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It's sometimes the little things

Grass roots talent from within



by Your Committee Chairman: Paul McRae, November 2018

Saturday the 3rd November was a good day. We all lead very busy lives and often get wrapped up in our own world. On that basis, it was good to take a few hours out of my usual routine and watch some of our younger swimmers competing in the Torfaen Spooktacular. I also got to take some pictures of them doing their thing - you'll get access to them very soon.

It doesn't seem that long ago that my own daughter was competing in the Spooktacular and the Wyvern League and it brought back many great memories. It was brilliant to see all the parents and family members cheering on their own child, their club and other club's swimmers. There were very young swimmers competing and in some cases this was their first taste of a competitive swimming gala. It didn't matter if they came first or last, they all got cheered on and a round of applause.

Galas like this are where all our swimmers learn the ropes. They will without doubt get DQ'd; there will be wobbles on the blocks, false starts, tears and smiles, but most importantly, lots of learning. Our swimmers never fail and certainly never let anyone down. Every time it doesn't quite go to plan, it is an opportunity for us and them to learn.

One of our lead coaches, Sarah Croke, took up the challenge of organising the Spooktacular with the support of a number of volunteers and parents. Just like our swimmers, I know Sarah worried about whether everything would go to plan or be 'just so'. The Spooktacular was of course a great success and everyone partied into the night at the disco. There was the odd technical hiccup, but none of it really mattered as everyone pulled together to make sure it worked out.

As a club, I see swimmers and volunteers striving to get it right everyday. We aren't perfect of course and every day we learn something new. We are fortunate to have so many parents who are prepared to support our swimmers and our vision as a club. I hope that you as parents get a great sense of satisfaction watching your own and our clubs swimmers giving their all in the pool. I certainly am immensely proud of the continued growth of our club. Torfaen Dolphins has in fact had one of the most successful swimming seasons between 2017 - 2018 and has the 3rd highest number of swimmers in the Welsh squad of any club in Wales. Not bad for a small club from Torfaen!

It's all too easy to forget where that talent is identified and nurtured. In the main it comes from within our academy and development squads. Those hours of finessing and perfecting their stroke is what ensures we have such a diverse talent pool. I cannot wait to see some of our younger swimmers rise through the ranks and show us how hungry they are to take their place in our P1 and P1 Elite squads. Every one of our swimmers works so hard to prove themselves and to be the best that they can be.

Talking about diversity, we also have two swimmers who have been selected for the British Para squad! We will update the notice board with full details of which swimmers have a place in the Welsh squad soon and of course the British Para squads too.

So, about those little things. What are they? They are the small improvements and gains that our swimmers make everyday. They are when they improve their starts, turns, underwater phase or just tweak their pull or head position. It sounds insignificant but when all of those individual elements come together it propels our swimmers on a pathway to success. I look forward to seeing our junior swimmers progress and I hope to see them at regional, national and long course meets over the coming months and years. More than that, I look forward to seeing those broad smiles.

