

COACH'S REPORT – JULY-SEPTEMBER 2018

I am very pleased to report on further successes for our club over the past couple of months.

The 2017/18 season finished well with some excellent performances by our five swimmers competing at the Summer Nationals in Sheffield, and the 2018/19 season has got off to a brilliant start with victory for our young swimmers in the Diddy League Final and another European Masters medal for Paul Wilkes.

We had five swimmers competing at the British Summer Nationals at Pond's Forge, Sheffield, at the end of July – Amelia Rodd (16 yrs) and Emily Farr (13/14) (both representing Redditch) and Lizzie Kingham (16), Alisha Stephenson (16) and Millie Checkley (13/14) (all representing City of Birmingham). All five girls achieved at least one top 10 finish – Amelia was 5th in the final of the 200 freestyle, 8th in the 800 free and 9th in the 1500 free; Emily was 7th in the 50 breaststroke final (at her first British Summer Championships); Lizzie finished 6th in the 200 IM final and 7th in the 400 IM; Alisha was 9th in the final of the 100 fly; and Millie qualified for two finals, finishing 9th in the 200 fly and 8th in the 400 IM. There were new PBs for Amelia in the 200 free and 1500 free, Emily in the 50 breast, Lizzie in the 200 IM and Millie in the 200 fly and 400 IM.

At the English Summer Nationals, at the start of August, highlights included gold medals for Millie Checkley in the 200 IM and Amelia Rodd in the 50 free.

In between the British and English Summer Nationals at Ponds Forge, Amelia was again competing at the National Open Water Festival in Sheffield. In a very close finish in the 5k event, Amelia came in 3rd, to win a bronze medal.

Last week, Paul Wilkes and Laura Cranshaw were in Slovenia competing, outdoors in the rain, at the LEN European Masters' Championships. Both swam well, Paul winning a bronze medal in the 200 fly (in a good time of 2:11.55) – to add to his growing collection of British, European and World championship medals – and finishing a very respectable 7th in the 100 breaststroke; and Laura achieving 5th place in the 100 breaststroke. Both Paul and Laura posted new long course PBs in their breaststroke events.

The next day (Saturday 8th September), at Wolverhampton, our 9-12 year-old swimmers were up against Bromsgrove, Stratford Sharks, City of Hereford, Dove Valley and Pershore in the Division 2 Final of the Nuneaton and District Junior Swimming League ("Diddy League"). After wins in the first three rounds, we went to the final as league leaders and favourites. Our young swimmers certainly didn't disappoint, as they secured victory, with an 8 point margin ahead of second placed Stratford, and came home with no fewer than seven trophies. There were some great swims in a brilliant all-round performance, including eight new Div. 2 'best performances' by our swimmers. The individual record breakers were Ashleigh Green (50 back), Amelia Wise (50 back) and Orla Power (25 back) and there were also new records for the 9 yr-old girls (freestyle and medley), 12/under girls (free), girls' cannon and mixed cannon teams.

After being harshly denied promotion last year, after we had comfortably won Division 2 West, we are now guaranteed our place in Division 1 for 2019. The other promoted teams are Stratford, Hereford and Bromsgrove.

The first club championship gala – 50 metre sprint events – and a time trial for our Development and Junior squad swimmers were also successfully completed during the summer. Numerous County qualifying times were achieved at the club sprints, including several for first-time qualifiers. Hopefully many more QTs will be posted during the rest of the championships, which resume next month.

Now that the summer holidays are over, we are starting to increase the intensity of training a little as we prepare for another important season. We must all work hard to keep up the high standards shown in the past year and to move forward to new achievements.

Chris Britt

11th September 2018