**South East Academy overview 2021-22.**

September 2021- we held academy trials in Eastbourne, with a follow up assessment in early October and from that our academy was chosen.

We had a very large squad of 25 as I felt it was important to reward athletes who had stuck with the sport through the trying Covid times, and were still engaged and keen to improve.

During the winter we had monthly academy days held at Eastbourne College using their 6 lane pool, hall, gym and classroom facilities as well as mountain bike, road bike activities outside.

Each athlete had an S&C assessment to assess where they could work on to improve flexibility and strength, a swimming fitness assessment and guidance given to their weekly programme ongoing through Training peaks.

Our annual academy camp is very much the cornerstone of the winters work. We went to Portugal for 10 days and had all bar 2 of the athletes come along. It is a time for getting to know the athletes better, for them to really enjoy training together, experiencing some independence and decision making, and faced with learning to manage training loads.

In the preceding months the thought of camp really keeps the athletes engaged and riding, as they know they need to be fit to make the most of the riding on the camp.

Once back, we continued to prepare for the upcoming season with a joint academy cycling day at the Velo park in London and some final preparations leading into the season.

England Next Generation Squad athletes-

The SE had 6 athletes invited onto the squad for 2021/22.

Racing – Highlights of our racing year were:

**Podiums in the super series:**

Youth A super series

female

1st Lauren Mitchell

2nd Gabriella Horne

male

3rd Josh Prendergast

Junior super series

1st Bethany Cook

2nd Issy Hayes

National Y&J mixed team relay champions retaining title from 2021

Team- Michael Gar, Issy Hayes, Ollie Curd, Beth Cook

**School Games 2022**

Female individual- Lauren Mitchell 1st Gabriella Horne 2nd Annabelle Souter 3rd Eloisa Symonds 5th

Mixed team relays

Wild card team (containing 3 South East athletes, Eloisa, Annabelle, Jude) 1st

SE team 2nd (Lauren, Gabriella, Alex, Charlie)

Throughout the season we had a strong turnout at all the national SS events, and the Youth athletes were encouraged to take part in the regional series at various times and many of them did this.

**International honours**:

Lauren Mitchell- 2nd Youth European championships individual and MTR.

Beth Cook- Junior European championships 7th, World championships 9th, world Mixed team relay champs 2nd.

Issy Hayes, Hannah Mitchell, Michael Gar all also selected for European cups during the season.

While this is the front end of racing there has been an array of issues and setbacks that go with the territory of teenagers racing / training and studying. Many tackling A levels & GCSE’s at the same time as significant events.

Covid has never been far away and has affected different athletes significantly throughout the season. Having the patience to sit it out and wait until the right time to return to training has been hard, and lots of opportunities were missed for them during this time. Injury management has also tested patience with various athletes as well as some personal issues for a few of the athletes.

Results only show part of the story and the courage and strength of the athletes affected has been huge, and the fact they are all returning this year and excited for the year ahead gives me as much satisfaction as the success stories.

It is always sad when athletes move up and on but also rewarding to see them continuing with their triathlon journey. This year all graduating athletes have stayed engaged with the sport-

My overreaching goal will always be to prioritise for the athletes a love of what they are doing, aim for a high level of retention in the sport, and to help them learn valuable transferable life skills going forwards.

Sarah

Sarah Coope

South East Triathlon Academy Head Coach