



DUNDONALD GYMNASTICS CLUB
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Coaches Report - Dundonald Gymnastics Club AGM Thurs 18th June 2009

First of all, my apologies for not being there for the second year in a row, it's not deliberate honest! My fingers are crossed for a good turnout this time.

Again a big thank you to everyone involved in the club particularly those involved in coaching and committee work.

Additionally, a thank you to all those who help in small but significant ways at club events, fundraisers and in helping with the moving equipment every weekend.

We now have a settled coaching structure and an effective committee working towards a common goal of providing access to participation in the sport and producing a good standard of competitive gymnast.

We have continued to progress in all areas of the club and I would summarise these as follows.

Recreational Level

Membership levels remain good although I do not think we should be complacent. Promotion of the club is already on the agenda and I'm sure we'll work hard in this area.

I think the recent competition showed a good recreational standard and the high participation level was good to see. We have a waiting list of around 15 for the start of the New Year, which we hope, will maintain the membership level around its current level.

We have had a larger than expected drop off in the 12-2 class numbers and are assessing the reasons for this and how best to address them. There will be movement between classes for the start of the new term to accommodate the new starts and keep the kids we have in the most appropriate group for their ability. I think all coaches agree that we will issue SG badges on a more regular basis next year rather than save them up to the end of the year.

Additionally I think other reward-based activities such as the return of the skills competition may in particular provide a focus for the 12-2 class. Any other ideas are more than welcome.

Competition Groups

The club continued to compete in various Beginner Floor and Vault competitions over the year. Most significantly in November 2008 Eva Smith won the Scottish Beginner Floor and Vault Competition in Perth in the 10 - 11 years age category. A team bronze in this category was also noteworthy. A number of our other gymnasts achieved creditable positions. Further successes were noted at the recent Largs competition.

The floor and vault group is continuing well with a young development group in this area showing positive signs for the future. We are still retaining the older girls in this group, which is also very important to club development. All clubs have difficulty with retention, particularly as girls go into secondary school and face competing demands on their time. I hope they stay with us for plenty time to come.

Intermediate levels of this competition format may well provide the girls with further targets for the future and I know Linda is on the lookout for events that will inspire the girls.

In March 2009 Erin Telford and Eva Smith passed their Compulsory Club Grade 8 at the Scottish Regional event in Perth, followed by Rosie Watkins passing her Compulsory Club Grade 14 in May. Unfortunately Niamh Douglas was unable to compete in the Grade 12 competition due to injury but she was well prepared and I'm sure barring disaster would have passed.

It means a significant increase in the number of gymnasts competing at this level. In view of the younger gymnasts coming through this should increase again next year. Additionally the development of some of the gymnasts from Linda's work with her group will also allow us to increase those competing at this level. Again a positive sign indicating the structure of the club is starting to work for us.

We have some way to go in being more competitive at this level but we're learning all the time and I'm sure will improve.

I hope to compete some of the girls in voluntary competitions in the second half of the year, which will be another challenge. Hopefully the experience will prepare us all better for a fuller competition calendar next year. I have challenged Erin, Eva and Niamh to work towards the Scottish Championships in 2010 and I hope we can all rise to this in the coming year.

Another big challenge will be preparing for squad trials in January 2010 with 2 gymnasts currently preparing for the chance of qualification!

What we achieve at competitions will continue to be the best gauge of how the club and its coaches are developing.

Coaching

We have now lost coaches Katherine Kilpatrick and Sarah Brown as they are going onto University. We wish them well in all they do and hope they stay in touch in the future. I have no regrets whatsoever in the investment the club made in putting them through their coaching courses and hope in the longer term we get further benefit. That said, in view of rising costs for coaching courses there is perhaps a topic for debate with the committee regarding recruitment of coaches in the future and the level to which the club subsidises the courses.

Linda and Laura are currently engaged in their Level 3 Women's Artistic Club Coach courses and we will progress these as quickly as possible. We are thankful that we got this done now as it has recently been announced that future equivalent course costs will rise to around £1000. This again ties in with my previous point as to how the club can best support coach education in the future.

During the past year I have passed my Level 4 Women's Artistic Senior Club Coach course. I do not foresee any further qualifications being possible or necessary until the day comes when I can retire and do this full time!!

Tracy Martin joined the coaching team during the past year and has successfully passed her UKCC Level 1 assistant coaching course.

We will monitor things come the restart of the club in August to assess whether we should seek a further assistant coach for the club.

Shirley Jamieson continues to assist with choreography and ballet training for the development groups.

In August 2008 Sara Politakis passed her Level 1 Judging Course. Hopefully she will get plenty of opportunity to make use of the course in the future. Should she wish to progress this any further I think club should support any further courses.

I'd like to thank everyone in the coaching team for all their efforts.

I again need to thank Sandra Walsh, Head Coach, Women's Artistic, City of Glasgow Gymnastics Club and Sandy Richardson, Scottish National Coach for all their advice and assistance. The access we get as coaches to their mentoring, gymnasts and facilities continues to be a massive help as we try to develop as a competitive development

club.

Equipment

In the past year we have purchased

1 x EXPENSIVE Storage container (Dawn's words)
Tumble track extension
Padded Vaulting Horse
Yurchenko Pad and Mat
Vault Runs
Bar extensions for use of wall bars.

The storage unit was on last year's wish list and will be essential as we look to get yet more equipment.

We currently await word from Awards for All regarding our recent grant application.

Fingers crossed for a successful outcome to assist in the purchase of Asymmetric Bars and appropriate safety matting. This remains my only big wish and I think it is now essential due to the level of some of our gymnasts.

I also would like to obtain climbing ropes for attachment to the wall bars. Squad trials include a rope climb in the testing and the girls will need to practice this in the run up to January. I have spoken to the school who have no objections.

Again the equipment remains in good condition and I see no need for replacement of what we have. That said I am concerned that the amount of moving about of the equipment to the outside storage will cause additional wear and tear and I think the subject of appropriate covers should be considered again to ensure we prolong the life of what we have.

Development

This year I would like the club to consider putting things in place to achieve the Gym Mark accreditation. I think that we have the majority of things in place to achieve it and believe it would benefit the club to have this.

As you know I never like to stand still for too long and have recently put some thought to what the club can do with regard to the development of the sport in Ayrshire. We are all busy people and I have no intention of wanting to impose a huge burden of work on us. However I do feel that by simply engaging with neighbouring clubs and South Ayrshire Council we have a lot to offer and most importantly could benefit from being involved in such a process.

Whilst being well aware that we have a long way to go ourselves, I do believe that we are making rapid progress towards positioning ourselves as a 'development club'. I would like to use this to our advantage in recruiting potential gymnasts from recreational clubs in the surrounding areas.

There are established programs in all other regions where clubs network to assist each other and identify and develop gymnasts. I have had preliminary talks with South Ayrshire in this regard which have been positive and will

update the committee at the next meeting.

Summary

I would say this has been another good year – no I should say GREAT year.

Thank you again to all on the committee for the time you give.

I'd like to think we're improving all the time as a club and hope the team we have stays together to keep things going in the right direction.

Thank you

Scott Telford
Club Coach