**Junior water polo**

First of all, I’d like to thank all our fantastic volunteers involved in Junior water polo who give up their time week after week.

Coaches:

Ben Scott

Cameron McRobbie

Gregor Turner

Ramon Valvona

Gael Logan

Alan Anderson

Key Parent Volunteers Poolside:

Nicola Moodie (U15 Boys TM)

Dawn Bailey

Lucy Scott-Watson

Rosy Cristaudo

Sally Williamson (U17 Boys TM)

Stephen Mathieson (U19 Boys TM)

Fiona Boswell (U19 Girls TM)

We also have a growing army of parents volunteering as table officials, without them we wouldn’t be able to take part in the leagues.

I’d also like to thank the senior members who have stepped up to offer help with refereeing at junior league games – Neilson Rutherford, Keith Anderson, Fraser Rutherford, Andrew Melville, James Melville, Dave Armstrong and Sandy Aitken.

I’m pleased to say that a number of members are in the process of registering to volunteer poolside over the next year and hope to complete coaching courses as soon as possible.

**Beginners**

We were so successful in our autumn term recruitment drive that we had to split our large Beginners training group into two as the early intake gained experience and required a more advanced level of training than the newer members. Ben has done an excellent job coaching all of them but without regular poolside coaching assistance he was only able to provide the right level of coaching by splitting the group, this did allow us to continue recruiting new members to Beginners water polo throughout the year.

They’ve come on leaps and bounds despite losing their dedicated pool-time at Portobello High School. In order to keep growing our junior membership we will need to continue to look for a solution to our reduced pool-time for water polo with Edinburgh Leisure.

We currently have a healthy mix of boys and girls in the Beginners training group.

**2009+ Boys and Girls**

Our increased intake at the beginning of the school year meant that we were able to enter a 2009+ boys team in the new league. There are still some games to play and we’ve had a mixed bag of results, for many boys this has been their first taste of competition and many of our players are quite young for the age group but they’ve worked hard and are enjoying the experience.

At the start of the season we didn’t have enough girls to enter a team in the league but through our partnership with Forth Valley and Stirling water polo clubs our girls have had the opportunity to take part. Stirling run the composite team for 2009+ girls and have welcomed our girls. With more girls joining the club in the last few weeks we hope to soon be able to play in the league as a standalone team.

**2007+ Boys**

Our 2007+ boys have had a great season, at the time of writing the league results have not been released but unofficially the word is that we have retained the league title this year after some great wins this season.

The team were runners up in the Scottish Championship 2023, losing out to Stirling in the final.

**2007+ Girls**

The girls played as part of the composite Forth Valley/Portobello/Stirling team under Forth Valley’s banner, again no league results released yet.

**2005+ Boys**

The 2005+ boys played in the BMC Cup at Carnegie in December. The addition of 3 teams from England made this year’s competition even bigger and better with Portobello coming in in 6th place after a very close play off game against Northampton School for Boys.

Again, we’re waiting for league results but I think a second place position is realistic.

This team were also runners up in last weekend’s Scottish Championships losing out to Stirling in the final.

**2005+ Girls**

Playing under the Portobello banner the FV/Stirling/Porty composite team came 3rd in their league.

Unfortunately, a very exciting Scottish Championships semi-final against KKASC saw them go out on penalties after a tough fight back in the second half of the game. One objective for the next season is to facilitate some joint training sessions for this composite team.

We now have 54 junior members playing water polo, this means we are back up to pre-Covid numbers, with 53 juniors reported at the AGM in 2019. We have members in Girls and Boys National Development Squads at all age groups U14, U16 & U18 which is great.

Four of our boys have been invited to trial for GB water polo later this month - Joe Mathieson and Frankton Bell in the 2008 age group and Ben Williamson and Lorcan McNally in the 2009 age group. I’m sure everyone will join me in wishing them the best of luck, we do have to keep it quiet though until SWP officially announce it!

Overall, junior water polo is in a brilliant position for the year ahead thanks to the hard work of the coaches, players and parent volunteers.