

TOP SQUAD IN FLORIDA SUN



It might be Florida, but it's certainly not Mickey Mouse stuff for City Of Edinburgh's top swimmers. The Commonwealth Games may still seem a long way off to many of us, but the CES Centre Squad has had the Games in its sights for some time. Preparations are now hotting up and part of this is the Games pre-selection training camp in Coral Springs, Florida. The squad comprises the CES swimmers who could achieve a Games qualifying time at the forthcoming selection competitions. The purpose of this camp is to give everyone the best possible chance of making their time. The squad was joined by world record holder Sarah Price (bottom left of picture) and David Carry.

After the selection round of competitions, the successful athletes who will be competing in the Games will be off to another pre-Games camp, destination as yet unknown.

Dates for Your Diary

Feb 15/17-Leeds Grand Prix

Feb 23 – Dinner at Stirling Castle

Mar 2/3 - Scottish Nationals incorporating Commonwealth Games qualifying

Apr 13/14 – Edinburgh International at RCP

Tim Jones Scoops Two Top Awards

Head Coach Tim Jones has received two prestigious coaching awards in the last few weeks.

Firstly he received the Scottish Professional Coach of the Year 2001 award. This was won against all other sports in Scotland including football and rugby. The picture below shows him receiving his award from Dr Elaine Murray, Depute Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and Alastair Dempster, Chair of sportscotland.



A few days earlier, Tim received the award for Coaching Excellence at the BSCTA Awards Dinner in Coventry. This is regarded as the top award of the five presented annually at the ceremony, and is a mark of impact that he and CES have made on GB swimming. Earlier in the day, Tim had presented a paper at the conference that attracted significant acclaim.

Reflecting on his Scottish award, Tim commented: "I am honoured to receive this award, and feel it is a reflection of the dramatic progress made over the last five years by the swimmers and staff associated with the City of Edinburgh Swimming programme. Whilst I am not involved in coaching to receive awards, it is nice to be recognised for the success of our programme, and I hope this award goes some way to raising the profile of swimming as a sport. As we start this Commonwealth Games season, I am sure that we can all look forward to an exciting few months ahead, and can watch with anticipation when our swimmers take to the water in Manchester in July".

The Head Coach position at CES is supported by City of Edinburgh Council.

A SPORTING CHANCE ...

In the first of a series of articles, Jamie Edgar looks at where our next World-Class athletes are coming from.

Last month saw the launch of a consultation process initiated by City of Edinburgh Council to determine a strategy for opening up sport to a far larger section of the community. Almost one hundred people turned up at the Assembly Rooms to provide their input as to how the City Council should steer their resources. Introducing the event, Herbert Coutts stated that the objective was to "Make Edinburgh the most physically active city in Europe". Certainly a visionary statement, and a Herculean task – but every long journey starts out with a single step.

In parallel, an ongoing topic in all sports is where our next group of world-class athletes is going to come from. Swimming is no exception, and this subject is of particular interest in Edinburgh as we are now starting to put a number of athletes on the world stage.

At the Sydney Olympics, Britain had its best results since 1920. This was a great achievement and one on which we should build. But it is against a backdrop of diminishing opportunities for our young people who could be the medal winners of tomorrow. Amongst the concerns is the decline in extra-curricular activities carried out by schools following the series of teachers' strikes in the 1980's. This is on top of the recent spate of selling-off of sports grounds by councils for urban development. Youth culture has also changed in that teenagers at a critical age, when they might be breaking through into top-flight competition, seem more interested in filling supermarket shelves so that they can share in the designer clothing and clubbing culture enjoyed by their friends.

Our chances of international sporting success must be improved if these youngsters are given the opportunity, and the encouragement, to try their hand at a variety of sports. How many potential tennis champions have never picked up a racket, and how many runners at the school sports day were never seen by a professional coach who could have noted that they were just a bit better than the rest? Unfortunately, we have to select and train our medal winners from a tiny proportion of the population who, by luck or privilege, got the chance.

However, all is not doom and gloom. The importance of skilled coaching at all levels is now being recognised and is being addressed. In all sports there is an army of volunteers, mainly willing parents, who will do much of the basic tasks required to keep a club or association going. And this is where the business community can help. These volunteers can make a small sponsorship or donation go a very long way.

But the one ingredient that can make the difference is the enthusiasm of today's young people. Given the chance, they will respond positively and enthusiastically, but they need that chance. This is why the City of Edinburgh initiative can succeed. But it must go beyond providing "physical activity". It must provide the opportunity to excel. In an age where our political leaders, pop stars etc are regarded with considerable scepticism, everyone still loves a sporting hero. And, lets be honest, there isn't a youngster anywhere who hasn't dreamed of scoring the vital goal or winning the gold medal. Hopefully the Council initiative might make it a reality for more of our local youngsters.

FEEDER FOCUS

As always, there's plenty happening in the Feeder Squad. Here are the latest snippets from Alan Rapley (or are they a sample of the text messages from his mobile phone) ...

News ... Congratulations to Kris Gilchrist on his recent move up to the Centre Squad. This is a big step to take and the CES coaches always make sure that a new swimmer in the top squad is capable of handling what is expected. Kris has shown the commitment and maturity to merit this positive move.

News ... Welcome to new member John Owen. John has joined us from Hearts, having originally swum at Glenrothes. He is a first year student at the University of Edinburgh. He has obtained a place in the CESF squad on the back of his performances at East District and Inverness competitions accompanied by his work ethic with Hearts since joining them. Although a latecomer to the Feeder group, John has shown the potential of moving ahead quickly in his long distance events.

News ... Sam Keddie has left the feeder Squad to concentrate on his studies leading into his Highers. He has re-joined Hearts Group 1 Squad to continue with his training programme. We wish him well and hope to see him again.

News ... The training camp for the Junior Group Lottery Award is programmed from the 8th-20th April. The first week will be at the new National Swimming Academy in Stirling. In the middle weekend we will compete at the Edinburgh International Meet at the RCP. The camp will then continue through the second week at the RCP. This JGLA is Lottery Money gained through sportscotland on behalf of Edinburgh Leisure. During the camp we will be working with a sports nutritionists Sara Martin and Lorraine Cullen with a focus on eating regimes in preparation for major competitions.

News ... The Scottish Schools competition on 26th January produced some excellent performances. Winners from CESF were Jody Forbes in the 100 Free (with Iain MacMillan coming in with the silver), Emily Byars in the 200 IM, Hayley Preston in the 100 Breaststroke, Holly Nicholson in the 100 Free, Joel Roberts in the 100 Back, and Ailsa Docherty in the 200 IM. Congratulations to all these swimmers on outstanding performances for their respective schools, and for CES. They are all now waiting to see if they are selected to represent Scotland at Inverness in March.