



December 13, 2011

Dear Lamorinda Families

As the holidays rapidly approach, we are reflecting on our athletes' past accomplishments and ahead to an exciting year of water polo. The summer and fall seasons are in the rear view mirror as are our teams' collective efforts at JO's and the Cousineau Cup. The high school season ended with a lot of excitement and many of the athletes who play on our teams were a big part of that. At the same time looking forward, we are focused on the winter and spring season and the exciting initiatives we are working on to improve Lamorinda's offerings. One thing is clear; it's going to be an exciting new year of water polo.

We wanted to take this opportunity to recap some of our recent accomplishments and club developments, as well as provide some insight to key initiatives we are looking to implement for the 2011-2012 polo year.

Summer Season

The summer ended with another strong showing at Junior Olympics, demonstrating yet again we are the premier club team in Northern California. Our teams represented us well and we all should be very proud of how well all the players did during the tournament. In the end, our collective results were as follows:

12U Boys – 9th place Platinum Division

14U Boys "A" – Silver Medal -- Gold Division

14U Boys "B" – 9th place -- Gold Division

16U Boys "A" – Gold Medal -- Platinum Division

16U Boys "B" – 5th place -- Silver Division

16U Boys "C" – 12th place -- Gold Division

18U Boys "A" – 5th place -- Platinum Division

18U Boys "B" – 11th place -- Gold Division

21U Boys "A" – Silver Medal -- Platinum Division

The highlight of JO's clearly was adding our third overall National Junior Olympic Championship and our first at the 16U level. The 16U boys "A" team went 40-0 this past year, winning all four major tournaments including Kap7, Cal Cup, USCC's and JO's. Charlie Wiser was awarded MVP of the JO tournament, in what was one of the more exciting games of the year for the team. All of our boys made demonstrable progress through the summer and it was fun to see that progress in their JO campaigns.

JO's are at Stanford this year and planning is already in high gear. We have identified a team hotel and are working on a host of other issues. Look for updates from your Age Group Co-Ordinator ("AGC") to stay in the loop. While I am on that subject, I wanted to thank the folks who have volunteered for the AGC position. They are

10U – Mo Hoover
12U – Mia Lauritzen
14U – Luke Brassinga
16U – Sarah & Jerome Sivesind
18U – Meg Reid
Girls 14U & 18U – Jeanne Barker

These folks work tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure we all show up at the right pool and most importantly -- on time. I also wanted to thank Cathy Hanley (14U Boys), Kelly Ratchford (16U Boys) and John Schnugg (18U Boys) who also served as AGC's this past summer. Thanks to all for the hard work. We appreciate it.

Fall Season

With almost 100 athletes across the boys and girls program, we had a great fall session. Our partnership with Moraga Parks and Rec yet again yielded a very successful Splashball program. We had more than 30 boys and girls in the Bill Brown led program. While these youngsters get a taste of water polo from the safety of a noodle, they get a view towards the excitement of the game. The program is a great way for our experienced players to help these young players learn the game while learning some teaching skills.

Our boys and girls grade-group teams took advantage of their playing opportunities in both local and travel tournaments to showcase their skills. The 14U boys played in the Evan Cousineau Cup held in Orange County in October and finished with typically strong results. The 14A team finished 7th in Platinum bracket and the 14B team won the Gold bracket. The Cousineau Cup is the first big tournament of the water polo year and with their efforts our boys showed that they will be a force during the year. Our girls program continues to grow under the leadership of Trevor Rose. In the fall session, we had almost 20 girls in the 8th grade and under program. We are excited to have so many girls in the program and look for big things from them in the future.

Recent Developments

High school season

In another example of the breadth and depth of our program, the all-league team for the Diablo-Foothill Athletic League ("DFAL") was recently announced. A total of 35 male players were named to that all star team with 22 of them coming from the ranks of current Lamorinda squads. In addition to scoring the

winning goal in the NCS championship game, Charlie Wiser was named MVP of the league. We would expect to see many of these boys join the ranks of the other 101 boys who have moved on from Lamorinda to collegiate water polo. Congratulations to everyone who was named to the all DFAL team.

James Lathrop

We are excited to announce that James Lathrop has rejoined Lamorinda Water Polo Club. In addition to being a history teacher at Miramonte, James is on the US National team coaching staff, Technical Director of the Olympic Development Program as well as the head water polo coach at Miramonte. James will assume coaching responsibility of the 18U boys program working with our existing coaches, Trevor Wagner and Matt Cooper. James, in conjunction with Clarke Tamariki (16U boys head coach) and Bill Brown (Beginners Coach), will introduce a new initiative across the Lamorinda program to develop a system play for our teams. The idea of the program is to develop common themes and terminology across the age groups with the goal to improve the development of all athletes. The program will also include providing written feedback to players to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to focus them on development opportunities as they pursue their water polo goals. The program will initially be developed with the 16U and 18U boys and roll into the other age groups in the future.

Please join me in welcoming James back to the program.

2011 -2012 Initiatives

The three main initiatives which the board is working on include

Annual Billing Program

With the success of the installment payment plan last summer (~35% of our families took advantage of this option), we plan to roll out annual fee program with the 2012 spring session. The Annual Fee program will allow families to pay their seasonal dues over a longer period of time and avoid large payments at one time. We believe this will help all of us with budgeting in a stressful economic time. The program will be run through PayPal and allow you to pay via your credit card just as you do now. The goal is to make it seamless and allow you to spread the cost of your athletes' participation over a longer period of time. Look for more information on this program in the coming months.

Membership survey

One of the tenets of any successful operation is making sure you hear the voices of your customer. To that end, please keep an eye out for our first survey to be rolled out just after the new year. We will be using an online tool called Survey Monkey which will allow you to easily and quickly voice your opinion. Our initial survey will be about 10 questions covering a few specific topics. Some of the questions will be recurring so we can judge the clubs' performance over time. Once the survey is complete, we will report the results back to you. As might be expected, there will likely be opportunities for improvement and we will look to form directed committees to address the issues identified. Thank you in advance for your participation in the survey and on these directed committees. We would like to run the survey at least once a year and likely will do it more often than that. The goal of the survey is to collect actionable information from you and use it to improve our collective experience.

Europe Training Trip

In what we hope will become a tradition of the club, we are in the midst of organizing a trip to Italy for our sophomore and junior high school male players. We are expecting to be in Italy for spring break 2012 and give the boys a taste of international competition. Clarke Tamariki and Trent Calder will lead the boys in an adventure to include competitions with local Italian clubs and a training program but with enough time to take in the sights and sounds of the Italian Riviera. It should be a great trip.

The Board is focused on delivering the highest quality experience to your child. With the best coaches in the area, the club's goal is to make sure that every child develops a love of the game which will last their lifetime. Equally true, we want to have easily understandable administrative procedures and timely communication to make it simple for parents to manage their child's participation. As is true with any volunteer run organization, it takes all of our collective efforts to make that vision a reality. We welcome your participation at any level you feel comfortable, whether that's joining a committee to implement a new initiative, manning the desk at a game or bringing lunch to the team; there isn't any effort too small or inconsequential. It takes all of our efforts to make this the club we think it can be and I thank you for your assistance in advance.

As always, we value your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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