



F.I.R.S.T. newsletter no.2

Welcome to the first F.I.R.S.T. newsletter of the year.

We would like to welcome our new FIRST swimmers to their respective clubs.

Yasmin Khera has joined Bo'ness and Alex Waterson has joined Falkirk. We now have an almost equal number of swimmers from each club. 21 swimmers in total.

It is now almost four years since FIRST was formed and if you haven't been around for all of this time you may like to know how FIRST has progressed in this time. Probably the best indicator of our success is the increasing number of swimmers qualifying for the British Age Groups and Youth Championships.

In **2006** only 2 swimmers qualified, one at Age Group and one at Youth level. However we did have a finalist in the Age Group competition.

In **2007** we had no Age Group qualifiers but 3 at Youth Level qualifying for 7 swims in total.

2008 brought us our first gold medal in the Age Group with the only qualifying swim. Hard training was beginning to kick in and 3 swimmers achieved 11 swims in total at the Youth Championships. We had a first reserve for 1 final and 1 semi finalist.

Most of you will know the rest but for the benefit of our newer swimmers **2009** proved to be the best year ever.

4 swimmers qualified for the Age Groups with 10 swims in total. From these swims we produced 6 finalists. These swimmers brought home 1 gold, 2 silver and one bronze medal.

3 swimmers followed this success at the Youth Event and qualified for 14 events bringing home 2 bronze medals. They qualified for 5 semi finals and 7 finals.

This equates to almost 50% of qualifying swims reaching finals of the top completion in Britain.

From 2 swimmers and no medals in **2006** to 7 swimmers and 6 medals in 4 years is no mean feat.

We had 24 swimmers in 2006 and only a handful of these were qualifying for Scottish Nationals. In 2010 we have only a few who are not qualifying with around the same number of swimmers in the squad.

FIRST Open Gala

Coaches have now been informed of the date **25th April** of above. This gala, as in the past is on a "first come" basis and it is important that all swimmers let the coach know if they are able to compete as late entries will really be "too late". Please let Steve know a.s.a.p. if you are competing. This gala is the main fundraiser for FIRST and its success depends on the support of the member clubs. We will be looking for volunteers to help at this gala. (Watch this space!!!!). We

will be looking for sponsors for races, either individuals or companies. Cost of sponsorship still to be agreed.

Leeds Christmas Cracker

Charlotte McKenzie proved she can compete with Britain's best when she won the women's 50 Backstroke Skins event beating Beijing Olympian Jess Sylvester in the process. She also broke the Scottish Age Group Record in the 100Back on her way to gold in the 13 year old girls.

Success at Scottish Schools

29th January saw another Scottish Schools Championships held at Tollcross Leisure Centre Again FIRST swimmers showed how they have progressed since 2006 when (pre start of FIRST) only one of the swimmers was in the medal tally. The following year 2007 there were 3 medals. In 2008 there were 2 medals (May be more but unable to access results for this competition.) 2009 saw 5 medals from FIRST swimmers.

Results from 2010 surpassed all previous years in the medal tables. 3 Gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze medals from FIRST swimmers and 1 bronze medal from a FIRST Junior swimmer. 10 medals in all. (Hope no one has been missed)

The success of the FIRST Junior swimmer shows the programme is working and we are now seeing the benefits in our clubs before swimmers move to FIRST. These results are by no means all of the successes as other swimmers achieved top ten places again from FIRST Junior. All of the successes and progression in the past 4 years are the result of hard work from coaches, swimmers and club committees and hopefully next year we will go on to better still.

Records

The last 12 months has seen FIRST swimmers break many West District and a few National Age Group records.

At the Scottish Short Course Championships Charlotte McKenzie broke the 50,100 and 200 backstroke short course record for 13 years, finishing a healthy 4th in both the 50m and 100m backstroke Open events.

Other highlight of this event was Ross Muir winning Silver and Bronze in the 400im and 200im. The first time one of our swimmers has achieved a medal at a Scottish Open Event.

Although Ross now trains with the Stirling Performance Squad he has chosen to remain a member of Falkirk and will continue to compete for FIRST at national events.

I could go on forever with successes in the last year but hopefully this will give new swimmers an insight to what can be achieved when you train with FIRST.

Funding

Thanks to our Treasurer and his hard work trying to source income for FIRST, BP has agreed to back FIRST with a £3000 donation. As they don't directly sponsor sport activities in the UK, they are looking into whether they can offer financial help for our development plans as they are the official energy supplier for London Olympics.

This newsletter is a fairly new venture for the FIRST Committee and we would value any input from swimmers and parents alike. Let us know what you want from the newsletter and we will try to oblige.

Next Gala : Edinburgh International 13th/14th February at Tollcross Leisure Centre

Comments to Margaret.mcguckin@talktalk.net.