

STAR DIVING CLUB NEWSLETTER

Issue No.18 Summer Term 2008



Head coach's overhaul starts bearing fruit

IN SPITE OF a week-and-a-half long closure of the diving pool in January and a spate of weekend swimming galas in February resulting in a number of Sunday classes being cancelled, Jo Hewat's revamp of the entire training schedule at Guildford began to take shape at the start of the year with the timetable, lesson timings and content of all sessions undergoing a major shake-up.

Jo, who turns 25 this year, had been appointed overwhelmingly by the club committee last September to the role of community sports coach [CSC] – a part-time position initially being funded over a twelve-month trial period, on a 50/50 split between Star and local sports body Active Surrey. She had also been appointed as the new chief coach following her father's surprise announcement, at the club annual general meeting in February, that he was migrating to Australia soon after Easter.

The former University of Gloucestershire student, who graduated with a degree in sports tourism management, now has a wide-ranging remit in both roles, and the authority to implement Best Practice changes as and where she thinks best for the furtherance of the club. Ultimately, though, she is still answerable to the club committee for her actions, and reports back to Active Surrey once every three months. Some of her immediate responsibilities include boosting participation right across the board and coordinating a fresh, forward-thinking programme for all coaches and divers to follow.

Jo spent the first few months as CSC officer looking at how the existing structure had been functioning, and how to bring about new strategies to best take the club forward. Further afield she also researched how some of the other, larger, professionally-run diving

centres across the country – such as Southampton, Plymouth and Cambridge – operate, arming herself with heaps of expert knowledge in the process.

“Particularly, Southampton were very kind to me,” she said. “I spoke with Lindsey [Fraser, Southampton Diving Academy's director of coaching] quite a lot and, obviously, Steve [Gladding, UK Sport elite coach] and Annie [Clewlow, diving administration, Southampton City Council].”

The committee's approval of Jo to the CSC role last year, and as head coach this year, signals the dawning of a new era for Star, especially as all three chief coaches before her had been more than double her age. She is now officially the youngest person in the club's history to be appointed chief coach.

As far as her programme of reform is concerned, a new Monday afternoon dry-side session at the Woking leisure centre had been introduced in January. This one-hour session, geared principally for performance and regional squad divers, includes trampolining and rig-work and an array of other gym-based activities. Two newly created sessions at Spectrum on Wednesdays have also been added.

Alongside this, Thursday, Friday and Sunday afternoon grade classes all continue as normal, albeit with slightly curtailed times. These sessions are themed on the ASA's national awards scheme, with divers being assessed at regular intervals prior to moving on to the next level.

Meanwhile the two hour-long sessions at the Leatherhead leisure centre on Monday evenings, headed by Charlie Dries, continue to be as popular as ever – and full. However, there has been talk of reducing these lessons each by fifteen minutes and introducing a third class.

Summer term

THE summer term for all sessions at Guildford and Leatherhead begins the week commencing Monday 21st April – and runs through to Friday 23rd May. All sessions then break for half-term and recommence the week beginning Monday 2nd June.

Swim 21

THE club has been busy continuing to prepare its portfolio to submit for Swim 21 accreditation – the ASA's 'quality club' endorsement. Jo Hewat, who took over from Jayne Parker and Anita Frena on the project last year, has been making further inroads. It is anticipated that the remaining gaps in the modules will be completed in time for submission at the end of June.

Sunday diving

PARENTS and divers of Sunday classes please note that there will not be any lessons on Sunday 25th May because of a swimming gala taking place at Spectrum over the entire weekend.

Adult-only tasters

TWO free taster sessions for parents interested in trying the sport will be taking place at Spectrum on Friday 18th and Friday 25th July, from 8.45pm. If you or an adult friend would like to take part, then please contact Jo Hewat for further details. jo.diving@hotmail.co.uk

Prompt payments

ALL parents and divers are reminded that prompt payment of fees is an absolute must. If you have not received, misplaced or lost your subs renewal paperwork, then please email Jo Hewat immediately to have renewal forms resent.

Summer picnic & pool party

THE CLUB will be holding its first summer picnic and pool party for all members and their families on Sunday 20th July.

The event, which will begin at 2pm in Stoke Park [opposite Spectrum], will be an ideal opportunity for divers and parents from all sessions to meet, get to know one another and build on team spirit and teamwork.

The afternoon's activities will include a number of traditional games, such as egg-and-spoon races,

sack races and a game of rounders.

Everybody who would like to come along should bring their own picnic, which will take place between 3.30pm – 4.45pm.

Afterwards the event will move across to the road to the Spectrum, where a pool party will be staged – and should finish by 7pm.

