

## Gregor's Goal Is Beijing

### Edinburgh star chases second Olympics

The 2008 Olympic Games are approaching fast, and Gregor Tait sums up the feelings of each and every one involved with City of Edinburgh Swimming. "Next year is going to be very, very important."

A double Commonwealth Games gold medallist and the wily veteran of the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Tait has got his priorities very much in order. "At the moment, I have one aim," he stressed. "And that is to make the British team for Beijing."

"I'm not looking any further than the Olympic trials at the end of March. It's one step at a time – you can't afford to look too far ahead."

They are wise words that should be heeded by all his City of Edinburgh colleagues. A contender in the two back stroke events and the 200m individual medley, the 28-year-old knows he can match the qualifying times – but the harder part is making sure that he claims one of the British team places (two per event) at the Sheffield trials starting on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

"I'll be up against my old rival James Goddard and a couple of others in the 200m backstroke," he explained. "Liam Tancock (a world championship medallist) is already assured of one of the spots in the 100m backstroke and three people have already done the time in the 200m medley."

Experience will be Tait's strong ally. "It's a different kind of feeling this time round. I've got the confidence of having done times in three events, but I also know I have to be very wary and make sure I perform well at the trials."

Hopefully, come early April, it will be mission accomplished and Tait will be able to look ahead to a

## GREGOR TAIT



second Olympic Games and a chance to improve on 2004 when the highlight was swimming in the final of the 200m backstroke.

Since then, Tait has spent some time away from Edinburgh – he moved to Cardiff after the departure of head coach Tim Jones – before returning to benefit from the encouragement, cajoling and commitment of the new man in charge, Fred Vergnoux.

"After Tim left, Edinburgh was in a little bit of limbo and I felt I needed a change," explained Tait, who headed back to the Scottish capital following his terrific golden double (200m back and 200m medley) at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

"I was delighted to come back – there is nowhere quite like Edinburgh. Fred is a terrific coach. He has challenged me in different ways. He pushes the boundaries and has left no stone unturned in helping me to become a better and faster swimmer."

Having already split 2008 into two compartments – pre and post Olympic trials – Tait has not even dared to contemplate his career path past the closing ceremony in Beijing.

"I haven't made any decisions about my swimming future, but I think I'll just know when it is time to stop competing," he summed up. "But I would like to stay in the sport and give something back to the younger generation."

## COACH'S CORNER

### FRED'S OLYMPIC FOCUS

In the run-up to Christmas, all 11 squad members are spending time in Australia, and it's going to be a long and important block of work. The Olympic countdown has started in earnest and it is going to be an intensive period of training.

We are also taking in three competitions – a World Cup Meet in Sydney, the Australian Institute of Sport Championships in Canberra and the Queensland Championships in Brisbane.

The mixture of competition and training is just perfect at this stage. To be able to work in outdoor pools on the Gold Coast is ideal and it takes us away from the dismal winter weather back in Scotland.

The squad will be home just in time for Christmas – but there won't be much time to rest. In January, the big test will be the Scottish short-course Championships and then we will move to Altitude for a 2 weeks training camp, and practice cross country skiing.

### CHRIS'S CHIT CHAT

The swimmers have been climbing the wall for the past few weeks – not out of frustration, but as part of a new fitness plan.

It's always good to try something different, and we've been using the Alien Rock centre in Leith to practice some rock climbing. It's a great cross-training tool and has introduced the squad to another new sporting skill.

We've also been lucky to be able to call on the skills of one of the Commonwealth Pool's duty managers, Ian Mitchinson. He's a British and Commonwealth kick-boxing champion and he's been introducing the discipline to the swimmers. It's another different way to improve fitness, and we're very grateful for his help.

These alternative activities also help bring the squad together – and learning something new is good for everyone.

### TREENA'S TIP

*Stretching is so important for all athletes. The following exercise, using a Theraband, helps to keep the hamstrings flexible and will also prevent back problems.*

*Pic1: Cuddle the knee and stretch the upper hamstring.*

*Pic 2: Extend the knee by stretching the Theraband over the foot.*



## SPONSORSHIP NEWS—DO YOU WANT TO JOIN IN?

Double Commonwealth Games champion Gregor Tait is delighted to have a sponsorship deal renewed with Arnold Clark. He's now driving around Edinburgh in a bright yellow Seat.

### HOW ABOUT PLACING AN ADVERT IN THIS SPACE?

With the Olympic Games fast approaching, this is an ideal time to lend support to City of Edinburgh swimmers—a super bunch who all have their sights firmly focused on Beijing.

Backing can come in a variety of forms – logos on t-shirts, an advertisement in the newsletter. It will not only benefit the swimmers – an association with a successful group of athletes can also be a huge benefit to your business.

If you are interested in any type of sponsorship or advertising, please get in touch with City of Edinburgh Swimming's Media Consultant Elspeth Burnside - [eburnside@btinternet.com](mailto:eburnside@btinternet.com)

## MEET THE SWIMMER

Iain MacMillan



**I love competing because:** The buzz from racing is amazing

**I hate training because:** It makes me tired and grumpy

**Favourite band:** Oasis

**Top night out:** A tasty meal followed by a good film.

**Edinburgh is great because:** It just feels natural.

**Sporting idol:** Johnny Weissmuller

**Favourite meal:** Lamb shanks in a mint sauce with roast potatoes, carrots and broccoli

**Favourite drink:** Ginger beer

**Favourite film:** Miller's Crossing

**Favourite book:** Dracula

**Signature aftershave:** Lynx Phoenix

**Three perfect dinner guests:** Homer, Earl Hickey and Keira Knightley

**If I wasn't a swimmer:** I would be playing another sport, probably rugby.