



The National Arena Swimming League

Mixed fortunes for the League this year. The clubs in the North East decided that their programme was too busy and therefore were not interested to be involved in the League in the season 2017/2018. So we are currently only operating with six leagues around the country. The West Midlands however have had a revival. There not being an AGM convened, the National Secretary contacted all the West Midland clubs informing them of the date for an AGM. The result being a new committee has been formed and they have shared all the jobs amongst themselves and the league operated really well in the current season.

Unfortunately Alan Doyle our webmaster and a very strong advocate of the League died at the end of November 2017. Alan worked professionally and as a volunteer for swimming as an administrator and as a coach. Our thoughts go out to his widow Caroline and their two daughters. The website has been dormant, but in March, John Dring from the City of Oxford created a website so that we were active again prior to and for the Finals weekend. The League could not function without the support of all our volunteers. John will now build the new website gradually capturing all the information off the old site. It would be really helpful if each league had a website lead so that their own page can be serviced regularly and Facebook/tweeting can keep all our clubs and athletes up to date,

We returned to Cardiff for the 18th B Final and the 49th Cup Final. The expected weekend the first weekend in March was thwarted again owing to fitting in with the national calendar which was thrown into disarray because of the Commonwealth Games in Australia. One club had six athletes who had competed at the Games competing for them at the Cup Final! The loyal volunteer team from all of the leagues came together again and ensured another excellent two galas. City of Cardiff led the B Final from the start, they had a bad last round in their own league final with six DQs. They made up for it in the B Final romping to a fine win, second and third Northampton and Camden Swiss Cottage respectively, with only one point between them. There was only one point between fourth and fifth places as well, so a well contested competition.

Plymouth Leander won the Cup Final, second was Guildford City followed by Millfield, last year's winners. The following five clubs were only separated by eighteen points so another hard fought competition. Cardiff and Plymouth also won their respective relay challenges.

Solo Sport Brands, the UK distributors for Arena have been very supportive of the League during the year and continue to come up with new ideas to help us and them support our athletes and clubs. As well as sponsorship monies they ensured the branding was conspicuous around the pool and all the winners of each age group received Arena goodies. The officials all received a branded shirt, clipboard and drinks bottle. Without their support the competition could not run in its present format.

Swim England last year approved for Leagues to Licence their galas. The South and London, Arena leagues have licensed all their rounds. Several questions have been received however asking why all galas are not licensed. Basically the leagues need greater support for volunteers to join their executives to share the load. Someone needs to allocate and appoint the senior licensed officials to each of the league's galas, two referees and a starter. The pools need to be booked by someone else. They need to have the required number of lanes with Automated Officiating Equipment (AOE) and people to operate it. Then the biggest issue is for ALL the clubs to supply the required qualified and licensed officials, minimum qualifications being a licensed J1 and a licensed J2. With AOE only one timekeeper per lane is necessary All clubs need to develop their volunteers as officials in support of their athletes. Next season we celebrate the 50th Cup Final, I would hope that every league can be looking to licence at least their Premier Division, but the commitment has to come from the clubs.

Thank you to all the league executives, all poolside officials, all those who help on the poolside and the host club helpers, and those who ensure reports are made for the newspapers or for our website.

Ian Mackenzie (Secretary) April 2018