An invitation with further details and a remittance slip will be circulated nearer the time – but put the date in your diary now.

Introduce a friend to the club

THE club would like to expand its intake of new divers and the number of sessions it currently runs, and will be offering current members the opportunity to bring a friend along for a free taster.

If you have a buddy or a friend at school who would like to give diving a try, then please pass their details on to Jo Hewat for an invitational

letter to be sent to them.

The bring-a-friend-along week will take place at Spectrum during the week commencing Monday 11th May.

Please note, however, that friends' parents or guardians must first complete, sign and return their remittance slips before coming along. jo.diving@hotmail.co.uk

More coaches required

STAR is looking to increase the number of weekly sessions it is currently running and is looking for more poolside helpers and coaches.

Are you already a swimming teacher who, perhaps, would also like to teach diving?

At present there is a shortfall of coaches in the club, limiting the

the number of lessons that can be run in any one given week.

If you have some previous teaching or coaching experience in any of the aquatic disciplines and would like to be trained up, then please contact Jo Hewat, the club's chief coach, for further details.

jo.diving@hotmail.co.uk

Committee members wanted

THE CLUB is desperately looking for new members and parents to join its committee.

For those of you who are not already aware, Star is a voluntary-run organisation that relies almost entirely on people stepping forward and contributing.

If you have a little spare time on your hands or have some skills that you feel the club might benefit from, then please be certain to make yourself known to us.

The committee meets once a term to discuss, manage and direct the club. If you would like to air any of your views or opinions, then this is the ideal platform for you to do so.

If you are interested in joining the committee and would like some more information, please contact the club's general secretary, Louise McArthur. macs13@ntl.world.com

The club committee comprises...

President: Brian Mitchell
Chair: Nicky Edgar
Chief coach: Jo Hewat
General secretary: Louise McArthur
Welfare officer: Nicola McMahon
Treasurer: George Mills
Fundraising: Karen Raine
Press officer: Clare Carr
Club coach: Charlie Dries
Club coach: Francisco Diaz

Pool closures

SPECTRUM has planned a series of pool closures from the start of term to the end of August. The work, to be conducted in three stages, will be routine maintenance and refurbishment. The leisure and teaching pool will be closed from April 21st until July 7th, the competition pool shut from July 8th to August 6th and the diving pool closed from July 29th to August 25th. None of the summer term classes will be affected by the work.

Changes to subs

NEW arrangements to the way in which subscriptions are handled will be coming into effect. Renewals will now cover an entire term, and forms for the following term will be posted one month before the end of term. In future, it will be necessary for all fees to be received by the end of term to guarantee a place for the following term. It would also be appreciated if you could inform your coach if you do not intend to renew.

Club merchandise

NEW club apparel will soon be available for everyone to order. All items in the range, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, towels and tracksuits, are modestly priced and feature the club logo on them. Ideally, the club would like all children to have a T-shirt. A new purchase order-form will be circulated soon and also be available to download online. If you would like any further details, then either speak to your session coach or email Nicola McMahon. valentine20@ntlworld.com

Club annual membership fee

THE club annual membership fee will be increasing from £10 to £15 with immediate effect, the committee has agreed. The one-off yearly payment, which is payable on the diver's anniversary of joining the club, is used to cover the ASA's [national governing body] affiliation and membership fees and club insurance.

Summer competition fixtures

Date:	Competition / Event:	Venue:	Entry fee:	Entry deadline:
10th May	St Albans Dive In	St Albans	£5 – individual £4 – synchro	4th April
8th June	South East Region Level 2 Skills	Southampton	£7	9th May
14th June (tbc)	SCWPSA 1m Age Groups and 1m Championships	Morden	£4.50	16th May
21st June	Albatross Inter-Club Junior Novice Competition	Reading	£5	23rd May
5 – 6th July	ASA National Skills Finals	Plymouth	£9.50 (tbc)	6th June

Please speak to your session coaches if you would like to take part in any of the above competitions. All entry fees must be paid in advance. Further information is also available in the 'competition information' section on the club website www.stardiving.org

Which sports will you be watching?

WITH the world soon to be firmly fixing its eyes on the Olympics in Beijing this summer, the newsletter conducted a straw poll among some of the divers, coaches and committee members to find out which sports they intend watching in August. Here are a few of the findings ...

