

Stretford ASC AGM – Report from the Head Coach

2020 was of course significantly affected by the covid-19 worldwide pandemic. In the part of the year before lockdown began we were continuing with planned increases to the training program – higher mileage was bearing fruit and we were seeing some fantastic training performances, which were then leading to excellent racing from our swimmers. At Lancs county champs we had 19 swimmers eligible to compete. We finished with 3 medals and 16 top-8 finishes including 8 finals. Following these fantastic results, and at the qualification deadline we had 9 Regional qualifiers, plus around 6 others who would have been swimming in relays. There was a host of medals at Counties from our COMAST members, winning numerous events and continuing their progress from last year.

Upon the announcement of national lockdown, we announced our temporary closure to the swimmers – a sad and emotional day. It would turn out, that all of our usual events would be cancelled due to the pandemic, including Rossall swim camp, Club Champs, all league galas, and the Pointscore season. Once lockdown was in full flow, we began sending out land training for the swimmers to complete in via our club Instagram account, and there was good participation with these workouts, with swimmers completing them in the safety of their own home. We also began twice-weekly zoom land training sessions and then a whole-club distance challenge through the month of June. We competed against Flixton and Altrincham, and despite being in last place after week 1, we were the overall winners by the end of June. Our Girls captain in particular, Anna O'Brien was leading by example, posting over 1000km travelled during the challenge.

We were thankful for the opportunity to return to the pool on 25th July (the earliest possible date across the country) due to the hard work from our committee and coaching team working closely with Trafford Leisure leadership. We carefully returned with a drastically changed operating procedure, maintaining strict social distancing between all members at all times. All our members adapted to this exceptionally well and there was no known transmission of the virus between our members. Alas, national lockdown returned in November. During this month we tried to maintain routine for all, by moving the majority of the swim timetable onto zoom in the form of land workouts. Again, our swimmers were a credit to themselves in completing these and returned to the pool in December with some unexpected but welcome gains from these sessions. As lockdown began again moving into 2021, we decided to continue this program of training after much positive feedback.

Looking forward to 2021 and beyond, I hope that the club can return to pre-covid levels of training. I believe we are in the best position we could expect to be in after such a difficult year for everyone, with seemingly high swimmer retention and a hard working team of volunteers ready for anything else life throws at us!

Tom Pope
Head Coach