

## Head Coach's Report, November 2024

Firstly, I would like to give a massive thank you to everyone for their support over the last year. Without the hard work and dedication that has been demonstrated by the whole team; Coaches, Management and Trustees, alongside the commitment and enthusiasm shown from our Gymnasts and their families, the Club would not be the success it is today.

The Club has had to adapt to a lot of big changes this year, but has shown resilience and is moving from strength to strength, evolving to meet new challenges and demands.

This year, it was with great sadness that we said goodbye to two long standing and instrumental members of staff; both largely responsible for where the Club is today. Rattie Gordon – our previous Head Coach, has been a main stay within the Club and losing her has been difficult on both a personal and professional level. We also sadly said goodbye to Joy Payne, who has been deeply involved within the Club and its development for decades. Their leaving was a blow to the Club as we lost the figure heads of NDDGC, and 25 years of both service and experience. This has been a challenging time for all, and I'm grateful to have been given the opportunity to step in and be part of the team keeping the Club moving on in an upwards trajectory.

The format of the gym classes remains similar to that of the past year – gymnasts are separated into smaller groups within the class and rotate, using between 2-3 pieces of equipment each week. This allows for more coach interaction and personalised support to encourage each gymnast's development. We are in the lucky position to be able to provide four members of staff in our recreational classes, which increases learning opportunities for all gymnasts.

Membership numbers have continued to grow, this has happened partly as a result of more local exposure and event days such as 'bring a friend to gym' week. Our social media presence has also grown thanks to our newly appointed Social Media Co-ordinator and this is making the Club more visible in the community. Taster days remain popular and give a good expectation of what to expect from the facility and programme. We are in the position now where we have waiting lists for some classes, but remain dedicated to keeping classes full to coaching capacity without compromising our coaching ratios. We base our classes on a ratio of 1-8 wherever possible, instead of the 1-16 which British Gymnastics accept.

We appreciated receiving parent responses to our survey earlier this year, and as a result of these, have added several new classes to our timetable including; a Strength and Flexibility class, an Adult's class and a Tumbling class. We are proud to be offering a variety of classes and to be able to give our members more flexibility to do different disciplines and additional hours if desired. The new timetable has also allowed us to spend additional time with our display and development teams, giving us more opportunity to practice and prepare for events where these gymnasts will represent the Club. We plan to attend more local events and competitions in the coming year, as well as hosting our annual in-house Recreational Competition and Awards and Presentation night. We are dedicated to celebrating all of our gymnasts and recognising the importance of each and every one of our members.

Despite a year that has seen many changes within the Gym, I do believe that we have a strong, dedicated and motivated team. We are moving our club forwards and growing the Coaching team. The inclusion of our Assistant Coaches and Junior Coaches has been very successful, giving our younger gymnasts both encouragement and inspiration. This has led to the newly launched Young Leadership Academy, which has had an amazing uptake and we look forward to giving our new Young Leaders the opportunity to build their coaching skills and confidence.

I'm pleased to share our Congratulations to Coaches who have passed their coaching exams this year. Both myself and Jayne have passed the Acro Level 1 course and Liz her Level 3 General Gymnastics Modules 1 and 3. As always, we are looking to upskill and diversify the coaching qualifications our team has, and have various courses being taken throughout the year in different gymnastics disciplines and also in Judging.

Once again, our Display team has had a very busy year. We have seen a lot of new team members join and watched the more senior members step up to support the younger gymnasts. We are always proud to watch the gym family grow and develop each year, forming tight bonds between the gymnasts and their families. We were fortunate enough to attend Festival Del Sol in Italy this year, where our team performed exceptionally well. It was an enormous success and highlighted the family focused ethos at the heart of the Club. The team also performed in London at the London Festival of Gymnastics and received a great reception. This year also saw us perform in the half time break at the Exeter Chiefs

Final at Sandy Park. This was the first time we had attended this event, and the gymnasts represented themselves and their Club admirably. Our most recent outing was to Chance 2 Dance at Alton Towers, where once again, our team and their supporters really celebrated what the Club is about, making it a fun family outing with some great performances delivered by the gymnasts. We are in the process of arranging performance opportunities for 2025 and are excited to see our gymnasts perform their routines at the Awards evening.

We have extended our development groups this year, offering extra hours to those gymnasts that performed exceptionally well in our in-house competition. These gymnasts were offered similar training hours to our already established, older development team. Both our junior and senior development teams have been working hard training for the Rising Stars Competition at Baskervilles gym club in Bath and performed exceptionally well, securing trophies, medals, ribbons and performing personal bests, all whilst supporting each other and showing terrific sportsmanship. We have more competitions lined up for next year and will be developing our teams with these in mind.

Our Recreational Competition was a triumph! It had a lot of support from our Club members and saw a very large amount of competitor entries and even more supporters coming to cheer them on on the day! I must give a huge thanks to all the Volunteer Judges and Helpers on the day who make this event possible. We trialled competition practice sessions before the event, which were more successful than we anticipated and will be offered prior to this year's competition also.

We have spent some months devising and creating an Awards Level System that we will use to replace the BG Proficiency Awards (which have been discontinued). This will be rolled out in the new year, giving all our gymnasts progressive goals and rewards to work towards. This is something we're really looking forward to as there has been a gap in progress incentives during this transition period.

Myself and Jayne were fortunate to be invited to Lilleshall this year, where we received CPD from the GB Olympic coaches. The day was eye opening and gave us an insight into elite level coaching. It was inspiring to see the National Gymnastics Team training and gave us lots of ideas.

Fundraising has been very successful this year, with various events being held by staff and parents. It has been lovely to see parents take more of an active role in fundraising events and we're grateful for all support given. We have seen sleepovers, bingo nights, Santa's sleigh, cake and kit sales amongst various other things. We are also grateful for all helpers and volunteers who have supported these events and others, such as the Recreational Competition, which wouldn't run without volunteer support. All events are for everyone in the club to get involved in, so come along and enjoy yourselves! We have also been lucky enough to have been gifted several grants from the community this year. This has allowed us to invest in new gym equipment and update existing assets, as well as enable us to continue our Coach Development – all contributing to the growth of our gymnasts.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thankyou to My Gym Family. Firstly, to the coaching team for the amazing job they all do, although rewarding, it is a demanding job and for most, is their 2<sup>nd</sup> job. Secondly, to the Trustees who work tirelessly behind the scenes in their own time to ensure the continued running of the gym. Thirdly, to Claire, who does a fantastic job keeping me and the gym in order! Her job is not an easy one, and is absolutely vital to the Club.

Lastly, but certainly not least - is the biggest thankyou of all: To all of our gymnasts and their families, as without them there would be NO gym club! We, as a team, appreciate the time and commitment they show the Club and will continue endeavouring to exceed their expectations.

On a personal note, I would like to reiterate how grateful I am for the support and guidance I have received whilst stepping in to this new role. I feel excited and privileged to be able to be part of such a great team and to work with our amazing gymnasts and their families. Myself, and everyone at NDDGC, remain dedicated to the progression and success of the Club and providing the best gymnastics environment for all of our members.

Please feel free to pop us an email or speak with any member of staff if we can support you or your children through their gymnastic journey, we are always happy to help.

Best wishes  
Vickie