

Berkshire and South Bucks Artistic Swimming Report

**Report to Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire ASA Management Board,
Tuesday 9 June 2020**

(Reviewing January 2019 to June 2020)

The County comprises of 2 Artistic Swimming Clubs, Reading Royals and Bracknell. I have not had any feedback from Bracknell so not able to provide details for the club for calendar year 2019 or this year.

With regard to Reading Royals they continue to be Swim Mark accredited. Training is largely in smaller pools leased by schools and remains a challenge in terms of the logistics of moving from pool to pool on training days. More importantly, younger swimmers do not have opportunity to see more mature swimmers training and performing. This means that less developed swimmers do not have the opportunity to visualise first hand what the basic skills they are learning today may be able to equip them to do in the future. There is also the challenge of having competent and qualified individuals in terms of coaching and lifesaving present at all sessions as well as moving around sound equipment to multiple locations.

The shift from Skills to Grades also remains testing, particularly for younger swimmers who are expected to move rapidly through the levels in order to gain competitive status.

Despite the challenges, the coaching team remained highly focussed throughout 2019 which led to some of the best results for Reading Royals in decades (covered below). In addition, the quality of training means that the Club supplies a substantial amount of the national squad across the various age ranges and pathways.

The funding provided by B&SB ASA for developing some of our younger swimmers has proven invaluable. The swimmers selected were all grade 0 or 1 at the start of the training programme and as a group were provided with four sessions each lasting four hours in order to boost their ability. Every swimmer involved in this programme has moved onto higher level training as a result of the additional coaching. All athletes competed at the Combo Cup in July 2019 and won medals in their respective teams. 5 of the group became part of the 12 & Under squad with 3 selected to be in the team at the National Age Groups competition in March 2020 (silver medal winners). One swimmer also took the bronze medal in the 10 & Under Solo event at the competition. Feedback from swimmers and parents has been largely positive and some suggestions have been incorporated to take forward to the next squad. Recent social distancing policies and pool closures has meant that selecting swimmers for a 2020 programme has not taken place.

Competitions

Domestic

March 2019 – National Age Groups

Reading Royals 4 silver medals and 4 bronze medals

April 2019 – National Championships

Reading Royals, 5 gold medals, 1 silver and 1 bronze. Winners of the Redwood Trophy with highest routine scores on record for the competition and winners of the Spencer Trophy for best duet.

July 2019 – Combo Cup

Reading Royals overall competition winners with 3 gold medals, 1 silver and 2 bronze.

March 2020 – National Age Groups

Reading Royals 4 gold, 2 silver and 6 bronze medals

International

In 2019, the year began with 6 Reading Royals swimmers in the national senior squad with one leaving during 2019 due to a persistent injury.

March 2019 – Senior Worlds in Paris, France

3 Reading Royals swimmers in team, silver medal

May 2019 – LEN Senior European in St Petersburg, Russia

3 Reading Royals swimmers in team and team personal best in 2 routines.

May 2019 Senior Worlds in Barcelona

3 Reading Royals swimmers in team and team personal best in 3 routines

June 2019 – Junior Europeans in Prague

4 Reading Royals swimmers in team and team personal best in 1 routine

August 2019 Junior Worlds in Slovakia

4 Reading Royals swimmers in the team

In 2020, the number of Reading Royals swimmers in the Senior squad has expanded to 8

March 2020 – Senior Worlds in Paris, France

4 Reading Royals swimmers in team and highest score for routine performed for the first time and a silver medal.

Also in 2020, the talent pathway to the national squad currently has 4 swimmers with another swimmer due to join Reading from an Oxfordshire based club.

Additional highlights in 2019 were the Reading Sports Awards where Reading Royals swimmers won numerous awards including best team and best club.

Post Covid-19

Pools generally remain closed, therefore water training not possible at this time. We anticipate that some form of water based training may be allowed from September but it is likely that there will be constraints on numbers that can train at any one time.

Although the social distancing rules have been relaxed, land training outside in smaller groups, as per guidance at time of writing, is considered to be unfeasible. Therefore looking to set up on line sessions focussing on strength training.

Those swimmers that are part of the GB and England Development training squads do have regular training sessions via the internet with the national coaches. In addition, the swimmers that were in the silver medal winning team at the French Open in 2020 were also part of a GB team that delivered a national workout session via Zoom Conferencing to 300 girls and boys from England, Scotland and Wales in late May