

Dolphin News

Issue 1 - February 2024

What's New

Welcome to the new and first edition of Dolphin News. This e-newsletter explores the key issues related to Torfaen Dolphins Performance Centre (TDPC) and will be published regularly throughout the year. This newsletter will keep you informed on the latest training developments, committee news and upcoming events. It will be supplemented with a quarterly e-magazine that will explore topic areas that will assist with training and competitive swimming. The first edition of the e-magazine will be published in a few weeks.

Spectacular Spooktacular

TDPC held the annual Spooktacular in conjunction with the Torfaen Leisure Trust on the 4th November 2023. The afternoon saw the Dolphins Development and some Transition Performance Squad

battle with eight additional clubs in what turned out to be an excellent afternoon of competition.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and officials who helped to make this event so special for all the swimmers.

The evening saw the 'learn to swim' squad take to the water in their first swims in timed lanes. This was hosted by TLT but many thanks to the eight TD volunteers who stayed until 7pm to help and support the meet. The smiles on the faces of some of the swimmers was worth the long hours at poolside.

There is a booklet on the TD website if you would like to support your club.

Follow the link below to get an overview of the roles and how to get involved



<https://www.torfaendolphins.com/volunteers/>

Message from Tom

A huge well done to the girls that represented Team Wales in Luxembourg at the end of January. This meet was targeted deliberately because of the world class level of competition, it was an opportunity for our swimmers to compete in the same arena, and in the same races as Olympic champions. It was not a meet where we targeted times (the P1 squad is undergoing heavy training) but focused on the behaviours and processes that underpin excellent performance. Swimmers learn a lot about themselves when they are asked to perform in different environments, in different locations against different swimmers. It is not easy and it isn't straightforward.



My view is that the more we expose our P1 swimmers to these new challenges, the greater the gains will be. I am sure the three TD girls will have learnt from the competition and share their experiences with the rest of the squad.



The same is true for Dylan and Meg who competed in Aberdeen at an international para competition. Again, the competition was world class providing similar challenges for the TD swimmers. The focus was on 'racing hard' focusing on process and improving on race plans from heats to finals. Both swimmers achieved this, which confirms to me and the coaching team that the P1 squad is in the right place given the time in the cycle.

So, as we look forward to our up coming competitions, we will be looking for more of the same. To commit to the racing plans and to demonstrate positive attitudes and winning behaviours.



Committee News

Committee Meeting

The first committee meeting of the season was held on the 29th November at 17.30 in the Hanbury Suite, PALC. The main areas of discussion focused on feedback from the Swim Wales Annual General Meeting, Swim Wales club engagement session and audit. This year the club was chosen to pilot and provided feedback prior to the audit tool launch. The main feedback from the engagement meeting was the launch of Ein Clwb, a portal on Just Go to assist the executive committee in their duties. Changes in personnel at Swim Wales, training & development opportunities and Swim Wales role as a lobby agent for Clubs and Pool Partners when discussing funding with the Welsh Government.

Reflection on the Spooktacular Meet

After every gala we ask for feedback on how to improve future events. The number of spectators at the Spooktacular was raised as a concern as we were full to capacity. The meet planning committee is looking at a number of ways to monitor spectator numbers for the upcoming St David's Day Meet. Spectator tickets will be purchased online and limited to one ticket per swimmer. This will be monitored to see if this reduces overcrowding.

The St David's Meet is proving to be a popular event and for the first time the number of swimmer entries has exceeded capacity. It is always difficult when swimmers need to be scratched from events but we have limited pool time and space. The organising committee are trying to keep the number of exclusions to a minimum by maximising the day. Warm up will start at 7.30 and there will be two sessions finishing at 16.15. At present we do not have criteria in place when maximum capacity is reached. This will be addressed in the coming weeks to ensure parents are aware of the policy.

Torfaen Leisure Trust Meeting

The executive committee meets quarterly with the Torfaen Leisure Trust. (TLT) Issues discussed include transition from learning to swim to development. TLT are now identifying swimmers with talent and directing them to the club and this appears to be working well. We have had discussions about the purchase of a trophy cabinet to display the numerous awards won over the past years. This is proving costly for TLT and the club is looking at ways of funding this purchase. Pool maintenance has been discussed and the pool temperature at Fairwater has been top priority recently. TLT are working hard to resolve the issue. It appears that a sensitive pool thermometer is to blame requiring fine adjustment to stop swings in pool temperature.

