

Centurions Post

Regular Updates for Swimmers, Lifesavers and Parents

PRATT'S AMAZING!

Centurions Shine at Cheshire County Champs

The Centurions can boast a County Champion for a second year in succession as Madeline stormed to a four second victory in the girls 15 years age group 800m, during this year's gala series at Macclesfield.

This, however, was just one of many wonderful highs for Centurion swimmers, as PBs tumbled, finals were made, further medals were claimed by Chloe, Dan and Poppy, and Regional times were achieved. Other highlights are too numerous to detail, although for sheer emotion the girls' 50m backstroke event would take some beating. Five consecutive heats saw five swimmers all achieving regional qualifying times, a feat that reduced the Head Coach to an emotional wreck.



Every single swimmer represented the Centurions with passion and pride. They gave their all for themselves, their families and the club, leaving nothing in the pool, and each one of them came away with their head held high, having achieved a personal goal. This commitment and dedication is not only reflected in the final points total attained, **167**, which is double last year's showing but also in the sixteen new regional qualifying times posted, compared to just the one posted during last year's championships. Furthermore, a massive 66% of swims resulted in a PB. Simply incredible.

Asked for his reaction to this year's Championships, Phil told us, "It is great to see that so many of the swimmers have been inspired to build upon the success of one or two last year. This year our medals and points came from a wide range of swimmers, not just a few, and there are so many more sitting just outside the points - and there is potential all the way down the squads. The supportive coaching and teaching volunteers at Northwich, who support my vision, are doing a wonderful job to guide this enthusiastic, young team."

PLAIN SAILING

The Peaks and Plains League is used primarily to give inexperienced swimmers an introduction to competition and, with this in mind, the Centurions fielded a team of swimmers with no Cheshire qualifying times in round one of this contest. It is also a competition which has time restrictions, i.e. swimmers obtain no points if they swim faster than the allotted time for that event/age group; they do however receive a speeding ticket.

Swimming in Crewe, the Centurions finished in 6th place out of the 7 teams entered. This though has made Head Coach, Phil, a very happy man. In total, Northwich received 8 speeding tickets where swimmers had won their races, which equated to around 70 'lost' points. "I put out what was most definitely a development team", said Phil, "adding our own handicap by not allowing Cheshire swimmers to enter and we still have 20% speeding tickets. A truly phenomenal result."

DATES

24 Feb - Sputnik
Gala

24 March - Peaks
and Plains League

24 March - Sputnik
Gala

24, 25 March -
Wirral Spring Meet

8 Apr - Swim Camp

21 Apr - Sputnik
Gala



LIFESAVER'S LOG

Daniel Moore is one of our older Lifesavers. He is currently training for his distinction award and is also a Lifesaving Assistant Instructor. The distinction requires not only work in the pool but also rescues from open water. Here Daniel describes his assessments at Boundary Park Lake:



"It may come as a surprise to those who know me, but I actually enjoy saving lives. However, when you only know how to save lives at a swimming pool, you can only really save lives at a swimming pool (although, I guess you could try saving lives in a lake but you might not know what to do). So, if you want to learn how to save *more* lives, the Open Water Assessments might be the thing for you.

Back in 2016, I successfully completed the Bronze Open Water Assessment and, last year, accomplished both the Silver and Gold awards.

There were a good few pages of theory we had to learn in preparation. I won't bore you with the details, as for some reason I feel a list of topics relating to tidal flow, seabed consistency and water safety wouldn't float your boat. Yes, that was an intentional pun. Luckily for me, I like theory. Many people didn't. One person hadn't actually learnt any of it!

Following the rather informal academic assessment, we swam in a cold lake for 10 minutes. Since our bodies measure changes in stimuli as opposed to sensing the exact temperature itself, after a while we really didn't notice it. Following this test of stamina and masochism, we completed a series of tows and throws. It is very similar to the corresponding Bronze, Silver and Gold core elements. So, if you feel confident with those and have a penchant for freezing yourself for personal enjoyment, I'd highly recommend taking the Open Water Assessments."



