

2024-2025 AGM

HEAD COACHES REPORT



SAST continues to run close to our largest capacity with around 230 monthly paying members supported by the continued strong effective Partnership with South Ayrshire Council. Our volunteers & officials' numbers are also in the largest in the club's history which is bonded by healthy relationships and driven by a well organised cohesive committee. Therefore, the Head Coaches wish to pass on a huge thank you to all the contributors who have supported the club and its continued solidified development.

WHATS BEEN HAPPENING

2024 saw the club open applications to become Club Captain. We had a positive response, and as such, decided to create the role of Vice Captains creating a large team. Club Captains were Benji Jeffreys and Eilidh Robertson, and Vice Captains were Emma Logie and Lewis Gibson.

The 2024 SAST Awards Night was a fun and enjoyable evening which took place at Ayr Town Hall. The evening provided the club with the opportunity to celebrate the success of our swimmers and volunteers from across the full club.

We hosted an online Sports Nutrition Seminar via Zoom. Athlete Focused ran the seminar and provided very useful information to our members regarding nutrition in and around training and competitions.

October 2024 saw our second warm weather camp take place in Torremolinos. The primary purpose was to provide a challenging training week for our swimmers. The camp had many other benefits, and it was a brilliant bonding experience for the swimmers, and it has helped enhance the performance culture within the squads. We are taking a year off in 2025, but it will form part of our training camp plans in future years.

The coaching team continued to evolve, with Jessica Murdoch joining to support the Transition Squad, Iain Masson continuing to support overall development and Lewis Hammond being selected on to Scottish Swimming's Youth Academy as a coach.

We are currently exploring a partnership with Move Better (physiotherapist). We are hoping that they will be able to provide screenings for our athletes which will lead to tailored and specific land-based plans to ensure that our swimmers are healthy, strong and robust enough to be able to cope with the training loads required.

One major area of continued success this season has been our army of volunteers, especially our officials who help at all the meets that we attend. And well done to all our officials who have upskilled and qualified in new roles this year, in particular Sheena Currie who is now a fully qualified Referee. Our presence on poolside does not go unnoticed and we are grateful to every person who has given up any time to support our club and swimmers. Thank you.

Once again, we ran our very successful home meets – the one-day SAST Graded Meet in October 2024, the one-day SAST Mini Meet in January 2025 and the two-day SAST Open Meet in June 2025. All our events ran very successfully and are continually well supported by other clubs, and we thank them for this. Our meets are also well supported by officials and our volunteers, and we thank everyone that contributed to the smooth running of these competitions as they are vital to the club in several different ways. There are several important roles at these events that we will be looking to fill in the coming months, any help from any parents across the club would be appreciated. We also had many younger and older swimmers volunteering across all three meets making a massive contribution in the process.

SAST also continued with our internal competitions - time trials, Jewels in the Pools, Sprints Meet and the Xmas Fun Nights - for the benefit of all our swimmers. We will also continue with the 3-Club Meet, partnering with East Kilbride and Dumfries, when the calendar allows.

Swimmers also attended some 'away' meets, with SP1 racing in England multiple times across the season to provide more varied racing opportunities for our swimmers. Four senior swimmers attend the McCullagh International Swim Meet in Bangor, Northern Ireland, on their own as an opportunity to prepare themselves for their future at university.

This last season all SAST members became South Ayrshire Leisure members, and as a club, we will ensure that all swimmers have this membership in place.

The club has great support from its members and parents. There are many different roles needing to be completed within the club and our parents are fantastic with the time and effort that they contribute for the benefit of our members. This has been very evident in the last season, with a fantastic number of SAST officials and volunteers at every meet that we attend.

2025 saw the finalisation of our 'Race Against the Clock' campaign, which was focused on raising £35k to renew the electronic timing system. This was essential to ensure that all our equipment is up to day to continue allowing us to organise and run our own competitions. The club has done a fantastic job in reaching our target allowing us to purchase all the required equipment. A massive thank you goes to all that have supported the club with this.

