

RDC Report to Taranaki Region

I visited the Taranaki Region 27th July through until 1st July. The visit covered.

- Coach visits **1.** Clive Weeler **2.** Sue Southgate **3.** Anita Kitto talking to and observing their assistant coaches where possible.
- Individual coach reports/feedback has been provided to head coaches and their assistants covering areas of best practice, strength and weaknesses.
- Meeting Aquaknight swimmers (4) and discussing the status of the programme and where we intend heading in the next 12 months.
- Conducting a Parent Forum 'the 10,000 Conundrum' this had a reasonable attendance.
- Attendance at the Taranaki Winter Champs observing and discussing with a number of people various topics relating to the RCP and other coaching issues.

Coach Visits

Without the actual statistics I had the visual impression that all the programmes I visited there was significant growth in numbers – mostly in the younger age groups. There was however from the same programmes a drop in the older age group.

There has also been a significant improvement in the development of coaching structures within each of the programmes with the emphasis in the last year being placed on establishing a strong feeder system.

Bell block and New Plymouth Aquatics have both established well patronized swim schools and are already experiencing an increase in their development groups. It was discussed that because of this, there is a need to make sure this growth is catered for in their planning so that it does not result in a reduction in coaching delivery because of pressure on pool space.

Stratford Club (Flyers) on the other hand have had an excellent feeder system but are now faced with a crisis with the new pool management structure, which potentially is going to affect this very well and long term established coaching programme. This issue will be dealt with in a separate report.

Annual plans are still not being prepared or promoted adequately by coaches and need to be. From my discussions I believe that Taranaki needs to develop a more 'think big' strategy for the future. There is no question Taranaki is a much travelled region due to the isolation, having to travel extensively to get valuable competition, however this is mainly at a domestic or regional level and on too shorter cycles (Bell Block and Flyers to a certain extent have gone off shore) There is a need to develop a longer 5 year plan that has a more ambitious international pathway.

There has been a very good working relationship between the coaching fraternity in Taranaki which has been the envy of other regions. However this must be strengthened as the coaching programmes get bigger and start producing international swimmers. This is the responsibility of the senior coaches.

Part of the rationale of setting up the Regional Coaching Programme was to utilize in the best possible way, the resources of our regions, swimmers, competition and administration. I would suggest Taranaki needs to work to do the same in a domestic sense to offer the top swimmers more variety in training.

This could be achieved by bringing together all swimmers 600pts + on a more regular basis to train together (not camps) but every second Saturday, for example doing specific sets and allowing the swimmers the opportunity to interact and socialize with one another – this type of situation is supported in the Long term Athlete Development Model for isolated athletes, it will go some way to preventing swimmers dropping out.

Taranaki Winter Championships

This meet was again run very efficiently and enjoyable with session length being reasonable. These are some small areas that could be considered.

- FINA points always part of results, heats/finals
- Use short course times only for entry.
- A list/ announcement of swimmers achieving Aquaknight status and a reward for the highest points winner.

I would like to thank the Taranaki Region for their hospitality and on going support to the Regional coaching Programme and wish everyone a very successful 2010 – 2011 season.

Clive Power
Regional director of Coaching

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