



Head Coach Statement (28/08)

The news we have all been waiting for! First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced today that swimming pools will be able to reopen from the 31st of August. This means that we will soon be able to go back into the water after nearly 6 months off! This is obviously incredible news and I am sure that all our swimmers, parents, volunteers and coaches shared a collective cheer when she made the announcement earlier today. I am so excited to get back to poolside and see you all!

While this is an exciting time and we are on the verge of being able to dive back into training I wanted to take this time to share a short message regarding what will be involved the next 11 days to facilitate our return to the water.

Firstly, and most importantly, I want to reassure our members that all plans that have been drawn up by the Executive Committee and Coaching Staff are in place to ensure **your** safety. That has and always will be our top priority. We have created risk assessments for training, which are still subject to approval by Dingwall Leisure Centre, however once we have had these approved they will be emailed to all of our members and also posted onto our website to help allay any fears and concerns that our swimmers and parents will have. These risk assessments are a fluid document and will be subject to change, dependent on the Scottish Government, Scottish Swimming and Public Health Scotland guidance.

Secondly, the Club are in ongoing talks with Dingwall Leisure Centre and will be inviting Lisa MacDonald (Centre Manager) to our Executive Committee Meeting next week. It is important for our members to be aware that we will not immediately be going back to training as we were used to before COVID. Session times, session days and session lengths may be considerably different that we are used to however we are working tirelessly to secure the most pool time for our members as possible. It is important for me as the Head Coach, I manage the expectations of our swimmers, coaches and volunteers who will be undeniably excited about getting back to training.

On the topic of swimming pools, it has been brought to my attention that the Alness Swimming Pool has been drained of water and is in the process of being retired. I am heartbroken at this news as Alness Pool has played a massive part in the development of not only our Club but also of myself and Jordan as this is where we started our journey together as swimming instructors and is also where we first watched the Club training in 8 years ago. The closure of the pool at Alness is a hurdle that we will overcome but it does hamper our ability to access training on a Friday evening as we normally would. However, all is not lost as the new Alness Swimming pool is nearing completion and is currently being filled with water. We are in talks with High Life Highland about securing pool time in this facility, and I have to say, from what I have seen so far, it is looking absolutely stunning!



Thirdly, there are several tasks outstanding that the Club must complete before diving back into training. These include, but are not limited to:

- Appointing a COVID Team which will be done in the next few days
- Finalising our COVID Risk Assessments and gaining approval from High Life Highland
- Requiring our members to complete a Return to Training Self Declaration and Health Screening Questionnaire
- And finalising any Squad movements or changes to Squad Structures

All of these tasks will require a team effort from everyone involved in the Club so please keep an eye on your emails as it is going to be a very busy couple of days.

Finally, I apologise if the above message came across a little gloomy, but it has always been important to me that I am as transparent as possible with you. I am overjoyed at the thought of getting back onto poolside and putting on my coaching t-shirt once again! It has been so long since we have all been together physically and I am looking forward to seeing all swimmers together, on poolside, laughing and joking together again. The feeling of family at this Club is something that I have missed!

The Coaches and I will be here for each and every one of our swimmers and our parents throughout every step of the next few months. You have all been absolutely fantastic over the last six months and have stood by this Club and each other every day, for that, I cannot thank you enough! If there is one thing for sure, Dingwall ASC **WILL** get through this and we **WILL** be stronger for it!

See you soon...

Andrew