

WITHNELL A.S.C. 2010 ANNUAL GALA

Welcome to you all for the Withnell A.S.C's 2010 Gala here at Horwich. I would like to thank everyone involved in bringing this event together, including the staff here at Horwich Leisure Centre who are always very accommodating.

This year has been difficult in terms of attendance and funding, last years change to standing order payments for membership do not go well and the club lost significant funds as a result, we have had only one sponsor donate again this year mainly due to the economic climate, ASA membership costs have risen year on year and pool hire costs were not being covered. This resulted in the first rise in membership and door fees in five years and the committee thank you all for your understanding in this matter.

Thanks to Simon Townsend our club website withnellpiranhas.org, remains productive, we would like more people to participate online and contribute to the message board, all club information is available on this site, including our sponsors and special events.

Poolside instructors; four of our poolside trainers have recently attended a level 1 instructors course at the Aquatics centre Wavertree Liverpool, Caroline Macphee, Helen Rusu, Grace Frost & Amy Brett gave up two weekends of their time to attend this stringent course and the committee thanks them all for their commitment. We have also trained two lifeguards in the period Grace Frost & Luke Townsend.

This year also has seen a change of our Child Welfare Officer, Helen Rusu has now taken over this role and any issues related to child safety and welfare can be addressed to her directly or any committee member, child welfare is at the front of our commitment as a club and is discussed at every meeting, we thank Sharon Alston for her commitment in this role but due to a change in her personal life she has had to stand down.

The Instructors have again given a massive commitment during the past year and all deserve out thanks and praise namely our coach Dirk Wilson, Liz Frost, Andrew Taylor, Sharon Alston, Caroline Macphee, Liz Hopley, Helen Rusu, Andrew Westhead, Earl Kier, Grace Frost & Amy Brett, without their dedication we would not have a club.

I would also like to thank all the individuals involved in ensuring the club functions correctly; this includes officers of the club Rob Flood, Ton Van der Linde & Mark & Fiona Armitage, Jacky & Peter Monks, Margaret Rae, Kath & Simon Townsend and all our regular committee members and all those that carry out door duties. The club relies upon the goodwill of all the parents, please help us if you can, as we always need extra help, this club belongs to the children and their parents. My thanks also go to the spouses of our dedicated Instructors & committee members without their support and help it would not be possible to give all the time necessary to ensure the club functions correctly.

All of these people dedicate many hours outside the pool in planning, organising, discussing and improving their understanding of swimming and operating the club and events such as this evening which take a considerable amount of time to prepare and bring to fruition so please be patient if you believe all is not perfect, you can always join the team and help us to improve. The social events of the club are considered a major part in ensuring the children belong, please continue to support these events, we also have dedicated members who ensure these events are successful, Bob & Liz Flood, Kath & Simon Townsend and Margaret Rae dedicate many hours to ensuring our children enjoy these events and deserve special mention.

May I wish all the competitors and parents well in tonight's gala, we hope you will all enjoy being involved, even whilst spectating.

Again it has been difficult to maintain age group categories throughout the programme, this is mainly because of numbers and in certain instances ability levels, therefore in some instances mixed age categories have been necessary to get children into an event they specified, this has been done in the past years and is not an exception to this gala, the committee have to draw a line at some point to ensure we can host events that include all the children. Please remember all this work is done voluntarily with the best of intentions to all the children and to the best of our ability as individuals and committee members. This club is not a competitive club and the gala event is meant to show the children that participating is the greater part in any sport; that is why as a committee we ensure that every child receives a medal for having the courage just to take part.

Photography or video is not permitted at this event, this is in line with Horwich Pool rules and as a result of complaints at prior events. Please note the club's child welfare officer Helen Rusu will be in attendance at this event and can be consulted if requested.

Please remember to cheer and applaud all who take part in the events, it really does spur the children (and adults) on to enjoy their participation. Due to the high number of entries for certain age groups events have had to be split into two groups rather than ask the children to swim twice in heats and a final the results will be given on the 3 fastest times for the overall event.

All our children will receive a medal and certificate for being involved this evening, gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd places. Cups will be awarded for senior boy, senior girl, junior boy, junior girl, most determined and most improved. These cups will be awarded on a points system developed by the committee, inclusive of club attendance and additional activities within the club. The decision on events is made by the coach and committee members and their official adjudication is final.

The presentation evening will be held on Saturday 15th May 2010 @ Hoghton Village Hall, the event will open at approx. 6.45pm and the medal ceremony will commence at 7:15pm prompt, there will be a Disco, Hot Pot followed by fruit pie, tickets will be on sale soon. Please note that you will have to supply your own drinks / alcohol, children's drinks will be supplied free of charge. This year the Mayor of Chorley Mrs Iris Smith and her Consort Mr Jim Smith will be in attendance and will present the Trophies.

Just a note on our charitable status, the club can claim gift aid on your membership fees, if you are a UK tax payer can you please complete a gift aid form for the club to claim another 25 pence in every pound you have paid towards membership. Thank you in anticipation of your support in this issue.

May I wish you all a wonderful evening watching the children compete.

Frank Rae

Chairman Withnell Amateur Swimming Club