The St David's Day meet is run in conjunction with TLT and the learn to swim classes will again have a swim meet. Any volunteers/officials who wish to remain after the TD meet are more than welcome.

If anyone is interested in volunteering ask any member of the committee or email Mark: secretary@torfaendolphins.com

Christmas Party



The Torfaen Dolphins Christmas Party at Pontypool Active Living Centre on the evening of Friday 22nd December proved to be a very successful event.

There was a good turn out and apart from the caterers failing to provide plates and cutlery, the event was a great way for swimmers, parents and coaches to get together and celebrate the end of the short course season whilst waiting for Santa's arrival.

Thanks to all volunteers for their hard work organising this event.

Swim Wales Annual Awards

The glitz and glamour of the Swim Wales Annual Awards came to the Village Hotel, Cardiff on the 20th January 2024. All aquatic sports were represented alongside learn to swim and recreational swimming. The awards recognised a diverse range of individuals, clubs and partners across 23 categories. This event had in excess of 300 nominations and each award was shortlisted to just two nominees. So being nominated was an achievement in its own right.

Torfaen Dolphins had four nominations with Theodora Taylor winning Best Young Athlete award, Tom Croke collecting the Best Performance Coach award and the Club won Best Performance Club. Dylan Broom was nominated for Best Para swimmer but narrowly missed out of an award this year.

Torfaen Dolphins has a good record of winning awards at this event and that's all down to the hard work of coaches, parents and swimmers



Membership

We have been working hard with Torfaen Leisure Trust to recruit new members from their learn to swim programme. Just before Christmas 14 new members had trials with all starting in the Foundation squad in January. There are a further two swimmers currently on trial, with one transfer request pending.

To keep informed of swim competitions it is important that new members/parents join Active. If you need assistance on how to sign up for this important portal, contact your team manager or membership for advice.

There have been two new members joining the Performance squad alongside three moves from Transition Performance.

Membership and coaching staff have done a great job clearing the waiting list so any contacts to membership are currently being offered trials. This is likely to change in the current weeks when the next learn to swim group complete nofio 7 and the waiting list is likely to grow..

Team Manager update

Team managers are a vital part of the club's structure and a few changes have occurred over the last few weeks.

Helen McCan is the new team manager for Development Squad
(developmentsquad@torfaendolphins.com)

Suzanne Willis has changed role and is now team manager for Transition Performance (p2squad@torfaendolphins.com)

A full list of committee members can be found on the Torfaen Dolphins website at

<https://www.torfaendolphins.com/about-history/committee/>

Website update

The Torfaen Dolphins website has been updated over the last few months and will continue to evolve over the coming weeks. Back issues of all future newsletters will be stored on the website alongside information on how to contact committee members, volunteer for galas or how to start the journey of becoming a coach or official. If you are new to the club the website can be found at the following address

www.torfaendolphins.com

Loss of a Torfaen Friend

Robert James

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of a founder of the Torfaen Dolphins. Robert first developed a passion for our beloved sport through his work as a Coach within the Torfaen County Borough. Following this he took up a position within Swim Wales, most notably as their CEO.

Through the merger and restructure of swimming within Torfaen in 2015, Robert, with the backing of Swim Wales, was very helpful guiding us towards the club we now know as Torfaen Dolphins. This foresight and support forged strong roots and principles which have bought an elite level of success in recent years.

Upcoming Club Events



St David's Day meet is booked for Sunday 3rd March. This is a development meet and all entries are now closed for a sell out event. This event gives our junior swimmers a chance to compete against other clubs and maybe win some medals. The event is run in partnership with TLT learn to swim programme whose swimmers will be racing after the development squad.

If you have some spare time and would like to volunteer for the development and/or the TLT meet, then please contact Mark by email on secretary@torfaendolphins.com.

Sharks Swimshop will be attending the St Davids Day Meet, so please check them out.

This newsletter is the first edition and will be published regularly throughout the year. This will be supplemented with a magazine that will focus on training and lifestyle tips for developing and competitive swimmers.

Let us know what you think about this new venture by either talking to members of the committee at poolside or emailing Mark on secretary@torfaendolphins.com. The aim is to keep swimmers and parents informed about club activities but more importantly it will act as a resource for swimmers who commit a tremendous amount of time in a sport we all love.