**Welcome**

Hello and welcome to our annual Christmas Party and Presentation Evening. I am sure you agree it is a wonderful venue and thank you to everyone who has helped organise this. For those who don’t know me, my name is Rick Hall and I am the Head Coach of the club.

Just over 2 years ago when I joined Hackney, we had a vision of creating the best swim team in London. We didn’t want our success to be measured by just 1 or 2 individuals, but by the experiences, opportunities and performances of every member of the team. This meant building the club at all levels and instilling values that would make us stand apart from everyone else. Over the last 2 years we have seen the club grow by over 160 members. Over 100 new members have joined us in the last year and I would like to welcome you all to the club.

Tonight is a celebration of our swimmers and the inspirational achievements of this year which leaves us on course to achieve this vision. At every level of the club we have seen success and have been inspired by what we have seen. Let me take you on a journey through 2017 and all parts of our club.

**Academy**

I would like to start by mentioning one of the newest pathways of the club. Our Learn to Swim Academy which was set up in June 2017 now has over 40 swimmers and I want to congratulate (if any are here) the first wave of 5 swimmers who have moved from the Academy into our skill development squads.

**Galas**

This year has by far been our most successful year in the competition pool.

We have also seen many swimmers attending competitions for the first time and along with a very successful club championships last month which saw over 100 of our swimmers competing we also held our first ever Development Gala in June

I would like to thank everyone who has helped organise, volunteer or officiate at our galas and made them so successful.

We now see more swimmers than ever entering competitions and regularly get 60-70 swimmers competing. In recent meets such as Harrow and Redbridge we have had more swimmers than the host club. A far cry from a couple of years ago when we struggled to get just 20 swimmers to attend.

In 2017 we have won 2 top club awards. We won the BWF Summer Meet and also came away from the Redbridge Meet as top team for the second year running.

**County and Regional Championships**

This year has also been our most successful County and Regional Championships. The County Champs 2017 saw 37 qualifiers and 24 medals. To put this in perspective, the year before we had just 21 qualifiers and 13 medals. In 2018 we now have 58 swimmers enter.

The Regional Championships this year saw 21 swimmers qualify and come away with 6 medals. Triple the amount of the previous year.

**M11 League**

One of the biggest success stories of the year though came in June when our M11 League Team for swimmers aged 9-12 came 2nd in the league final and gained promotion to the top division. We would like everyone who was part of this M11 team to stand up and collect a certificate for their part in promotion

**Arena League……**

And onto last night.

**National Championships 2017**

For the first time ever, Hackney Aquatics saw 3 swimmers qualify for the National Championships in Sheffield. Kai Ogden, Ryan McCoy and Jude Costley all qualified for both the British and English Summer Championships in the window between March and May. To make the British competition you have to qualify in the top 24 swimmers and the English the next 20.

Ryan qualified for the 100 and 200 fly at British and 50 and 100 Free at English. Kai qualified for the 200 IM at British and 200 Back and 400 IM at English. Jude Costley Qualified for the 100 Backstroke at British and the 50 Backstroke at English. For those that don’t know, Jude picked up our very first medal at the National Championships – a Gold in the 50 Back – SHOW VIDEO

There were also medals in the Welsh National Championships this year where Lily Giradet won 4 medals in the 100 free and 50, 100 and 200 back.

**Finally**

All off this success couldn’t have been done without the many people who have helped out at the club this year. So thank you to all our volunteers, officials, committee members, parents and coaches who have made this the best year that the club has ever had.

On to the Presentations:

**Swimmer of the Year Presentations**

**Development Swimmer of the Year**

Based on training, attendance, attitude and improvement of skills for swimmers in Skill Dev, Comp Dev and Junior.

**Female – Lena Westgate**

**Male – Yasir Ahmed**

**Junior Swimmer of the Year**

Based on Attitude, Attendance, Teamwork, Performances in competition, Competition Improvement throughout year, Trainability, Going above and beyond in what they are meant to do, Time management, (for swimmers in Perf Age, Comp Age, Comp Dev)

**Junior Female – Mika Ogden**

* Superb attitude to training
* Goes above and beyond in training
* Outstanding performances across the year and is ranked top 10 in the country in numerous events including 2nd in the 200 back
* Her determination epitomised last night when she swam 100 fly in an age group above despite being injured and came 2nd

**Junior Male – Bryan Piedra Ojeda**

* Has made sensational improvements across the year both in training and competition
* Has done everything that the coaches have asked and even does more out the pool including land training every day at home
* Great attendance this year
* Hasn’t been phased by any challenge we have given him

**Senior Swimmer of the Year** – based on criteria above plus stand out achievements (for Comp Youth, Jun Masters and Perf Youth)

**Senior Female – Lily Girardet**

* Lily has been a role model in and out of the pool
* Continuous improvement throughout the year
* From 2 years ago just qualifying for Counties, she won medals at the Youth and Winter Regional Championships and won 4 medals at the Welsh National Championships
* Not only this but Lily shows how you can manage both school, other commitments and swimming and rarely misses a session.

**Senior Male – Jude Costley**

* Jude has been made significant improvements across this year in all areas of his swimming
* He has matured both in and out the pool and is now one of highest attenders and often one of the hardest trainers.
* Medalled at the regional championships this year and qualified for the British and English National Championships
* Concluded a great season with a GOLD medal at the English Nationals Championships