

FREDERIC AT THE HELM

CES Announces Appointment of Vergnoux as Head Coach

CES was delighted to announce on 23rd December 2004 the appointment of Frederic Vergnoux as Head Coach. Frederic, or "Fred" as he is familiarly known, will take over the reins from Tim Jones who has taken a post with British Swimming.

"It has taken us some time since the Athens Games to find a person of the calibre that we have been seeking", commented Chief Executive Jamie Edgar. "But we are delighted that our patience has paid off and that we are able to welcome someone of Frederic's experience and talent to City of Edinburgh Swimming".

Vergnoux is looking forward to his move to Edinburgh. "I am very pleased to be joining CES in January. I look forward to working with the local Edinburgh clubs and swimmers, the CES executive, the Area Institute Coach, the Institute Coach, and the Scottish Swimming Director of Performance. Working in collaboration with our partners to bolster the swimmer pathway in the East will be critical to building on the excellent progress to date at CES".

Jamie Edgar added, "With the recent appointment of Kim Swanwick as Performance Director at Scottish Swimming, a strong technical team is on hand that will build on the foundation established by Tim Jones at CES. We look forward to continuing our role as a major contributor to Scottish and British swimming. I'd also like to record our appreciation of the fine work put in by Chris Jones and Ally Whike in keeping the programme moving ahead during the Head Coach recruitment process".

Frederic starts his duties with CES on 5th January 2005 at the Royal Commonwealth Pool.

Frederic Vergnoux



A Short Biography ...

Frederic is 31 years old and has been Head Coach at CS Clichy 92 in Paris for the last two years. Clichy is France's top club and has adopted a strategy of coaching swimmers from a variety of countries outside of France, including swimmers from South Africa, Belarus, as well as GB's James Hickman.

Prior to this, Fred coached in the US and South Africa, having moved from an age group position at Racing Club de France. He was a national swimmer himself before pursuing a career in coaching. He coached Alena Popchanka to world champion in the 200m freestyle in 2003, as well as positions in two finals in Athens. He also coached Darian Townsend who won gold in Athens as part of the South Africa 4 x 100 freestyle relay team. Following the success of the Belarus swimmers under his programme, Fred was appointed as the national coach for Belarus in 2002.

Before and during his coaching career, Fred obtained a number of formal sports qualifications including a BSc in Physical Education and a Diploma in Sports Training Biology, majoring in Physiology, from the Pierre and Marie Curie Medical University in Paris.

Fred includes computer skills as one of his interests and stresses the importance of using the internet as a means of communication and image creation. He is a regular contributor to the www.swiminfo.com website.

On a personal note, wedding bells will be ringing on 22nd January when Fred returns to Paris to marry Alena Popchanka. We look forward to welcoming Alena to Edinburgh after the marriage.

A SPORTING CHANCE ...

In an ongoing series of articles, Jamie Edgar looks at the role of the media in promoting amateur sport

It is the end of another year, and the newspapers turn to the inevitable 'Sports Review of 2004' and 'Sports Personalities to Watch in 2005'. Once again, I have been intrigued by the stance taken by a number of Scotland's publications in which they castigate the performance of the national football and rugby teams, and highlight the successes of amateur sports such as cycling, rowing etc.

The media gather at this time of year to lament the parlous state of our two main national sports, and are keen to point out the fact that so few of our nation's youth show any inclination to become involved in any kind of meaningful sporting activity. And the subsequent blame inevitably focuses on our political leaders and their lack of vision in providing a coherent sports policy for our young people. This undoubtedly has some truth. But what about the media itself?

The 'sports reviews' suddenly discover a clutch of national sporting heroes who are set up as examples to our mainstream sports about the merits of commitment, vision and will to succeed. But where were the column-inches throughout the rest of the year if these individuals are worthy of such praise as the end-of-year file is being closed. This reader has thumbed through many dreary articles covering bottom of the table clashes between teams in the lower Scottish football divisions that may be of interest to the handful of spectators who turned up to watch those games. But how much coverage was given to the Scottish team that finished fourth in the Commonwealth Youth Games in Bendigo, Australia, bringing home no fewer than 52 medals, 30 of which were in the swimming pool? Perhaps a more balanced view of our sporting achievements is required in the press - something that our friends in Australia seem to enjoy.

Let's leave our media alone for a minute and home in briefly on the Australian picture...

In 1976, Australia returned from the Montreal Olympic Games with one silver and four bronze medals. The then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser called up one of the bronze medal winners, Steve Holland, to congratulate him. Holland curtly told him to "f*** off", a sentiment prompted by the lack of government support for sport at that time. Maybe it did the trick. Australia now spends three times as much as Great Britain on sport with just one quarter of the population. The results are there to see - at the Athens Olympics, Australia returned with more medals per head of population than any other nation.

It is a well known fact that investment in sport achieves results. The more cynical observers say that medals can be simply bought if you are prepared to throw enough money at it. Yes, investment in sport buys medals. But it buys far

more than that. It buys role models, it buys pride, and it buys the notion that any young person has the potential to excel in the sport of their choice.

So, returning to our media, where should they fit into all this? Our media has a vital role to play in reporting the achievements of our sportsmen and women, not just once a year at "sports review" time, but on an ongoing basis. The column-inches in the newspaper have to be filled, so this presents an opportunity to appeal to a wider audience. In terms of investment in sport, it's as close to "free" as you can get. The media devotes pages of print to the well-documented problems facing our main sports, and nothing seems to provide more headlines than the hounding to death of a leading coach or the scent of a drugs scandal.

So what about this for a new year's resolution for our media. Let's raise a glass to our under-reported sporting achievers and make a mental note that their careers will be followed more closely, and be given the exposure and coverage that they richly deserve.

And it may just increase the readership too ...

CES Club Status

In August 2004, CES converted to 'club' status within the SASA constitution. Previously, the programme had been a 'composite team'.

So, why the change, and what does it mean?

The legal status of CES has been that of a 'company limited by guarantee' for several years. At a meeting of the SASA East District clubs in April 2004, the CES documentation was approved as meeting the requirements of the SASA constitution, thus clearing the way for the change to club status.

The primary reasons for CES converting to a club are as follows:

- The recent introduction of first and second claim clubs has made this a better option for CES than the current composite team / parent club scenario.
- Entry to the programme is now by application, in line with current freedom-of-choice.
- With the introduction of the Area Institute programme, the focus of CES activities will be even more on providing services for world-class performance athletes within the framework of Scottish and British Swimming. It is important to develop these objectives as a more closely-knit team, and the mutual support given by team members has to be encouraged.
- Administratively, it is far easier for CES to operate as a club rather than as a composite. It means that we have the same freedoms to act as are enjoyed by other clubs.

CES has encouraged all its swimmers to register second claim clubs. This means that anyone joining CES can maintain links with their previous club, and can swim for that club at competitions in which CES is not participating. At present, all CES swimmers are members of CES and another club.

At the same time, it is important to point out that CES intends to focus on elite swimming and does not intend to extend its activities to overlap with the Area Institute programme or programmes run by local clubs.