**Head Coaches Report – 2021**

**Looking back at 2020**

As others will have mentioned 2020 was a singularly different year to any other:

Jan – late March: Training at Warden Park as normal (remember normal?)

late March – late June: Lockdown 1

late June – October: Training at Whitemans Green under Covid guidelines

November: Tier 4 Lockdown

Most of December: Training around Haywards Heath or the Triangle under Covid guidelines

Late December to date: Lockdown 2

So just 8 months of club training, albeit mostly under Covid restrictions.

Hopefully many of you found ways to stay fit, and healthy, during the lockdowns.

**Forward to 2021**

Return to Training

The coaches, with committee agreement, have decided there is little point in returning to the Triangle or Warden Park for just 2-3 weeks before we would return to Whitemans Green anyway.

Instead we would prefer to return to WG as quickly as possible after March 29th. Currently we are in discussion with MSDC to establish when we can return. As I write we do not currently have a date, but would presume Tuesday 20th April would be latest.

Initially we will again be following a guideline of “bubbles of 6”, certainly in the absence of any updated guidelines from England Athletics, etc. But we will open training up to a normal regime with no limits of group sizes as and when we can.

Covid-19 Procedures

When we do start up can I ask everyone please to remind themselves of the Covid procedures we have written and to follow them. No turning up to training if displaying Covid type symptoms, maintaining distance, use the hand sanitiser available, etc.

General Safety

 Please make yourself also familiar with the general safety measures in place, particularly as regards the safety area around the throws sector. This is currently in discussion but hopefully will be decided in time for the AGM (and thus shown in the presentation pack), but if not it will be in place in time for our return to WG and will be displayed on a notice board.

Coaches and Running Leaders

Over the last 18 months or more we have become blessed with a substantial number of running leaders (LiRF’s). This has been of massive benefit to the Endurance Squad during those periods when we could only train in “bubbles of 6”. And they will continue to be a benefit as coaches send groups off on training runs away from WG or WP in the future.

In addition, all the coaches came to the fore to support “bubble of 6” training for the Juniors. This meant that every Junior who wanted to could come and train during the periods when we were not in lockdown.

Without the commitment of all our coaches and running leaders we would not have been able to support all the training that happened last summer and I want to personally thank them all for their hard work.

Of particular note has to be the hard work and commitment put in by our lead coaches Linda Tullett and Martin Delbridge, who have not only designed and organised the training regimes during those training periods but also provided their athletes with weekly training programmes, etc. to encourage them to keep training and to continue to feel part of the great team that HHH is.

I hope everyone has maintained their training and stayed both physically and mentally healthy over this difficult year. Let’s hope we will now begin to see the end of it and life will return to normal over the coming months.

Sadly, this year we lost Bob Ruff, one of our coaching stalwarts who had turned out week after week to provide sprints coaching for nigh on 30 years. He will be sorely missed and we are fortunate indeed to have Lucie Venables to take this responsibility on, with Becky Healy currently working her way through the coaching course to join her.

Lastly, I want to touch on the need for further coaches. We have all too few coaches in the club, just 7 for 235 members, when the recommend ratio of 1:12 would suggest we have 20. And most of those are past retirement age and have been coaching for 20 years or more. We desperately need some younger blood if we are to continue providing our services. This affects both endurance and track & field.

Some of our coaches would like to take ‘a step back’ but are continuing only because they know there is no replacement. For some time (20 years?) we have not had a middle distance coach and we only have one jumps and one throws coach in the club. If we are to continue to support the Juniors, give middle distance runners the specific training they require and prepare seniors better for all the leagues, we need more coaches.

So can I ask members to think about the possibility of becoming a coach, even if it does not reflect the event group they themselves compete in. Coaches can be parents as well as athletes, and the existing coaches will be only too keen to mentor and provide support and guidance.

You would not necessarily have to coach every week, so it can be mixed in with your own training. If you have any questions please come and talk to myself or one of the lead coaches. We will be happy to assist and will appreciate your help.

Happy training

Mike Bale