to help out on a regular basis. On our current committee we also have parents who take time out to work and support our swimmers especially at Aquasprint league galas even when their own children are too old to swim in the event. Within hours results are sent which to my mind is efficiency as its best. We as a club should be extremely

grateful to these parents who travel and take time out of their busy schedule to help Breifne continue to be successful.

I want to thank the committee for all their hard work over the year. They have a responsibility to ensure all swimmers are affiliated to Swim Ulster/Swim Ireland and that all members abide by the Club Constitution and handbook.

When parents join Breifne they give all their contact details so that in return they can be contacted regarding activities which are happening in the club. These emails are for club use only so at no stage should any member think they have the right to use these emails for their own purposes. Members do not have the right to use other member's emails without their permission.

As our club continues from strength to strength lets not forget Mary McKeever. Mary is our anchor point and I would not like to think that her hard work goes unnoticed. She monitors the list of swimmers from our lessons and corresponds with me in relation to their prowess. From here both myself, Mary and the instructors work closely together to see if there are any children showing an interest in the club. If so, we have the children assessed and they will be allocated a Breifne Stroke Development Class or qualify for the Novice Group.

Evelyn O Reilly's expertise should not be overlooked. She is extremely well qualified and is a valuable asset to the club and should be highly recognised. We currently have Debbie Stevenson coming up the ranks and gaining all the relevant qualifications to assist on deck on a weekly basis. I work closely with Debbie with reference to our club sessions and with gala attendance. At present Sasha Gannon assists with the Development and the Novice Squad along with Mary McKeever. We also had assistance from Sheila Donohoe. It is extremely vital we have this help on deck so that our swimmers are given as much individual help as possible. Mary McKeever is a qualified Level 2 Teacher and Sasha is very knowledgeable in swimming and should be encouraged to take her expertise to the next level. In the Novice Group our older swimmers help coach with each of the lanes. We have Deborah Coyle (Level 1 Teacher), Kieran Grimes and Michaela McGill and these senior swimmers are extremely valuable and should be recognised for their efforts. Recently we also have Andrew Vickerman on board. A huge thanks should be given to these people who help out week after week to ensure our swimmers are given the best chance they possibly can.

SQUAD TRAINING:

After coaching the club for 20 years I know what's best for the swimmers and how each group should be organised. With this in mind I have to decide how to allocate the hours available to each squad. Within these squads I need to consider numbers and ability of the swimmers. Criteria is set up for each squad and changes are made from time to time. For example at present we

have 34 swimmers in the Novice group so I have decided to change the times for entry to the squad to make it harder for swimmers to qualify. These times will then be put in place until space becomes available again. All squads are constantly monitored for numbers per squad and aerobic timing for lane allocation. To ensure we comply with the above I keep in contact with the Carmel McGill who in my eyes is a very active secretary and a huge asset to the club with her ongoing correspondence. I also keep in contact with our parents who assist on poolside to ensure all correspondence is either posted on the notice board or brought to the committee.

Criteria is decided not on individuals, but on the club as a whole. I monitor the level of ability within the squads and then decide on the criteria. When the criteria is in place swimmers must achieve that standard before they can move on. I will not move any swimmers on unless the standard is achieved. Swimmers work hard and earn their place and in return will train hard. At present we are fortunate to still have some of our senior swimmers training with us in the Competition Squad. These swimmers and their parents have put Breifne on the map and without these swimmers Breifne would not be where it is today. The swimmers are used constantly for demonstration purposes and continue to inspire our younger swimmers coming through the ranks as they have Ulster and All Ireland titles under their belts. Lets hope we have a few more in the near future.

All sessions are planned carefully to ensure our swimmers train to the best of their ability. Constructive suggestions can be considered and measures will be put in place if possible.

TEAM SELECTION:

Breifne have had a great year once again in the Aquasprint League. I want to thank the both the swimmers and their parents for their commitment in making us a very successful team in Ulster. It is an honour to be coaching such a fantastic group of swimmers with great fight and a will to succeed to the best of their ability. To hear them chant and be proud to participate as part of team is very inspiring.

TEAM SELECTION:

I select the team with representatives of the committee. My selection is based on times only and not on individuals. 'Fastest Times' within the year is the only way to select a team. Relays are selected by calculating PB's of each individual in each age group to ensure we put our fastest relays forward. Swimmers earn their place on the team on times only. When making team selections all times from Aquasprints, Internal Gala's and Open competitions are considered. If a swimmer has achieved a time for a stroke but the stroke is technically not right then the swimmer will be replaced. For example

recently I had a swimmer who qualified for the team in Butterfly but did Butterfly arms with Front Crawl legs this would enable a child to go much faster so I spoke to the swimmer and explained the situation. Within a few sessions the swimmer corrected their technique and is now back swimming butterfly on the team. Also if a swimmer gets a P.B. but does not swim again within 3 seconds of that time over the next 3 meets, that P.B will be removed from the record. It takes 1.5 -2 hours to select a team so it is vital that all parents respect that when the team is picked that careful consideration has been put in place. This is a very successful way of selecting teams and at present there is no other way as it allows all swimmers to be given a fair chance.

When a team is selected and a parent does not let us know until a day or two, or hours before the gala commences that their child cannot attend this leaves a lot more hours of phone calls to adjust the team to ensure we select the next swimmers in line. Not only is this unfair on those who have selected the teams but also swimmers who have to be contacted at short notice. I firmly believe if this happens on regular basis then we should consider that these swimmers should not be up for selection for the rest of the season.

COMPETITIVE SWIMMERS:

Congratulations to all our swimmers who travel the roads and put Breifne on the map once again. These swimmers train hard and have achieved Ulster medals and many Personal Best Performances.

We also have swimmers achieving very high standards of Irish Age Group Division 1 & Division 2 qualifying times.

DIVING:

I am delighted we have two diving sessions under our belts. The time allocated was later than expected but there was a great response from the club and the swimmers should be going into the final with a more positive attitude. Again I want to thank the parents who helped organise the diving and those who helped our on deck. Mary McKeever, Sasha Gannon, Fergal Maguire, Adrian Ronan, Marcella Smith, Debbie Stevenson , Michaela McGill and Carmel McGill.

BREIFNE TRACKSUITS AND SWIMMING CAPS:

When we represent Breifne it is in our handbook that all children should wear our Breifne gear which includes the Breifne Swim Caps. You are representing your club so you should be proud of it. When photographs are taken our children are part of a team so correct gear must be worn. Those who do not wear gear should not be allowed into photographs or swim in open

competitions. If a swimmer forgets their gear there are normally spare tracksuits of tee-shirts in stock for children to borrow if necessary.

CONCLUSION:

Lets all work together with a positive attitude. The swimmers are my priority and I will strive to make these swimmers achieve to the best of their ability. Breifne Swim Club Committee, its swimmers and its parents need to continue to work together to secure Breifne and its future.

Ann Coyle
Breifne Swim Club Head Coach.