HEAD COACH HUB

How do we measure progress?

There is often a disparity between where a parent feels a swimmer should be and where a coach feels a swimmer should be. In future newsletters I will be going into more detail on how we measure progress for each squad but here is a summary to get us started.

Stages 6 & 7 - These groups are learning skills set out in the Learn to Swim programme and need to consistently show that they can meet the standard to move on. A "one-off" pass is not enough. This group are encouraged to enter novice competitions.

Bronze - This group develop stamina while maintaining the stroke standards and learning basic turn skills. They are encouraged to enter novice galas.

Silver - This group are actively competing in a few galas a year and are working to enter the North Midlands Championships. They learn basic training skills and racing turns.

Transition - These swimmers are working to maintain good technique and racing skills while training for longer. Transition are working towards the County Championships and should enter external galas.

Gold - In Gold squad swimmers are developing training & competition skills while working towards the County Championships.

Platinum - These swimmers are working at regional standard. They are likely to make finals at the County Championships. Commitment to competition and training is essential at this level.

CLUB CAPTAIN'S CORNER

It might seem strange to hear, but there is more than just the one way of going about training. What I mean to say is that you can swim up and down the pool, only putting in about half of your effort, or you can train with everything you've got. You can push yourself whilst concentrating on technique; have fun whilst staying focused. When you come to train, you do it because you enjoy the sport, because you want to improve, and the only way of achieving this is to train properly. But don't just think that this only applies to when you're in the pool. The hard work starts when you get on poolside ten minutes before practise, to warm up, and only ends once you have stretched after the session. Speaking as someone with experience, I know that if you don't do either of these things, the chances are that you will pick up an injury and that isn't fun at all.

A lot of swimmers will say that they don't have much confidence when they are standing behind the blocks ready to swim.

However, one of the main things that will help boost your confidence levels is knowing that you have done everything in your power to prepare yourself for the race, and that includes putting the effort in at training. So remember, the proper attitude in training helps you physically and mentally.

Josh

How to Prepare for Your Race

You've done all the hard work in training, and the gala isn't far away. Here are some tips to make sure you're ready for your gala and your race.

- 1. Be Organised.** Make sure your meals for the day are prepared ahead of time, that you have all your snacks ready, your water bottle, dry clothes, towels, club shirt, costume, goggles and hat all packed the night before so you aren't running around on the day of your race.
- 2. Warm Up.** That doesn't just mean in the pool before your race. It means preparing your body. In the days leading up to the gala, get a few good nights sleep. Continue to eat healthily and drink plenty of water, and remember to stretch properly before you even enter the water.
- 3. Find Your Place.** Galas are busy and hectic so make sure you arrive early. You don't want to be rushing about at the last minute. Make sure you know what events you are entered into and then find your own spot at poolside, with your team, and relax.
- 4. Race Hard.** When it's time, concentrate on your race and what you want to achieve. You've trained for this so forget everything else and focus on the job in hand. You know what you want, so go and get it.
- 5. Debrief.** Well done. You did it. Whatever the result, be proud of yourself and happy with your achievement. Go and see your coach and chat about the result and your swim. You will get valuable feedback. Now go back and sit with your friends, you're all part of the same team, so be there for one another and enjoy the rest of your day.

Fundraising and Sponsorships Officer

We are looking for a Fundraising and Sponsorships Officer to be responsible for revenue generation at NCSC. Do you have expertise in this area and can spare the time that will make a big difference to the club?

For details, please contact Steve at chair@northwichcenturions.co.uk

It's Official

During the first weekend of the Cheshire County Championships, **Jeff** and **Simon** were successful in completing their Official's Assessment to each qualify as a Judge Level 2 (J2). Well done to both of you on a great achievement.

Bags of Help!

Following our successful application to be shortlisted as one of the projects in Tesco's community grant scheme, back in November, we are pleased to say that, with voting over, the Centurions have secured an award of £1,025. The money will be used to host the annual local primary schools gala.

Thank you to everyone who voted.

