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2023 AGM Chair's report

The 2022/23 season has been a good one for Hackney Aquatics Club (HAC) both in and out of the pool.

Below are some of our in pool highlights from the 2022/23 season, David's report will go into in more detail.

In the pool

- It was great to see our swimmers taking part in a multitude of competitions and meets least season including representation at Counties, Regionals and Nationals as well as all the M11 and Arena League. Our teams performed admirably in their respective leagues.
- The London Roar Academy network goes from strength to strength with swimmers from HAC, Chelsea & Westminster, Greenwich and Anaconda meeting regularly at the LAC to swim together. This season the network had more swimmers at summer nationals than any club in the region.
- One significant development that the LRA network undoubtedly enabled has been our closer working relationship with Anaconda Swimming Club. Asides from helping us to keep David in a new role as

Director of Swimming across the two clubs this has had a multitude of other benefits. Perhaps the greatest has been the social aspect for those older swimmers who have joined a combined squad. Where HAC might have had one or two 15, 16 or 17 year olds we now see larger groups making friends across the two clubs - something that has helped both clubs retain teens when there are many other demands on their time.

- On the subject of which, our swimming numbers have stabilised after enduring a difficult time through the pandemic and I am confident that we will go from strength to strength next season with a strong focus on growth and new collaborations with both GLL and Hackney Council
- I would like to thank our superb coaching team who have, as they do every season, gone above and beyond in creating a safe and inclusive environment in which our members can grow and develop as swimmers either competitively or socially. This included a return to “talent camps” in the summer half-term that proved extremely popular and we will be repeating.
- I would like to minute my thanks to David and Tony, our full time coaches, and to Madison and Dhaval for all their efforts. It should also be noted that after nearly two decades at the club Tony has decided to leave us to work with C&W. This is an exciting opportunity for Tony and he will be missed by us all.
- This core team were ably supported by Ronni, Samir, Chan, Ash, Jago, Mika and Ronni. This team has recently been joined by Jane, Marco and Bryan who have all been volunteering for some time. It is brilliant to see this team growing not just in number but also skills with several trainees gaining qualifications this year.

Club administration

The last 12 months have again been hugely challenging trying to manage further increases to our pool costs across all pools that we use and a cost of living crisis affecting many in our community particularly hard. We have been working hard and being smart to reduce our costs and our partnership with ASC is a good example of this. We have seen some increases in squad fees and while that is difficult these increases have been below inflation.

- Our committee has taken on a huge work load across a broad range of committee members. As with any volunteer led organisation we are always on the look out for more people who are willing to take an active role.
- I would like to record a special vote of thanks to all our committee members who served during the 2022/23 season.
- HAC continue to receive support from Hackney Council, in particular Ian Holland and Ladi Ajayi for which we are grateful.
- I would also like to thank GLL and in particular Clissold Centre Manager, Martin Young, without whom we would not be able to operate. Martin has the unenviable job of balancing our pool needs with those of the rest of the general public and his continued support of HAC cannot be underestimated.

In the community

- HAC believe that swimming should be available to everyone regardless of their socio-economic background.
- We have many swimmers who receive significant concessions to their monthly subscriptions and many more that we help with meet entry fees as they start to compete.
- Our concession fund is funded through running Club Championships, 2 x Development Galas, fund raising days, sponsorship deals and generous individual donations.
- Running our own Galas is vitally important to the financial health of the club and would not be possible without an army of volunteers who we are extremely grateful to. I would like to record a special thank you to Jerome Lessard who coordinates our officials and to Nicola Taylor who makes meets possible. Also to Hester who looks after kit, fundraising and in this area has done some excellent work to relaunch our Jack Petchy funding.
- I would like to record a special thanks to all our qualified time keepers, judges, starters and future referees. You represent our club with pride at external meets and we could not run our own meets without you.
- HAC has also resurrected our very successful Young Volunteer Program that trains our teenage swimmers to become coaches. The program not only gives our young adults the opportunity to give something back but also enables them to earn money at the club and beyond. Thanks to Nia for getting this up and running again.
- I would like to record a vote of thanks to all our volunteers young and old who give generously of their time and in doing so make a huge difference to all our swimmers.

Plans for the coming season

- Everyone should have seen the improved squad structures that David recently launched. This builds on changes introduced last October in particular the success of a combined squad which will be extended to two additional squads. There should be the opportunity to discuss these plans after the formal items but it has been excellent to see more than 50 members join meetings to hear about plans and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.
- As you may know, there are to be some new faces on the committee this season. We will have a new Treasurer team and have recently discovered that we will need a new Welfare Officer from January 2024. I would like to minute my thanks to those who have seen fit to step up and take on these very important roles.
- We really do need more members to step forward and help. This may not need to be a committee role but one of many other possibilities. We need help at meets, marshals, announcers, medal managers, team managers, meet managers, catering support, social coordinators, squad reps and much more besides. Without volunteers we simply cannot operate.

Conclusion

HAC is a community sports club that relies on a dedicated team of volunteers. There are countless ways in which you, the parents, can make a difference. Here are some of the ways you can help to make a difference.

- Join the committee, we still have vacant roles.
- Help run our galas, Nicola is stepping up to the committee so we need a new Gala Maker.
- Become a Time Keeper, a Judge, a Starter or a Referee. Speak to Jerome Lessard about how this works. If your children are competing a meets, keeping busy will stop you going mad.
- Join the Tech Team that run the starting and timing equipment at our Galas. Speak to Dhaval or Chris Ogden.
- If you enjoy fundraising or have sponsorship ideas then please speak to Hester.
- Bake a cake or donate a prize to the raffle.
- I would like to propose a huge vote of thanks to every single volunteer at the club. Whether you're baking a cake or volunteering 20 hours of your time a week, we could not do what we do without you.
- We do what we do for the benefit of our swimmers.

Hackney Aquatics Club is grateful to our sponsors, supporters and swimming associations:

