

Top in Regionals!

The last 2 weekends had seen the top age group talent in the region go head to head in the last competition before the Nationals in July. There were some fantastic results across the board for Gallica's army of swimmers, some competing in their first champs, some in their 3rd or 4th !!

There were 3 swimmers gaining honours in the BAGCAT awards, with Jordan Theaker placed 1st in the 14 year old boys, Lucy Davis coming 2nd in the 11 year old girls category, with older sister Meg Davis ranked 3rd in the 12 year old girls age group.

All Gallica swimmers who took part in the champs gained pb's in the majority of the events they competed in. This is a fantastic achievement as most swims, especially the finals, are swum almost back to back, with some swimmers coming straight out of the swim down pool and onto the blocks, ready to go again!!

Further encouragement was taken from the number of finals Gallica were represented in. The trend continued from last year, where there were sometimes 4 Gallica swimmers lining up behind the blocks for a final. This happened on 2 occasions this year with the girls, and what was refreshing for the boys, was the number of finals they competed in too, vastly improving from last year!!

The team support over the 2 weekends was, by far, the best it has ever been, which has now extended up on the balcony. It was fantastic to see parents supporting the team in Gallica shirts, and being, with doubt, the most vocal group of supporters there. This atmosphere, and support certainly helped raise the spirits of the swimmers, and definitely helped push the team to the top club prize once again, and with the squad being so young, the signs are very good for years to come!!



Sophie Ward is returning to form in fine style by lowering her own English Record and in doing so setting a new British Age Record (14), the previous mark was set at 1.01.48 by World medalist Jemma Lowe, the record books now read 1.01.37!

Coach Greenwood "Its the first British Record for Sophie and I'm sure it won't be her last".

In the press conference following her swim Wardy commented "I'm really happy with my swim and am sure I can break more records along with my Team mates, with help from our top Coach".

If we take a look over the last 4 years at all the British/English Age Records that have fallen to Gallica's swimmers they look something like this

On The International Front

Gallica swimmers, Sarah Lucas and James Radcliffe both earned their first GB international honors when they were selected to compete in Toulouse, for their annual open water event.

The trip was an experience in itself for the pair, with them being a part of the GB set up, gaining the opportunity to work with experienced GB coaches, and seeing how an international team prepares for competitions.

The long weekend consisted of 2 pool sessions and 1 session round the competition race course, to allow the swimmers to acclimatize to the conditions, as heat was a major factor. There were regular team briefings and meetings, to keep the team apprised of developments and to give the swimmers as much information relating to open water swimming, as for many it was their first experience of the discipline.

Competition day saw 70 competitors take to the water to take on the 5km course (actually 5120m), the British team making up 11 of the total. Where open water differs to pool swimming, the results are about the position you finish in, rather than the time, so tactics play a major part. The advice given to the swimmers paid off, as the girls, of which there were 4, took 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th in the women's overall category, and the top 4 places in the Junior women's category. It was a proud moment for Sarah Lucas, as the Newton Hall swimmer was placed 3rd overall, and 2nd in the Juniors.

The men's event brought 2nd and 3rd place finishes in the Junior category for the British team, with Preston's James Radcliffe gaining 4th place in his age group. Not to detract in any way from the great results the girls had, but the men's field did consist of many experienced, Senior open water specialists, with a handful of Olympic qualifiers taking part too.

The event was a great success and a valuable learning experience for Gallica's participants. There was a fantastic team spirit and support, which the swimmers will now hopefully build on and carry into their next open water competition, which will be the National Champs in August.

Jeff Spector threw down the gauntlet!

And many of our swimmers, parents and even our chief coach took up the challenge,

“How many lengths can you swim in 20 minutes and 12 seconds?”

With lots of clubs and schools from all over Lancashire accepting we were in for a great day.

Many Gallica swimmers accepted the challenge with their usual vigor and arrived to swim not only for Gallica but also to represent their 1st claim clubs in what will hopefully be the first of many events to promote and encourage swimming as a great sport for the whole community.



Olympic Gold medalist Duncan Goodhew had agreed to support the day and arrived complete with trunks and towel and of course not forgetting his most prized possession his Gold Medal.

By the end of the day Duncan must have spent at least 5 of the 7 hours in the water to give demonstrations and have talks and photos taken with everyone involved in the day.

On the balcony the medal did the rounds and even parents and supporters were all eager to get a photo of themselves holding Duncan's medal.

Blackpool Sandcastle & Waterpark's Managing Director John Child had agreed to give every sponsored swimmer a free pass to the famous waterpark and their Cheeky Monkey mascot was on hand for photos and to cheer all the swimmers on.

Jan Glynn our very own compere kept everyone motivated with his encouraging words and of course his usual jokes and merry making, whilst Alex Ward, Bradley Wallbank and some of the other kids kept the music flowing.

Peter Higson along with Debbie and Peter's wife Rachel had the arduous task of registering each and every swimmer and taking copies of their sponsorship forms to make sure that everyone receives their pass to the Waterpark.

Julie Ward, Shirley Slater, Christine Sliwinski all got writers cramp filling out swimmers certificates once Deb Davis, Helen Hopkin, Craig Walsh, Jim McLeish and many other club volunteer helpers had counted and totaled up the lengths for each and every swimmer.

Rachel along with Jeff's wife Elaine and their kids took on their own challenge of keeping all the volunteers fed and watered throughout the day.

Blackpool Borough Council provided lifeguard cover throughout the day and even they joined in the fun by putting their own team through their paces during the afternoon session, which please joint event coordinator Lesley Meddings who spent her day off helping in what ever way she could.

The Mayor of Blackpool turned out to give her support and encouragement to all the swimmers during her stay.

On behalf of everyone at Gallica a massive thanks goes to Jeff and all the team involved.

And Finally.....

GOOD LUCK LADS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I'm sure you will all join us in wishing Gallica swimmers Rob Bale and Daniel Sliwinski all the very best of luck when they compete for GB at the World Junior Champs, in Monterrey, Mexico.

Under the watchful eye of chief coach Rob Greenwood, the lads will be pitting their wits against some of the worlds top junior talents, in their specialist events. Following the tremendous success both had at the Olympic trials in April, which earned them their place on this team, this proves an exciting time for the lads, and Gallica's swimming programme.

Finally.....

COMING SOON!!!

The Gallica Internet Challenge – watch this space!!!