- Brian Mitchell, president: Diving and athletics
- Louise McArthur, general secretary: Any of the athletics
- George Mills, treasurer: Athletics and diving
- Nicola McMahan, welfare officer: Diving
- Jo Hewat, head coach: Diving and gymnastics
- Charlie Dries, coach: Athletics, boxing, diving, gymnastics, trampolining. I'll watch it all
- Neil Mitchell, coach: Anything where I thought we would have a chance

- Fran Diaz, coach: Athletics, diving, gymnastics
- Kirsteen Mitchell, assistant coach: Diving and gymnastics
- Jayne Parker, assistant coach: Diving, swimming, trampolining. I'll watch it all
- Daniel Edgar, assistant coach: Diving and gymnastics
- Madeline Parker, diver: Diving and gymnastics
- Kirsty McMahan, diver: Athletics, diving, gymnastics and swimming
- Gemma McArthur, diver: Athletics and diving
- Charlotte Nash, diver: Athletics, diving and gymnastics
- Joe Edgar, diver: Diving and gymnastics
- Jessica Mills, poolside helper: Diving, gymnastics and swimming

Competition fees

ENTRY fees must now strictly be paid in advance of every competition. If your coach has entered you for an event and you do not take part, the full fee must still be paid.

No shoes, please

A VERY important reminder that outside footwear is not permissible anywhere on poolside or on the pooldeck. If you would like to watch any of the sessions from the upper pooldeck, you must either take your shoes off or use the blue shoe covers. The dispensing machine is situated on the wall of the First Aid room. If for any reason the dispenser is empty, then please ask at pool control.

Summer training camps

THE CLUB will be staging a series of training camps during the school summer holidays. Places will be open to divers from all classes – and available on a first come, first served basis. The sessions, which will be run in August by a selection of coaches and take place from 10am to 4pm, will include a variety of different activities, such as trampolining, circuit-training, videos of diving and goal setting. More details will be circulated in June, once the dates and prices are finalised. In the meantime, if you would like your name put on the list or require any further details, then please email Jo Hewat. jo.diving@hotmail.co.uk



Competition

AS FAR as car registration number plates go, this one rates very highly – and seems rather apt.

Fran spotted it on his travels in Europe not that long ago.

If you think you know who the driver of this vehicle might be, then let him know – and your name will go into the hat to stand a chance of winning an official 2008 FINA World Series polo T-shirt.

Community sports coach last year, and the new chief coach this year

Jo Hewat, aged 24, recently succeeded her father as head coach to become the youngest person in the history of the club to hold the post



Jo Hewat: community sports coach officer and recently-appointed chief coach

FOLLOWING in your parents' footsteps can be a tall order for anyone. But when Andy Hewat resigned as chief coach after a six-year stint in February, who better to succeed him than his very own daughter?

Currently in her mid-20s, Jo Hewat has many of the essential attributes needed to tick all the right boxes for this most challenging of roles: she is young, effervescent, well educated and, above all, has a great enthusiasm for the sport.

Last September she was appointed unanimously by the club committee to take on the job of community sports coach – a newly created role being funded on a 50/50 split between Star and local sports body, Active Surrey. Under the terms of the agreement between the parties, funding for this part-time position had been made available for a period of up to three years.

For Star this was a landmark decision that had been reached, and a huge, positive step forward. After all, everybody involved in the running of the club up to this point – both on poolside and behind-the-scenes – had been a volunteer. However, the committee did indeed recognise that in order for the club to be able to expand and develop its programme, it would need to employ a central figure to take it forward.

Frankly, the job could not have come at a better time for Jo. "My other job came to an end," she said. "I've always loved diving, and been involved with the diving club. It seemed the next step, really."

She spent much of the autumn travelling the length and breadth of the country to see how other clubs' programmes function, accumulating Best Practice knowledge along the way from some of the most revered

sources in the sport. Furthermore, she took time to closely examine the club's existing infrastructure, looking at ways in which it could be improved.

"I think the club had sort of got a bit stuck," she observed initially, "and so it was up to me to try to move it past that point. But I also noticed that there were loads and loads of members before – we had numerous amounts. And then when I came to watch and observe what was going on for a while, there was next to nobody. I was pretty surprised, really."

'I think it's important that anyone can do anything that they want to do. The main thing is that everyone enjoys it'

One of Jo's first priorities was to bolster numbers at some of the mid-week classes, several of which had suffered a noticeable downturn. "Obviously, that was one of the first things I needed to do. To get more people in." To her credit, this started happening rather speedily at the beginning of the year, with a steady influx of new children brought in to Thursday and Friday classes.

As well as boosting the intake of new members, the other hugely important precedence was the club's programme of work. "I had to re-shuffle everything," she explained, "and adopt a strict regime of how it all works so that we can get the numbers through, and the children through, but also to be able to develop and to provide the children with more of a pathway – or two pathways: one's competitive, or you're out; and the other, to a certain extent, is recreational.

"I think it's most important that anyone can do anything that they want to do. The main thing is that everyone enjoys it, but also that those who are coaching can help the divers develop their skills as far as they possibly can."