

Bethan Wins Gold at UK Swimming Championships.

Those readers amongst you who follow the progress of the young swimmers of Tenby Dolphins, will be aware that 12 year old Bethan Davie this year once again achieved the qualifying times to compete in the ASA National Age Group Swimming Championships which were held at the Ponds Forge International Sports Centre in Sheffield from 24th-27th of July.

This is the top competition for Age Group swimmers in the UK and is the ultimate event which young competitive swimmers aspire to qualify for at the beginning of every swimming year. Of the many thousands of youngsters who take part in competitive swimming across the UK, very few achieve the stringent qualifying times, so just qualifying for the championships is itself a major achievement.

Bethan, who is a breaststroke specialist, won a bronze medal on her first visit last year, so was very keen to try to repeat last year's success.

Over the course of the season she has been monitoring her progress on the National Rankings, and immediately prior to this year's championships she was ranked 6th in the 100m and 4th in the 200m breaststroke events for 12 year old girls. It looked as if it would be a real struggle to make the podium this time around.

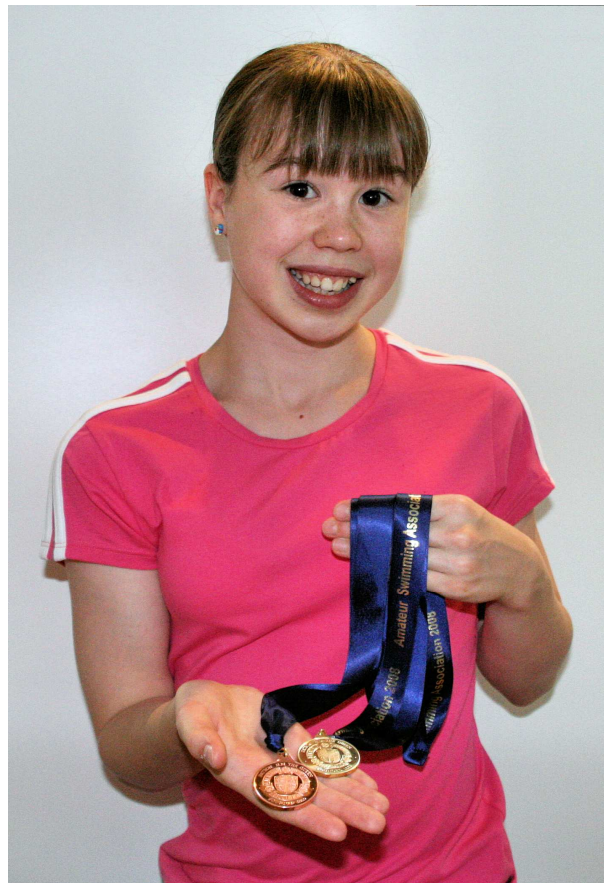
The 100m event took place on Friday 25th July, and Beth started off her campaign with a strong showing in the morning heats. Swimming a 2.6 second PB of 1' 18.14, she qualified third of the ten finalists for the evening final. What a final it turned out to be!



Beth Davie prepares for her gold medal winning swim in the 12 years 100m Breaststroke Final at the ASA National Age Group Swimming Championships.

At the start Beth reacted fastest and got away well, but despite recording her fastest ever 50m split time only managed to turn in 5th place. Nevertheless, she began to power back down the final 50m and gradually eased up on to the shoulder of the leader who was swimming in the lane adjacent to her. As they entered the final 15m the leading three swimmers were level but Bethan was carrying the greatest speed and just powered through to touch first in the narrowest of margins of just 0.03 seconds. In fact only 0.09 seconds separated the first three, with Jody Hawksworth of Cheadle winning silver, and last year's gold medallist Freya Whitehead of Wirral Metro picking up the bronze. What a race and what a result!

Bethan's winning time of 1'16.51 was another great PB, and is the 10th fastest 100m long course breaststroke time ever swum by a 12 year old in the UK!



Bethan Davie proudly displays her ASA National Age Group Championship Gold and Bronze Medals.

However, the excitement was not over because the next day the girls 200m breaststroke event took place.

The 200 heats followed a similar pattern with Bethan setting a 1.8 second PB on her way to qualifying for the final in third place once again. When the evening final got underway, Beth once again started well with a good reaction to the starting signal and this time turned fourth after the first 50m. By the halfway mark, she was up to third and moving away from the

remainder of the field with the two leaders. However, this time she was unable to close the gap on the two frontrunners and finished in bronze medal position. Another great result, which was enthusiastically supported by mum & dad and brothers Matt and Gaz. The other two medals went to the same girls who were on the podium in the 100m race with Freya winning the gold this time, and Jodie picking up another silver.

Beth's finals time of 2'46.01 was another massive 3.2 second PB and gives her a qualifying time for the Welsh National Youth Swimming Squad. This was the icing on the cake after a couple of tremendous days swimming and is something exciting to look forward to over the coming year.

The success Bethan has enjoyed thus far has not come without a lot of hard work, and Bethan would like to thank our award-winning Tenby Dolphins Head Coach John Amos for all his dedicated coaching over the past few years.

As well as training with John at Club sessions, Bethan also trains with John at Pembrokeshire County sessions in Tenby and Francis Bunker in Milford, and this year she has in addition been making twice weekly trips to Swansea to train at the Welsh National Pool with the Swim Wales Talent ID Coach, Stuart McNarry. We are delighted that everyone's efforts have been so well rewarded.

Everyone at Tenby Dolphins is very proud of Bethan's achievements to date and look forward to following her future progress and really hope that many more of our young athletes will be inspired to emulate her success.

The Welsh Summer Nationals have been held at the Welsh National Pool in Swansea over the weekend of 31st July to 3rd August, and a full report of our swimmers exploits will appear in the next edition.