Triathlon England South East Regional Committee

Annual General Meeting

23 October 2020 at 7:30pm

**Chair’s Report**

Thanks to the committee;

Jackie Hunter; Tara Wright; Clare Donovan; Liz Scott; David Pearson; Grace Hancock;

Liam Griggs, Clare Donovan, Peter Gilbert, Dick Donovan and Sarah Coope (Regional Academy Head Coach – South East)

It is an understatement that 2020 has been a challenging and difficult year. During some of the lockdown periods, very little triathlon activity took place. The key activities that the Region would normally focus on were cancelled – the Junior and Senior race series, as well as the IRCs.

In spite of 2020 being an extraordinary year, we have still seen a number of people be truly creative and committed to ensure the triathlon community stayed active in a safe and healthy way. Of course these included our Regional winners.

I have summarized key triathlon activity in 2020 within the region.

**Senior TESE races**

In terms of racing we have seen the following events taking place and I know the committee want to thank all the event organisers:

Ocean Lake Triathlon Sprint Race 3 9 August 2020

Ocean Lake Triathlon Sprint Race 4 6 September 2020

Eastbourne Aquathlon 13 September 2020

The Channel Triathlon 13 September 2020

KidstriUK Bognor Regis Triathlon 20 September 2020

Hever Castle Triathlon 26-27 September 2020

Eastbourne Duathlon 11 October 2020

Fast and Furious Duathlon including Children’s Duathlon 18 October 2020

**Regional Academy**

The Region has been lucky to have such a successful Regional Academy and this year has been an inspiration on what can be done to provide a positive platform for our junior athletes. I have included Sarah Coope’s annual report:

‘’I took the decision at the end of May to pull back on intensity, and instead to suggest a focus on aerobic and varied sessions, making use of mountain bikes, outdoor water, garden pools, swim cords, Zoom sessions developing rollers skills became a weekly fixture. It was an ideal opportunity to learn to love what they do, to swim, bike and run for the joy of it and to discover new routes.

Challenges were set along the way to keep some personal competition such as a 3 peaks challenge, Everest challenge, a virtual ironman challenge broken up over a few weeks, and probably my favourite virtual activity was when the academy and many of their parents along with a team from Bodyworks combined in teams to cycle the length of Lands’ End to John o Groats in a relay as an hour on an hour off. This led to 8 hours of cycling each, trying to get there before the other teams. There was a serious cause behind this, we were raising money for the charity Mind after one of our academy athletes lost a family member during and because of lockdown. The combined spirit of our academy, parents and Bodyworks was very inspiring and was a day we will all remember for a very long time. A huge effort by the athletes saw them all beat their highest daily cycling mileage by quite a bit. In the end we raised just over £5000 for the charity during the day.

Towards the end of August a few races appeared and Hamish Reilly very successfully competed in 2 French grand prix events, finishing 2nd both times, we had a big academy showing at the Eastbourne Aquathlon and Hever Castle triathlon.

From the beginning of September, the athletes are settling back into a normal training routine, and are accepting of the fact that their winter will not look like normal with XC events as we know them. They have structure and challenge weekly and are starting to build very well towards the season 2021.

Most of our activity will remain online for the next few months but I am trying when possible to be able to hold a safe outdoor session for the athletes to meet again.

It is a huge credit to them and their parents that we have an engaged, fit and hardworking squad to go forward into the winter and I am looking forward to continuing to help them on their journey throughout the winter’’

**Junior Activity**

The Junior Race Series was of course cancelled in full however we still saw number of Junior events taking place. Our thanks go to the organisers of Eastbourne Aquathlon, Kids Tri Bognor, Hever Castle Triathlon and Bridge Children’s Duathlon.

The BTF Skills School delivery has been extended and enhanced. For athletes in 2020, three Skills School Experience Days for young athletes were planned from May to August but sadly these were cancelled. For coaches, Skills School is now a one day CPD module called Coaching Children and Young People in Triathlon (CCYPT). At the beginning of 2020 a course was planned for April but inevitably cancelled. The course is now being run successfully on line. The next course is scheduled for the beginning of January and we hope to have as many of our regional coaches involved as possible. It is hoped that 2021 will see a series of Covid safe Skills School Experience Days for our young athletes.

**Coaching Courses**

* 1 x Level 1 course took place at Strood LC in February 2020. The course was full with 16 candidate coaches.
* 1 x Level 2 course took place at Hurstpierpoint, started in December 2019. The course was full with 15 candidate coaches.

**Technical Officials – South East**

As COVID-19 took hold, it became clear that 2020 would be a season like no other. Initial thoughts of continuing with Senior and Junior Series events were crushed as more Event Organisers opted to postpone for a later date (TBA) or eventually cancel their events. Sadly, this happened across the globe.

However, as we all learned to live the new “normal”, the BTF issued a range of Guidelines (continually updated) for Event Organisers and Technical Officials so that events could become a possibility. They hosted Forums where these guidelines could be clarified and discussed and in August the first events were issued BTF Permits under a new Risk Assessment process.

All events needed to work to Social Distancing Guidelines which meant a re-think of registration, briefings, swim starts & exits, racking and transition in general, run routes and the finish area. Some found this daunting and opted to cancel completely but a few intrepid organisers worked hard to get it right and offer what our triathletes had been hoping & training for! Adversity can bring benefits - watch out for some of these changes becoming permanent features of future events.

Technical Officials were kept informed throughout the season with any changes to the COVID Guidance, but there were no rule changes imposed and it was made clear to all that it was NOT an Official’s responsibility to “manage” or “police” social distancing. Priority remained the safety of all, and as Volunteers, nobody was obliged to Officiate - it was left to individuals to offer their services only if they were happy to do so. Officials were encouraged to wear face coverings but generally their role remained the same and all reported enjoying being back in the thick of events.

Unfortunately, there has been some fall out and I believe that some Officials will not resume their role for 2021. This means we have opportunities for enthusiastic Trainees! As Technical Officials Coordinator for the region, I’d love to see more people interested in becoming an Official – you don’t need to be a triathlete, just love the sport and want to be involved; young people, parents, friends & coaches should also think about becoming involved. Courses will be run by the BTF in 2021, but I’m always happy to answer questions and, when we start again next year, I encourage interested people to shadow an experienced Official to find out what it’s all about. Contact me - details are on the BTF website, alongside lots more information about what you need to do to become a Technical Official!

**Comms/ Social Media**

Grace has done a wonderful job here and we are continuing to build an online community mainly through Facebook and Instagram. However, we have to say goodbye to Grace in her role.

I know the committee and myself wish to thank Grace for her work over the last 2 years.