

Tiverton Swimming Club

Head Coaches Report to the AGM 2020

I would like to begin by saying this is the strangest swimming year anyone has ever known and by thanking the committee and volunteers for their support this year. We have seen some exciting changes in the coaching team – we have welcomed many new young members to the coaching team which is very positive to the future of coaching at TSC.

I would like to particularly thank Sara Dilks who once again has managed to steer TSC through another year of exceptional challenges and who sat through every Zoom meeting throughout lockdown! On a personal note Sara continues to be a great support to me. Sara works tirelessly with determination most certainly above and beyond the role of chairman to help make changes and progress TSC. I don't think we, as a club, realise how lucky we are to have Sara as our club chairman.

Over the last 18 months the club has continued to grow, we have more swimmers swimming in the pool from the learn to swim right through to the top performance end. We also have a growing masters section to the club. The focus in 2019 and 2020 was to continue developing the talent of the next generation of swimmers at Tiverton Swimming Club. This will take time, but it is a long cycle, and we all need to support each other on this journey.

The Head Coach is only as strong as the team behind them and I wish to extend my gratitude to the volunteer coaching team that continue to support and the excellent standard of teaching and coaching to all levels of the club.

Tony Dilks did yet another amazing job organising our annual meet – The Tiverton sparkler in 2019 which we had to move to September was as popular as ever. This year went without a hitch due to the hard work that goes on behind the scenes by the committee and helpers in the run up and on the day.

The masters squad continues to grow and we now have a group of committed competitive swimmers. It is really good to hear of their continued success. The cross over in training between the junior and masters swimmers is good as it helps to bring on all swimmers and create closer links between the older and younger swimmers.

During the last 12 months we have seen great success in the pool, and I would like to take a few moments to reflect upon these before outlining our key areas for focus in the coming 12 months.

We started the year off with a trip to Glasgow and the 2019 British Championships. Jodie Dilks qualified for the 200 Br. This was quite an experience – warming up/swimming down with the likes of Adam Peaty, James Guy, Freya Anderson, Hannah Miley, James Wilby to name a few was very exciting.



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2019 SW Regionals again saw a record number of swimmers qualifying. Great swims from age group and youth swimmers. We had more finalists across the age groups than TSC have ever had and Jodie and Gemma Dilks won lots of medals and PB's securing their qualification at British Summer Championships and English Championships in Glasgow and Sheffield in 2019. Sam also secured his place and the English Championships.

The Devon Developments were very well attended and there were some great swims from swimmers across the age ranges. It was really good to see new swimmers starting their racing journey.

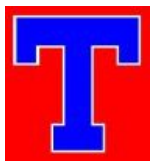
My head coach highlight came in July & August 2019. This saw the 3 swimmers (Jodie Dilks, Gemma Dilks & Katie Walton) qualify for British Championships, 1 swimmer (Emma Declerck) qualify for the Belgian Nationals and 3 swimmers qualify for English Championships (Jodie Dilks, Gemma Dilks & Sam Arrowsmith). Emma started it all off in Belgium by winning a bronze medal in the 100Bk. The end of July we headed to Glasgow for a very busy exciting week of racing at Toll Cross which saw lots of finals and my highlight seeing two TSC swimmers in the same 200Br final. The following week saw us in Sheffield at Ponds Forge for the English Championships. All the swimmers rose to the occasion qualifying for finals. Jodie has a very exciting 400IM coming storming through from 9th to finish 2nd and get a silver national medal. Gemma had some nail-biting finals finishing an agonising 4th twice, and a 5th place in the three finals she raced in Sheffield.

In the Autumn of 2019, we competed as a club in the National Arena League Division 1. This was very exciting and also challenging for us as this was a step up in competition from last year especially given the shortfall of swimmers in the certain age groups. I am so proud of every single swimmer as everyone played their part in us staying up in Division 1. It was quite close at times, but we fought hard as a team which gave us some very exciting racing. A special thanks to the parents and supporters who helped make it a very noisy affair!

In January 2020, the club competed in the Devon County Championships. This year produced yet another record number of qualifiers and individual entries. There were some excellent performances across the board in what was a rather challenging Devon Championships. We had so many finalists, championship finalists, county medallists, junior & senior county champions and regional qualifiers.

Interclub saw the introduction to team events to some of our younger swimmers. A bit of a scary place behind the blocks swimming for your club team but all the swimmers rose to the challenge. There were as always, some outstanding individual performances. Little did we know this would be the final bit of racing for some time...

Then we get to Covid-19 which stopped everything. Training stopped on 17th March 2020. We had no idea for how long, all those competitions we had been training so hard for gone. I continued coaching but in a completely different way – generating information for parents and swimmers, running Zoom sessions to keep swimmers engaged and active, setting tasks to keep swimmers



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motivated and feel part of a squad. I managed to complete some CPD which was a positive of the time away from the pool. This was very challenging as there was no guide with how to manage this situation or how long it would go on for.

Finally, in August we got the green light to return to the pool in an open-air setting. We fortunately managed to get some sessions at Wiveliscombe Community pool. 40 swimmers over 4 weeks had a minimum of 1 session, most getting 3 sessions.

News came through that EVLC was finally opening – after meetings, hours of planning and coordination TSC returned on 25th August. We have been very fortunate to have most of our hours back and training, although it looks very different, is going well.

Over the next 12 months the target of the coaching team is to adapt to the strange new way of coaching, ensure that swimmers are safe and enjoying their swimming. We don't know what competing is going to look like over the next year, but we will do everything we can to bring competition to the swimmers.

The club always needs more help, and I am sure there are people who want to help. Please offer that help even if it is only for 1 hour. It will help us and help you to understand what direction we are going in. The more people we have helping the more individual attention can be given to those that need it.

Tiverton Swimming Club is a competitive swimming club. Without the success that competition provides the name of the club is not broadcast throughout the local community and the wider county and region.

As a swimming club we have access to limited pool time, but we do have the potential to still achieve great success, swimmers need to make the most of every opportunity that they are given.

I passionately believe in what we are aiming to achieve. It is a long journey, and the results are achieved after hard work and dedication, there are no quick short cuts. The future of this club is bright we have some very talented swimmers.

Lucy Walton, Head Coach Tiverton Swimming Club 12th November 2020