Triathlon England West Midlands - AGM Report 2020

This year has most probably been one of the most difficult since British Triathlon was formed as the National Governing body for Triathlon and Multi-Sport. It has been an difficult year for everybody due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sport, like all other sectors, has gradually returned to provide some sense of normality. It is clear, that the pandemic is far from over, but British Triathlon is determined to ensure that all clubs, events and the volunteer workforce continue to be supported.

The pandemic hit us in February and by mid-March we entered into a phase of lock down. This led to the cessation of club activities, cancelation of almost all of the events for 2020 and saw all coaching courses placed on hold whilst we waited to see what would happen through the rest of the year. In addition to this, Kirsty Outhwaite West Mids Regional Manager, departed on maternity leave during the COVID-19 outbreak and will return in March 2021.

Whilst we have not been able to deliver the activity that we had planned, we have continued to support the club network through the release of return to play guidelines, club forums and regular correspondence. We will continue to do this as government guidelines change, and it is one of our prime objectives to support clubs getting back to delivering safe and enjoyable sessions for their members.

Currently we are faced with further local lockdowns depending on the risk within geographical areas which will impact on future sports development work. However, we remain upbeat and the Development Team is moving from a phase of being largely reactive to one of being more proactive in supporting clubs with returning to activity. We are also looking to relaunch our GO TRI initiatives, to work in areas of deprivation and develop our coaching programme so more can be done online without the need for face to face courses. We have also created several project groups to review our work programmes and ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the current needs of our sport.

The following is an update on the regional statistics for this year compared to last:

Membership

In the West Midlands, as is the same nationally, membership has remained buoyant despite the current crisis. In 2019 membership numbers were 2489. This year has seen a drop of 199 (8%) to 2290 overall. This is a fantastic achievement and will help the sport overcome the current situation as we move into 2021.

Affiliated West Midland Clubs

This year has seen a total of 51 clubs affiliate compared to 2019 when the total number of clubs was 53. There is always a small number of changes from year to year as race teams and informal clubs were included in this number previously. This year was also the first year of the new club affiliation structure which included price increases. There is a general upward trend for our community clubs. The pandemic has seen us produce extensive guidelines for our clubs and coaches, create webinars and develop two more FaceBook channels. This coupled with Regional Manager support has seen our clubs well support throughout this crisis. It has helped build stronger relationships with our clubs that will bode well for the future.

Events

This has been challenging as in 2020 we have only seen 12 events take place with 1037 participants. In comparison to last year that saw a total of 72 events with 16497 participants. The British Triathlon Events Team has worked hard with event organisers to develop a COVID-19 secure event strategy that will help event organisers to deliver events whilst this pandemic continues.

GO TRI

Since the last AGM GO TRI Events and Activities had continued to grow within the West Midlands with some fantastic support from the region’s clubs and coaches. Unfortunately, the pandemic has hit GO TRI hard with nothing taken place since March. British Triathlon is now working on the future and how we can deliver events and activities despite the current situation.

Coach Education and Officials

At the beginning of this year West Midlands saw three Level 1 courses and two Level 2 courses start with 45 attending out of a capacity of 45. Due to the pandemic two of these courses are yet to be complete; the coach education team have made provisions to get these completed by the end of this year. This has put the West Mids in a healthy position, compared to other regions, but currently no further courses have been arranged. This is due to the difficulty in finding venues that will take external bookings in the current climate. Where possible delivery has moved online but the practical elements will still need to be done within a coaching venue.

Regional Contacts

Whilst the current Regional Manager, Kirsty Outhwaite, remains on maternity leave the following regional managers are covering West Midland counties:

Oliver Heald – oliverheald@britishtriathlon.org. Oliver is supporting Staffordshire and Shropshire

Sarah Williams – sarahwilliams@britishtriathlon.org. Sarah is covering West Midlands and Worcestershire.

Debbie Hill – debbiehill@britishtriathlon.org. Debbie is supporting Herefordshire and Gloucestershire

Jen Granger – jengranger@britishtriathlon.org. Jen is covering Warwickshire.

If you are a club in the region, and need support, please do not hesitate to contact one of the above regional managers who will be only to happy to assist you.