The club also supported the Scottish Down Syndrome Swimming Festival at the end of June. The meet was organised through Down Syndrome Swimming GB, with support from South Ayrshire Council and us. It is a great event and was a fantastic opportunity for Down Syndrome swimmers from across the country to get involved in the competitive side of the sport. It was brilliant to see a couple of swimmers being identified to take the next steps in the development into the DSS GB pathway. We are delighted to be able to support this meet.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

- 16 SAST swimmers attained selection for various Scottish Swimming's squads in 2024/2025. They were:

Charity name: South Ayrshire Swim Team (SAST) Charity number: SC050025

- National Junior Team - Charlotte (also Millfield)
- National Youth Academy – Benji Jeffreys
- National Junior Academy – Felix Broome, Jasper Broome, Max Clark, Sam Currie, Ray Doherty, Connie Hart, Ruby McInnes, Cameron Miller, Cameron Masson, Lewis Relly and Brooke Stevenson
- National Disability Squad – Emma Imrie, Rachel Hill and Christian Hill
- Intercounties 2024 - Eilidh Robertson and Hamish Maxwell were selected to compete as part of the West District team. Brian Dalglish was Head Coach at the meet with the team finishing in 6th place in Division 1.
- Scottish Swimming National League Finals 2024 – SAST A Team qualified for the A Final, finishing in 7th place. Our B Team qualified for the C Final, finishing in 6th place. We will only be entering one team into the National League in 2025 to ensure that we have enough available for the team to perform.
- Mini League 2025 – we finished the A Final in 5th place.
- Para Success
 - Our Para Pathway developed a much more structured meet calendar, providing our swimmers more opportunities to race each month. This was led by Mike Boles, Para Squad coach, and supported by Betty Logan, Steven Barclay and Karen Imrie. Our team enjoyed their racing, and we could see lots of progress across the season.
 - Rachel and Christian were selected for the GB Deaf Swim Camp and raced at the National Championships.
 - Emma, Rachel and Christian raced as part of the Scottish Swimming team at the British Junior Para Swimming Championships.
 - Scottish Junior PD Championships – Emma Imrie, Rachel Hill (1 gold and 1 silver), Christian Hill (2 golds and 1 silver) and Nicole Millar all competed at the meet.
 - Scottish Junior LD Championships – Fraser Devlin (1 bronze) and Katie Hill competed at the meet.
 - British DS Championships – Alan Jardine (1 age group medal), Laura Logan (1 bronze and 6 age group medals) & Cerys McCrindle (2 golds, 2 silvers, 2 bronzes) raced at the meet, with Mike Boles part of the coaching team and Betty Logan as part of the meet organising team.
 - Aquatics GB Winter Para Meet – Emma Imrie & Cerys McCrindle were selected to race.
 - British Junior Para Swimming Championships – Emma Imrie, Rachel Hill and Christian Hill were all selected to be part of the Scottish Swimming team for the meet. Mike Boles part of the coaching team.
 - Laura Logan was runner up in the Ayrshire Sportsability Awards.
- Scottish Summer Meet 2024:
 - Medals: Eilidh Robertson – 1 x Gold, 2 x Silver, Connie Hart – 1 x Gold, Lewis Gibson – 2 x Silver, Jasper Broome – 1 x Silver, Hamish Maxwell – 1 x Silver, Max Clark – 1 x Silver, Brooke Stevenson – 1 x Bronze (2 Golds, 7 Silvers, 1 Bronze).
 - Finalists: 29 additional finalists and 8 additional top 10s (from heat declared events).
- Aquatic GB Summer Meet 2024:
 - Charlotte Hardy (representing Millfield) won silvers in the 17 years 50 and 100 Breast and was 10th in 200 Breaststroke.
 - Eilidh Robertson finished 22nd 50 Breast, 26th in the 100 Breast in the 17 years age group.
- Scottish National SC Open Championships 2024:

