



# Luton Team Challenge

## Media release for Southampton Diving Academy

Divers from Southampton Diving Academy once again proved the club's dominance at national level when they convincingly took the team trophy at the Luton Team Challenge event in Luton on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November.

In addition to the team trophy the group also took 3 gold, 3 silver and 6 bronze individual medals, the bronze medals in the pairs event and Senior Coach, Lindsey Fraser, took the trophy for the most successful coach.

The Luton Team Challenge always attracts a strong field from all over the country and this year was no exception. The Southampton team, the biggest team at the event, consisted of the cream of the club from Pete Waterfield and Monique McCarroll (both 22) to Georgia Wingrove (7) and Alex Cameron (8). Entrants from other clubs included national and international champions both past and current and competition was consequently fierce in all events and gave spectators a very exciting and nail-biting couple of days.

Taking the gold medals for Southampton were Ciaran O'Reilly (14), on top form who took gold in both his events and Pete Waterfield, who had his work cut out to finish ahead of Blake Aldridge, a former World Champion, in his only individual event on the 3m springboard. Going into the final in second place Pete put in a set of 3 spectacular dives to take the gold with a convincing 198.85 points.

Ciaran hardly put a foot wrong in his two events, going into the final of the 3m event 32 points ahead of his nearest rival and taking the gold in the final 14 points ahead of the silver medal position off only 3 dives. He also partnered Charly Tomkys (18) in the pairs event, where they reached the quarter finals and were narrowly beaten by a couple of international divers who made 287.5 points against their score of 268.25.

The Luton pairs knockout tournament is a unique event in the diving calendar, attracting a wide field of entrants and making for a very exciting occasion for spectators. Pairs consist of one male, one female, one from Group A or above (aged 16+) one from Group B or below (aged <16). Each diver performs 3 dives from boards of their choice. The first round is run as an eliminator to reduce the field to 8 couples (this year there were 15 entrants) and thereafter each round is run on a knockout basis.

The most successful couple from Southampton were Ellie Steel (12) and Pete Waterfield, diving under the name of "Mr and Mrs Muscle". Both dived outstandingly well in a field that included national and international champions, with Ellie being the youngest competitor to make it into the semi finals. After a spectacular semi final, during which they lost out to a pair of international divers, they fought a fierce battle to decide 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> places in a dive off with the other unsuccessful semi finalists. Tensions were very high as the two pairs were closely matched, but the last dive clinched them the third place.

In addition to her success in the pairs event, Ellie Steel was also did outstandingly well in the individual events, taking silver on 5m platform and bronze on 1m springboard. Team mate, Chris Mears (10), who has recently moved to Southampton from Reading, did equally well, taking silver on 1m and bronze on 5m. Throughout the competition Chris dived consistently well, using a number of new dives to good effect.

Also performing well was Gary Hunt (19), who took 2 bronze medals in fields that included world and commonwealth champions. On 3m he pushed the national champion, an international diver, into 4<sup>th</sup> place, with a 9 point advantage. Adam Purkis (12) took a silver medal on 5m platform only 4 points behind a member of the Junior Olympic Programme and Emily Alderman (11) and Jack Clewlow (13) took bronzes on 5m platform and 1m springboard respectively.

The A Group and Senior age groups were combined, so that Robert Appleby (17) took 5<sup>th</sup> overall, but was 2<sup>nd</sup> in his own age group. Similarly Charly Tomkys (18) was placed 5<sup>th</sup> overall, but again was 2<sup>nd</sup> in her age group, being beaten only by international divers.



Director of Coaching, Lindsey Fraser, was delighted with the team's success. "I am thrilled that we came away from such a prestigious meet as such convincing winners," she said. "Although our goal is always to take the trophy I knew we were really up against it in this field, but they did us proud!"

This was the first occasion that the younger elite divers had joined forces with the more established elite group and showed that the club is continuing to nurture a wealth of young talent. Currently 4 members of the Academy are on the prestigious World Class Start programme for youngsters showing outstanding potential. These are Ellie Steel, Emily Alderman, Chris Mears and Max Brick, who all contributed to the team's success in Luton.

Lindsey's success in winning the trophy for the coach of the meet came as no surprise to other coaches at the event (she has won it on at least 10 occasions in the last 16 years). "She is outstanding, there is no doubt about it," said Nick Bennett-Britton, Chair of the Management Committee of the Diving Academy. "We are very lucky to have her. She's also building a very good team of coaches alongside her, which shows when you look at the success of the other divers in the club."

#### **Full results:**

##### **1m springboard**

Georgia Wingrove, 11<sup>th</sup>  
Kate Hicks, 8<sup>th</sup>;  
Ciaran Allen, 11<sup>th</sup>;  
Alex Cameron, 13<sup>th</sup>;  
Chris Mears, silver;  
Stephen Lingard, 14<sup>th</sup>;  
Chris Farrow, 6<sup>th</sup>;  
Adam Purkis, 8<sup>th</sup>;  
Max Brick, 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Ciaran O'Reilly, gold;  
Jack Clewlow, bronze;

Stephen Appleby, 7<sup>th</sup>;  
Kim Purkis, 6<sup>th</sup>;  
Ellie Steel, bronze;  
Emily Alderman, 4<sup>th</sup>;  
Charly Tomkys, 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Melissa Harley, 13<sup>th</sup>;  
Robert Appleby, 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Patrick O'Reilly, 10<sup>th</sup>;  
Gary Hunt, bronze;  
Tom Owens, 11<sup>th</sup>

##### **3m springboard**

Ciaran O'Reilly, gold;  
Jack Clewlow, 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Stephen Appleby, 7<sup>th</sup>;  
Melissa Harley, 9<sup>th</sup>;

Robert Appleby, 7<sup>th</sup>;  
Patrick O'Reilly, 9<sup>th</sup>;  
Gary Hunt, bronze;  
Pete Waterfield, gold

##### **5m platform**

Kate Hicks, 8<sup>th</sup>;  
Chris Mears, bronze;  
Stephen Lingard, 10<sup>th</sup>;  
Chris Farrow, 7<sup>th</sup>;

Adam Purkis, silver;  
Max Brick, 5<sup>th</sup>;  
Ellie Steel, silver;  
Emily Alderman, bronze

**ENDS**

**For further details call the Director of Coaching, Lindsey Fraser: 023 8072 0922.**

**Please note photo opportunities can be arranged.**