

SUFFOLK COUNTY ASA

Disability Officer's Report

6th Suffolk Disability Meet

This was held at Lowestoft on Saturday 16th February. Many swimmers of all ages and abilities attended. Although numbers were slightly down on the previous year, we again split the meet into two sessions, so as not to have competitors on poolside for too long. Once again, I am grateful to Lowestoft Lions who provided sponsorship in the form of medals for all participants and two large trophies for the swimmers that achieved the most on the night. I am also extremely grateful to the County ASA, who footed the bill for feeding the officials and volunteer helpers - thank you!

Entering results directly into Excel on the night worked rather better this time round, allowing overprinting of pre-prepared certificates directly with names, events and times achieved. The swimmers and parents were thrilled to have something with their name and times on to take home.

Once again, there was a very positive response from the majority of swimmers and parents attending, and the officials seem to have enjoyed themselves too.

County Development Championships

Sadly this year, we had one solitary competitor who achieved the QTs and entry criteria set for this year's event, and I know that she did not find it a very satisfying experience being the sole disability swimmer. I appreciate the problems we have with swimmers awaiting classification, differences between DSE, asa and IPC categories and presumably potential problems with licensing, but, given that this was our Development Champs, I personally felt that the QTs were set far too high for a meet aimed at development level able-bodied swimmers. The swimmer that did attend actually had more QTs as a 10 year old able-bodied swimmer than she did as a disability swimmer.....

East Region and above

There were a number of opportunities for swimmers to compete across the East Region in 2009. The East Region Youth Championships back in May saw 2 Suffolk swimmers competing, and a considerable number more attended the first ER Disability Championships held at Biggleswade held earlier in February. This meet will be held again in 2009, on 7th February at Braintree.

Later in the year, a number of less experienced swimmers attended the Norwich Swimability Meet in June, including a large group of first-timers from L&OBSC's Disability section.

The DSE events of 2008, at Ponds Forge, saw medals for Suffolk swimmers at both Junior National level (March) and Open National level (November).

I also understand that we have at least 2 Suffolk disability swimmers on the British Talent Programme, and they have attended National training camps this year with their coaches and parents.

Future planning

The pool and conference room have been booked for the 7th Suffolk Disability Meet, again at Lowestoft Waterlane, on the 21st February 2009 at the slightly increased cost of £125, for which I am grateful to Waveney District Council. Lowestoft Lions have provisionally agreed to provide trophies, rosettes and manpower again.

Entry forms are completed and copied ready to go, but are having to be held-back due to complications with obtaining asa permission.

I have completed the initial stage of IPC classifier training, and have attended a classification session on January 9th, but was unable to attend the second training opportunity, as the asa did not notify me that I had a place until it was too late for me to arrange time off work. I am now waiting to find out what happens next.

I am still keen to go ahead with the idea of hosting a second County event later in the year, and will be in contact with Newmarket pool to see if they are able to help.