

Gavin Brown

Gavin Brown was a much loved Southampton based diver and coach who lost his life in a hit and run accident April 2007, aged 22.

The whole of the Diving Community, both national and international, has mourned the loss of Gavin, who was widely known and loved for his outgoing and fun loving personality as well as his overwhelming passion for his sport.

Gavin first expressed a desire to learn to dive at the age of 5 at his local pool in Bradford. Explaining that he was too young to start immediately the coaches there encouraged him to take up gymnastics, which he pursued until he returned to take up diving lessons at the age of 7.

On his first lesson Gavin showed some of the traits by which the diving world would know him, when, copying the actions of some others celebrating a birthday, he pushed his coach into the pool!

Nonetheless Andy Banks, his first club coach found Gavin to be a fast learner, quickly out-stripping most of his contemporaries. When he moved onto Plymouth he left Gavin in the capable hands of Julian Bellan, who until recently headed up the national Junior Talent Programme.

At the age of 13 Gavin transferred to train in Leeds, a 10m facility, under the guidance of Adrian Hinchliffe. Soon after this his international career took off. Taking 4th place at the Junior European Championships in Braschaat in 1998 and a bronze medal at the Junior World Championships in Pardubice in 1999 he demonstrated what a special talent he had.

At the age of 14 Gavin finalled in the senior European cup and in 2001 he was invited to take part in the "Goodwill Games" in Brisbane, competing in 10m synchro event with Blake Aldridge. Academy.

In transferring to his senior career Gavin chose to train in Sheffield with the Great Britain National Diving Coach, Chen Wen, alongside studying at the Leeds Metropolitan University. When he found the strains of travelling too much he considered giving up his sport and took a year's break from training, before the lure of diving took over and he made the decision to transfer his training and studies to Southampton in 2005, where he joined his lifelong buddy, Gary Hunt.

After joining Southampton Diving Academy, Gavin was coached by both Steve Gladding and Lindsey Fraser, who helped him to start to regain his position after his break. Simultaneously he was studying Criminology at the Solent University, taking up a place on the Solent Talented Athlete Network Development. He was looking forward to competing for the first time in the World Cup High Diving Contest in the summer of 2007.

In Southampton his career in training divers also took off. As a coach he proved to be charismatic and well loved by his charges. Taking responsibility for a group of teenagers he was preparing them for the National Skills Finals, to be held in Plymouth in July 2007.

Gavin Brown Trophy

In October 2007, the first Gavin Brown Trophy was given at the Southampton Invitational competition held at the Quays Swimming and Diving Complex. The specially designed trophy was created with the image of a diving Gavin etched into a glass block. Winners of the trophy are divers in any of the age group events (excluding seniors) who achieves the highest raw score on a back or reverse rotating dive. These were the dives that Gavin particularly excelled in.

Gavin Brown Love to Dive Competition

In February 2008, the first "Gavin Brown Love to Dive" Competition for novice and recreational divers was held at the Quays Swimming & Diving Complex in Southampton. Members of the diving squad that Gavin coached before he died formed part of the organizing team. The amateur diving competition has separate categories for springboard and highboard, divided by gender and age group. The competition currently attracts recreational divers from across England.

Director of Coaching, Lindsey Fraser, summed up the feelings of all those who knew him in the diving world when she said "Gavin is irreplaceable. His cheeky grin and irrepressible personality were without compare and words cannot express how much we are all going to miss him in whatever capacity our paths crossed.