

World Deaf Swimming Championships 2011 Report

Great Britain Deaf Swimming Team participated in the above at Coimbra, Portugal from 7 to 13 August 2011. The team consisted of 9 male and 4 female swimmers as follows: Male Callum Ross Stirling Swim SC, Sam Chamberlain Buckley SC, Tom Baxter Guildford City SC, Jack McComish Lanark SC, Alexander Cranford Shivers SC, Luke Nixon Wrexham SC, Oliver Kenny West Norfolk SC, Luke Nisted Halton SC, James Webster Leander SC, Female: Hannah Fitton Great Britain Deaf SC, Annabel Towns Deben SC, Lucy Walkup Glenrothes SC, Emily Noden Chester SC.

The Team (Which is in development stage) performed successfully, even though the standard of swimming had increased slightly since the 2009 Deaflympics. We got off to a good start on the first day with Callum Ross (Whom we recruited only a few months prior to the Worlds) winning the gold medal in the Mens 400m IM and Hannah Fitton winning the bronze medal in the 50m Freestyle. This meant that the medal haul of our team remained intact since I started in 1997.

From this day onwards we saw some brilliant swimming and near misses for the team who went on to win another 6 medals (2 silver and 4 Bronze), especially the Men's 4 x 200m Freestyle relay who lost by 0.05secs for the bronze when the USA team's last man Marcus Titus (Who like Terence Parkin of SA is a brilliant swimmer) caught James Webster at the touch. For the supporters of both the USA and GB teams there were a lot of sore throats from shouting/cheering (Yes the swimmers were Deaf, but what an atmosphere). The USA coach quoted "In 38 years of swimming I have never seen a such crazy finish, because Marcus crept past James over the last 1m then James crept back only to lose by a whisker of a touch"

The failure by the 4 x 200m team instead saw them achieve the British Record with a time of 8.11.37 beating the previous record by 9.78 secs (8.21.15 made in the 2006 Europeans). The men's team also broke the British record in both the 4 x 100m free with a time of 3.44.67 beating the previous record by 0.48 sec (3.45.15 made in the 1989 World Deaf Games) and 4 x 100m Medley with a time of 4.12.46 beating the previous record by 3.18 secs (4.15.64 made in the 2006 Europeans) not to be beaten the girls achieved one of their own in the 4 x 100m Freestyle with a time of 4.17.20 beating the previous record by 7.67 secs (4.24.87 made in the 2005 Deaflympics)

Our team of 13 swimmers managed to achieve 54 Personal Best times from their 75 races and overall the GB Team came 7th, which is an improvement from 12th place in 2007. The following records were broken at the Worlds by the GB Team:

Callum Ross: Deaf World Championship (2), European, British (2), Scottish (2) records in 400m IM
Callum Ross: British, Scottish records twice in 200m IM
Callum Ross: British, Scottish records in 50m Butterfly
Callum Ross: British, Scottish records in 200m Butterfly
Callum Ross: British, Scottish records in 100m Freestyle
Callum Ross: British, Scottish records in 200m Freestyle
Hannah Fitton: British, English, Youth records twice in 50m Freestyle
Hannah Fitton: British, English, Youth records 50m Butterfly
Hannah Fitton: British, English, Youth records twice in 100m Butterfly
Alexander Cranford: British record in 50m Backstroke

There were several Welsh records broken by Emily Noden, Luke Nixon and Scottish records broken by Lucy Walkup and Jack McComish, plus a lot of Youth records were broken. There were 54 personal best times achieved on top of these records.

Jack McComish who won bronze in the 1500m Freestyle final gave a brilliant swim to achieve a time of 16.59.30 Jack kept a cool head when swimming in the middle of the Japanese and Russian swimmers creeping away over the last 7 to 9 lengths to become only the second British swimmer to do under 17 minutes since Alistair Johnson broke the World Deaf Record in 1986. Well done Jack.

Oliver Kenny age 13 and Luke Nisted age 14 performed very well in their first Deaf International well done and we hope they gained valuable experience to work hard over the next two years. Well done to Hannah Fitton, Callum Ross and Jack McComish for their medal achievements.

We were very proud of the teams performance in development stage and look forward to the day when our cycle comes fully round again to the position we had previously against swimmers who benefit from better training facilities and also financially. We are the true amateurs of swimming and everyone working in the team should hold their head up high.

After 14 years as the Swimming Director I am stepping down and wish the team all the best for the future. I also hope they work hard over the next 2 years towards success at the Deaflympics in 2013. It has been a pleasure to work with Angela Holmes our coach since 1999 and also with Martin Lee our assistant coach over the last few years. We wish them both all the best for the future of Great Britain Swimming.

Vincent Dickson

Swimming Director

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