


Dear Sir!



Mark letters **'Sir!'** and address to **Swimming Times**, SportPark, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3QF or email to swimmingtimes@swimming.org. The **Letter of the Month** writer will receive a goody bag of swim equipment*, while every letter printed gets a pair of MARU goggles 

 Alternatively, comment on our featured letter online at www.swimming.org/swimmingtimes

A LITTLE CLUB BOLDLY GOING

It was great to see your article on the achievements of Josh Winnicott of the City of Birmingham Squad and Boldmere Swimming Club.

This was indeed a prestigious albeit fortuitous honour to go down in the record books as the first person to win a competitive race in the Olympic pool. However, look at the stats and the story gets even better. Later, at the same meet, the very first world record was also set by another Boldmere swimmer in the form of the fabulous Ellie Simmonds!

If this letter is published we will have just returned from our annual day trip to Ponds Forge and the National Arena League finals for the fourth year running. We were also at Corby for the grand final of the Arena Junior League for the second year running.

All of this success is indeed testament to the vision and programme that Ash Cox (coach) has been developing over the last decade with his team and not bad for a little club in north Birmingham.

Dave Price

**Competitive secretary
Boldmere Swimming Club**



IMPACT ON ASPIRATIONS

I want to illustrate the impact a single official can have on a team's aspirations. We have just come away from the National Arena League A final dispirited and bemused because of one single official's actions on the day.

Don't get me wrong, we went in to the A final ranked 10th and the likelihood of us testing the big boys was always going to be slim. However, after 20 events we were within two and 10 points of ninth and eighth places respectively and looking good to compete with Liverpool and Derby.

We then took the huge blow of six disqualifications over the course of 20-plus events - an unprecedented number of disqualifications for any team. City of Peterborough swim team staff, parents and swimmers were left bemused and deflated as the

POWERED BY
SWIMSHOP
swimshop.co.uk

LETTER OF THE MONTH WONDERFUL SPORT!

How good to see that Pat Rowley (May letters) is still interested in swimming albeit he now needs stronger glasses! I was pleased also to read his views on Judy Grinham, who was one of the most unassuming people you could know. If anything she seemed too nice to have that killer instinct. She worked extremely hard with her coach - a greatly underrated coach, Reg Laxton - who was one of the best technical coaches that I ever came across.

Judy inspired all who came into contact with her and I was pleased to see that she is still well and seeing two other greats: Julie Hoyle and Margaret Edwards. Judy, if you read this, please give my regards to Julie - with very fond memories at Loughborough way back in the early '50s.

Much is said about the north/south divide but with swimmers there is no divide. Some years ago (around 2003), I was coaching Basingstoke masters and had a great relationship with Neil Jackson as he had been coached by a dear friend of mine in the '50s, Haydn Rigby.

Early one Sunday morning when I was taking Neil in the gym, he gave me Haydn's telephone number and without thinking of the time (around 7am) I rang Haydn and we talked - as though the years hadn't passed - for an hour or so.

When we come across our friends in the sport, we are happy and pleased for them. When our ex-swimmers contact us, it brings back a multitude of good or, in some cases, very sad feelings. I have now lost so many good friends: Mike Geer, Graham Sykes, Graham Symonds and many others. But when you hear, as I did some years ago, from your ex-internationals who want you to write a letter to another swimmer who had reached 50, you realise that the swimmers you coach keep their

disqualifications rolled in. On personal enquiry all disqualifications came from one official. I managed to get one event overturned on the day, but the reasoning for some of the disqualifications was poor considering the individuals concerned.

Even one of our national champions got disqualified. What makes this worse is that over the course of the three rounds leading into the national final, we didn't receive one single DQ!

friendships up for years and, in some cases, become successful coaches themselves.

When you read in the press about your friends, as I did about Athol Still, who was a great friend, motivator and has been a huge success in many fields, you find no jealousy or divide - just pleasure in their success. I could write a book about Athol with many of the things that we did in the '50s. One of the greats in my life was also Ron Roberts, the Flying Policeman. It was Ron who told me when I was 12 that I should join a club. I kept trying to race him at the Walworth Road baths. In the end, I did as he said and it provided me with a lifetime of pleasure and friendships throughout the country.

So to 2012 and our swim team. When Rebecca won her medals last time, I was recovering from surgery. I don't know her but her success lifted my level of motivation and I felt proud to be in the sport. To see the standard that we have now reached in this country says much for all those who put in the work and to quote one of Athol's sayings: 'A quitter never wins: a winner never quits.. There is no doubt that faith, hard work and courage can achieve miracles.

I have been involved in swimming for 60-plus years and I still work at the International Academy at the NPIA, Bramshill, as a specialist PE adviser. If any of my ex-swimmers or friends read this, I say thanks for the memories and to those participating in the Games - you are willed to win by many who you don't know. Aim high and good luck. May your years of hard work be rewarding, and be aware that you will make friends for life by taking part in this wonderful sport.

David Glasenbury
By email



*Contents may vary

I would like this official to know that they ruined a team's day with their actions and potentially ruined my team's chances of moving up the rankings. We are a small club programme of 130 members. As coaching staff and swimmers, we work damn hard to earn results at this level and this official needs to understand the impact they have when they decide to take this course of unsportsmanlike conduct.

I would like this to go in your letters section as my