- Finalists: Charlotte was top 8 in 3 Breaststroke events, Eilidh was top 20 in 5 different events.
- Scottish Schools (swimmers were representing their schools):
Medals: Rachel Hill (Marr College) 1 x Gold, Eilidh Robertson (Kyle Academy) 1 x Gold and 1 x Silver, Benji Jeffreys (Marr College) 1 x Gold, Max Clark (Marr College) 1 x Gold and 1 x Silver, Lewis Gibson (Kilwinning Academy) 1 x Silver, Gracie Haddow (Belmont Academy) 1 x Silver, Sophie Steele (Belmont Academy) 1 x Bronze, Jamie Pitt (Prestwick Academy) 1 x Bronze, Ray Doherty (Culzean Primary) 1 x Bronze, Brooke Stevenson (Prestwick Academy) 1 x Bronze. (Total: 4 golds, 4 silvers, 4 bronzes).
- SNAGS 2025
 - 30 swimmers qualified – 28 individual swimmers, 2 relay only swimmers
 - Medals: Hamish Maxwell – 1 x Silver, Gracie Haddow – 1 x Silver, Eilidh Robertson – 3 x Bronze, Benji Jeffreys – 2 x Bronze, Max Clark – 1 x Bronze., Connie Hart – 1 x Bronze. (Total: 2 Silvers, 7 Bronze).
 - Finalists: 44 additional finalists / Top 10s (from heat declared events)
 - Relays: Top 10s – 8
 - 9th place in the team points score – our first time back in the Top 10 since 2019.
 - We are one of only two clubs (alongside Inverclyde) to be in the top 10 of PB % in the last 3 years. Scottish Swimming query: is this a sign of consistent coaching effectiveness from the coaches at these clubs, or is something else going on?
- Scottish National LC Open Champs 2024:
 - Medals: Charlotte – 1 x Bronze in the 50 Breast.
 - Finals – 5 individuals and 4 relay teams with a 5th placed finish
- Former SAST swimmer, Lucy Grieve, now of the University of Stirling, won a bronze medal in the 100 Fly at the European U23 Swimming Championships. It's always brilliant to see former SAST swimmers continue on in the sport in any capacity, especially at the top level!

COACHES

- Mike Boles was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the South Ayrshire Sports Awards 2024. Mike was nominated by some of our Master swimmers, and the award is very well deserved.
- Unfortunately, Lewis Hammond has left the coaching team. He is moving to Glasgow for his final year at university and we wish him all the best and thank him for his fantastic contribution to our swimmers.
- The club will be looking to continue developing our coaching team with more and varied coaching opportunities.
- Louise Copeland has recently undertaken a Poolside Helper Educators Course, which will allow us to formalise and streamline our support for all DofE volunteers. Louise is also part of the coaching team on Scottish Swimming's Junior Academy for 2025/2026.
- Lucy McNally will be taking on Junior Competition, Jessica Murdoch will be taking on Troon Development and Kirstin Heslop will be joining the team to support Transition.
- We will also be looking to add to the coaching team to ensure that we always have sufficient cover available.

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THE FUTURE

- We believe that the club is in a strong position to continue being successful into the immediate and long-term future. Last year we identified that improving our performance levels across all squads was a key area (with one of the main aims of progressing in the Top 10 Club standings at SNAGS) and we believe that this has occurred. However, there are several different areas that we will continue to work on to continue this progress. Our improved performances at National level will be focused on:
 - Developing the swimmers already within the Pathway, by providing education to swimmers and parents so that they understand the journey and the requirements for success, and by providing them varied opportunities to enhance their development.
 - Developing our pathways at the lower end of the club by supporting our coaches and their development.
- Our membership numbers are excellent, and we will look to maintain this, whilst ensuring that we improve the numbers within our Club Pathway squads (Transition and Development).
- We will be looking into different training camp opportunities for all squads, which will be tailored to each level. The aim of the plan is for it to be progressive meaning that swimmers can be more prepared for the next step in their swimming journey, and for it to be a fun and engaging training opportunity within a different environment leading into performance camps for those requiring it.
- We will need to revisit and continue developing our partnership with South Ayrshire Council for the benefit of both parties. We are hugely grateful to the council for their continued support despite all the challenges faced over the last 5 years.
- We look forward to returning to Prestwick Leisure Club once its refurbishment is completed.
- We also look forward to the completed refurbishment of the Citadel Leisure Centre, which we hope will provide additional land-based opportunities for our swimmers via the enhanced facilities that will be on offer.

THANKS

The Head Coaches are very grateful for the Committee and the support they provide allowing us (Byron & Brian) to manage and direct SAST with our knowledge and expertise. The SAST committee have been exceptional behind the scenes. A massive thank you to all the volunteers that continually step forward to help. Without volunteers for the committee, competitions, officiating, team managing, and club events etc, the club does not function. Thank you to the coaching staff for their continued support, development and passion for swimming at SAST. And finally, the biggest thank you of all is to the swimmers. We hope that the coming season with SAST plays a positive role in helping you all achieve any goals, regardless of what they may be.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL IN THE 2025-2026 SEASON