

## **First Competitions of the Year for Tenby Dolphins.**

We are only a couple of weeks into the New Year, but such is the intensity of the competitive swimming program that already the swimmers of Tenby Dolphins have been in action in the first galas of 2008.

The year kicked off with the annual county 800m and 1500m championships which were held in Pembroke on 5<sup>th</sup> January, and last weekend a group of our swimmers were at the Swim Wales New Year Dragon Meet which was held at the National Pool in Swansea.

### **Competition Results**

After the layoff over the holiday period the prospect of diving in the pool to take part in an 800m or 1500m race can be bit of a daunting prospect. This was compounded even more this year because the Tenby pool has been closed for maintenance for several weeks and the swimmers are a bit out of condition. Nevertheless, on 5<sup>th</sup> January a dedicated group of young athletes made the trip to Pembroke to try their hand at competing over the longer distances which many don't attempt throughout the rest of the year.

The competition entry was down a little on the previous year, and there were a few absences due to season coughs and colds. Even so there were some strong performances and exciting races as our swimmers battled it out with their friends from across the county. It is amazing how close some of the race finishes can be even after they have swum the 32 or 60 lengths of the 25m pool that the 800m and 1500m events demand.

The Tenby swimmers who were able to compete on the day, and the results they achieved were:

Bethan Davie, 2<sup>nd</sup> 13/U 1500m, 2<sup>nd</sup> 12/U 800m; Andrew James, 1<sup>st</sup> 16/O 800m, 2<sup>nd</sup> 14/O 1500m; Lewys Canton, 1<sup>st</sup> 13-15 800m; Rebekah Gwyther, 6<sup>th</sup> 12/U 800m; Niamh Slack, 7<sup>th</sup> 12/U 800m; Hannah Saunders, 9<sup>th</sup> 12/U 800m; Carl Gwyther, 7<sup>th</sup> 12/U 800m; Gemma Amos, 1<sup>st</sup> 13-15 800m; Lauren Arthur, 3<sup>rd</sup> 13-15 800m; Sophie Arthur, 1<sup>st</sup> 16/O 800m.

Just about everyone set PB's, and those who didn't still came away with some medals. Well done to all.

The first major long course event, i.e. one held in a 50m pool, is the annual Swim Wales New Year Dragon Meet which is held over three days at the National Pool in Swansea. This is major UK competition and attracts top competitors from clubs across the country.

Such is the increasing enthusiasm of our swimmers that this year quite a few of our swimmers decided they would like to take part. However, as luck would have it, Swim Wales received a massive entry and the event was oversubscribed so much that they had to reject 1100 swims across the various age bands. In such a circumstance the slower entrants are excluded, and such was the standard of entry that even some of our top swimmers were scratched from some of their weaker events. Unfortunately several of our younger team members were scratched from

all the events they entered, but there are several more long course events coming up, so we are sure you will have the opportunity to improve your times in the near future.

The Tenby swimmers who did compete were:

Dan Brown, Lewys Canton, Bethan Davie, Daniel Davies, Johnnie Delahunty, Rebekah Gwyther, Andrew James, Niamh Slack, Holly Watkin-Rees and Henry Whittaker.

The format of the Dragon Meet is such that there are age group events for boys of 14/U and girls of 13/U, and all other swimmers race in open categories. Consequently you can be up against International swimmers even though you are only just out of the age group classification. It can be tough, but in these instances the swimmers know they are primarily competing to set new times rather than genuinely competing for medals.

Overall, our swimmers performed very well and set some excellent new PB's. In fact just about everyone came away with some significant improvements.



Rebekah Gwyther in mid air at the New Year Dragon Meet.

Lewys set a good PB in the 100m Butterfly, as did Johnnie, and Rebekah made gains in the 100m and 200m breaststroke. Niamh sliced an impressive 8.2 seconds off her 100m butterfly long course time and Henry improved his 100m breaststroke time by 6 seconds. Daniel Davies swam well in the 200m breaststroke, set a good time, and gained valuable experience of competing in the big pool.



Daniel Davies starts the 200m Breaststroke at the Dragon Meet.

Performance of the weekend came from Bethan Davie who recorded a qualifying time for the 2008 UK National Age Group Championships in the 200m breaststroke, and came close in the 100m event as well. She also made a very big improvement of 7.1 seconds on her last 200m IM time that she set just a few weeks ago in November. Obviously the broken training schedule has worked wonders! Looks like the family holiday is in Yorkshire again this year!



Bethan Davie, who set a National Qualifying Time in the 200m event, starts the 100m Breaststroke from Lane 3 at the New Year Dragon Meet.

There are a lot of nasty bugs and viruses going around at the moment and despite their incredible fitness levels swimmers are not immune. As you can imagine a tiring weekend in a hot crowded sports arena is not the

best place to be in such circumstances and unfortunately quite a few youngsters fell ill over the weekend. On the last day things were bad enough for the pool staff to place a red bucket at each end of the pool, but fortunately they were not required.!

### **Forthcoming Events**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> Jan. | National Urdd Swimming Gala. Wales National Pool Swansea.   |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan.                   | Welsh Schools Gala. Brecon. Good luck to those of you selected for the Dyfed team.  |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan.                   | Swansea Valley Sprints, Pontardawe.   |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan.                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pembrokeshire Skill Camp for developing swimmers. Fishguard.  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb.                    | Dyfed Senior League, Round 1.   |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> Feb.  | West Wales Championships, Penlan, Swansea. Individual and Team Entries. Top Event in our region for club swimmers. Recommended! (Entries closed). |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> Mar.   | Llanelli Open   |

### **Club News**

We are pleased to report that the ongoing discussions regarding the planned employment of a professional county swimming coach are progressing well. Please ask any of the club officials if you would like more details of the plans and how it will affect the club.

Good luck to all our swimmers who will be representing their schools at the National Urdd swimming gala at the National Pool in Swansea this weekend. Older swimmers note this is a licensed meet so use the pool time effectively!

Finally we hope our youngsters attending the skills camp in Fishguard on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> have a fun day. Listen to what your coaches have to say and you will surely learn a lot!