

## **THE ROSS PGL JUNIOR LEAGUE**

### **HISTORY**

The Ross PGL Swimming League was created as a result of the efforts of Trixie Pulsford in 1988 to widen the range of competitive opportunities for swimmers in the Hereford and Worcester region. Trixie remains as the prime advocate of the League and has taken on the role as League Co-ordinator.

The Ross League takes its title from the place of its creation and the early participants were drawn from the surrounding area. The preface of PGL is significant in that PGL is the name of the holiday firm that creates holidays for children and their families and PGL is the sponsor of the League.

The League has widened its appeal over time so that in the 2011 season there will be 11 participating teams. Each year there is a final swim to decide the League champions at Gloucester. Hopefully we will have 12 teams again.

### **WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT?**

The ASA promotes "*Competition for All*" stating that it is important that within the competitive programme of the club there should be provision so that individuals can compete in events which are appropriate to their stage of development and talents. What is appropriate to the few talented individuals at national level is not necessarily appropriate for the hundreds of swimmers who compete at County level and require something different.

It is important that aquatics develops additional competitive opportunities for those swimmers who just break into, or remain outside, county qualifying times. It is probably as a result of having a competitively driven management group within a club that this group which, probably makes up the largest section in any swimming club, have needs which are possibly under addressed. The Ross League in its present format creates one solution and opportunity.

The Ross League looks to involve swimmers of both sexes between the ages of 9 and 14 (age on date of final) swimming a variety of individual events and relays and this part of the programme is the same as for the other competitions that will be familiar to club members. The difference comes by the fact that each event has a time attached and if a swimmer goes faster than the stated time the points, which would normally accrue to the team total, will be denied and not scored. It is the attachment of these times to the events that makes this competition different for, by their very existence, they will exclude the more able participants and offer competitive opportunities to those who swim regularly at the club but cannot command top billing

### **Nine years olds do now have graded times 2011 (see chart)**

### **WHAT IS THE SAME AS FOR OTHER LEAGUES?**

What is the same is that:

For the Ross League the swimmers are identified as being able and proficient to the standard required and have the joy of swimming before everyone and representing the club. They are

confident because they know that it is a level playing field and the swimmers on the blocks are those of similar ability. Swimmers have a joy in testing themselves and they are buoyed at their chance to participate and enjoy the responsibility to help the team to be the highest achievers on the night.

The swimmers identify themselves with the club and the team and strive to register personal and team success. The swimmers find themselves in a like for like situation competing against athletes of similar ability and in front of "friends" who will want them to raise their standard and be excited about what they have just seen.

The promoters determine the ages used, the race distances and the graded times for this competition.

The Ross League is swum in a series of rounds and it is the summation of club scores for each round which determines the clubs who will appear in the final.

### **The Structure of the League**

The League is managed by a group of volunteers who are selected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM is held on the first Monday in September at a venue decided at the previous year's AGM.

For 2011 there are eleven clubs competing in the League: Bromsgrove, Evesham, Haden Hill, Worcester, Ross, Leominster, Redditch, Wyre Forest, Cheltenham, Oldbury and Stourbridge. Ideally there would be twelve teams so that each gala would consist of four teams.

There are four competitive rounds swum and for 2011 these are on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 16<sup>th</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> May each year with a final being swum on 11<sup>th</sup> June at Gloucester. (These are provisional dates yet to be confirmed). Haden Hill is the organising club for one of the galas on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and this we are staging at the Smethwick Swimming Centre, Thimblemill Road. Gala points will be given to the teams at the end of each gala. Gala points are added together and the top eight teams swim in the final. If teams are equal in gala points, then the highest accumulative gala score goes forward.

### **The Gala(s)**

The competitive programme is determined at the AGM and at that meeting the organising clubs are identified.

The Ross PGL uses the age groups 9 to 14 years with age as at June 11<sup>th</sup> 2011. It has a 52 event programme using all recognised strokes over race distances of 25 to 50 meters related to age. Each race has a graded time that cannot be exceeded. The programme will define the age group, the gender, the race, the distance and the graded time, for example 10/u Boys Freestyle 17.9; 10/u Girls Freestyle 17.19. Swimmers swimming faster than the graded time for that event will be awarded a speeding ticket and no points in that race. However, there is in the rules a caveat that makes the Ross League different from other competitions in that swimmers may be issued with a speeding ticket and, though they are effectively disqualified, they will still be issued with a race time which they can record in their log books for entry into other competition.

Scores acquired by clubs to determine participation in the League Final will not be used in the final itself and in the final the participating clubs will start equal.

### **Sponsorship**

The League has gained the support of the *PGL Activity Holiday Centres* which provide holiday breaks for young people and their families. This partnership has been positive and beneficial in its contribution to the running of the League.

If you are seeking a different family holiday please do make an enquiry of the company and make sure the company know your enquiry stems from your participation in the PGL Ross Swimming League. Request a brochure or make an enquiry using the telephone number 08700 551 551 or go to the web site [www.pgl.co.uk](http://www.pgl.co.uk) Do anything which will demonstrate to PGL that it's participation with the Ross League is useful and will encourage the firm to stay as a major sponsor in the future.

### **Use of the League**

The League is another competitive opportunity but not just another competitive opportunity it is an indicator of performance and interest levels within the club and should be used as a stepping stone to success on your swimming pathway.

*Malcolm D Oates, 2011*

The Ross PGL Junior League