Time Please, Ladies and Gents

In January, the club hosted a course offering volunteers the chance to qualify as official British Swimming Timekeepers. Several parents attended, as well as two of our current Gold squad.

As we had hoped and expected, everyone passed and so congratulations are extended to **Duncan, Neil, Alison, Dot, Mia and Jenna.**

We look forward to seeing you at future events and thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the Centurions.



MEET THE COACH

In this month's hard-hitting expose, we turn our attention to an actor, a singer, a heckler of A-list celebrities and of course a swimming coach, **Andrew 'Andy' Day**.

Tired of apologising to baffled librarians, we arranged to meet at the local coffee shop after one of Andy's triathlon training sessions, on what turned out to be a cold winter's morning. I was already seated when the door opened and an icy blast of wind preceded Andy into the establishment. His arrival caused quite the stir and provided an opportunity to present my first question, as he made himself comfortable in the seat opposite.



So, what's with the rubber trunks on such a cold day? "Ah, when I was at University I was captain of the water polo team. I loved being in the water, playing a competitive contact sport. We wore rubber trunks during the games and it is something that's just stuck with me. They are so comfortable and I rarely wear anything else. I played alongside national players, you know, and also met my future wife through the sport, as she also played."

How and when did you get into coaching? "As a child, I swam for Derby Phoenix swimming club but packed it all in when my sisters started swimming faster than me. After that, I wasn't really involved in swimming proper until university, when I became a swimming teacher to earn some money. I loved seeing the kids learning such an important life skill. It was this that made me consider a career in teaching. After that, I didn't really do anything with swimming until my daughters joined Northwich Centurions. I approached the new Head Coach, Phil, and he invited me to help on poolside."

So how long have you been at the club? "Just under 4 years, although when I'm coaching alongside Simon, it feels like I've been there a lifetime."

At this point, the waitress came to take our order and the interview suffered a hiatus of several minutes as she explained to Andy that no matter how much he waved his books under her nose, as this was a coffee shop, he would need to renew them at the library.

Where are you from? "I was born in Burton-Upon-Trent, so I'm a Midlands lad who moved North to go to university. I also spent a year living in Japan!"

A claim to fame, please. "I had a stand-up argument with Benedict Comberbach, in a theatre. He claimed my students were making too much noise unwrapping their sweets." A dark look crossed Andy's face as he began to fume, "It was actually students from another school making the noise, not my students. I ban sweets in the theatre; ban them, you hear? IT WASN'T US! OK?!" When asked to comment on the situation, Benylin Cumberbund's agent stated, "Mr Cumberland denies the argument had anything to do with sweet wrappers, instead he cites it was the sound of squeaking rubber that distracted him from his performance."

Quick fire time:

Most embarrassing moment? "Singing Stand and Deliver, as Adam Ant, at a Stars in their Eyes event."

Hidden talent? "I've performed in a number of plays, the last one involving me portraying a rugby player!"

Fave food? "Thai green curry." *Fave film?* "Blues Brothers." *Fave book?* "The Gruffalo." *Celebrity crush?* "Alistair Brownlee and Penelope Cruz."

What do you get out of being involved with the Centurions? "Seeing the progress of those I used to teach in Silver Squad who are now county champions and soon to be regional swimmers is fantastic. The hard work and commitment that so many of our swimmers, coaches and parents put in is inspirational - I love the family feel of the Centurions."

There was so much more to talk about, however at this point our waitress returned to ask if we could keep it down a little as we were annoying the other patrons. "It wasn't us!", Andy bellowed, "It was another table making a noise; them over there, unwrapping toffees!" He stalked from the shop, the sound of the waitress' last sentence ringing in his ears, "No Sir, it was a kind of squeaking rubber sound."

You can find the Centurions on Facebook and Twitter by clicking the buttons below or by searching Twitter for @NorthwichASC and Facebook for Northwich Centurions Swimming Club.



Contributions Welcomed

If you have an article you would like to submit for publication in the newsletter or any ideas as to what you would like to see in future issues, please let us know by contacting us at:
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