

Gateshead & Whickham ASC Summer Nationals Report 2017

A report by coaches Ken Nesworthy and Paul Armstrong

These 2017 Nationals were really exciting for our swimmers. It was the first time at a major National Event for all of GAW's competing athletes and this championships ran live streaming of the World Championships in Hungary at the same time.

With 6 athletes qualifying this year, TEAM GAW doubled the number of athletes achieving the standard required to compete at British and or Swim England Summer Nationals. Here's a report on how well each of our swimmers did at these events.



ADAM MORKOT

15 years old YOUTH/SENIOR PERFORMANCE Athlete Adam was once told by his previous club that he was un-coachable. Adam proved them wrong and has moved gradually through the GAW ranks, only recently qualifying for Regional Champs. He continued his progression by qualifying for the Scottish Short course championships with ease, producing an impressive performance in the 200 Butterfly only to see the time wiped out on a technical error.

Following solid attendance and applying a hard work ethic in the training tank during the winter months, Adam entered into the New Year in great shape and produced several best times during the qualifying window reducing his time within a year from a 2.33.10 to 2.16.29 for the 200 Fly.

In the run up to the Nationals, long standing pre-arranged family and educational commitments meant that it was going to be a tough call for Adam to replicate his "Window" performances. In the heats, a performance time of 2.20.65 Adam achieved his first goal of qualifying for a second swim at the Nationals by making it to the final in 10th place with split times (50m 30.60) (100m 1.05.13) (150m 1.43.01).

Immediately after his heat swim, Adam's lactate test registered OBLA 13.4 mmol/L, meaning that Adam had almost hit his peak lactate level.

In his final, Adam took on the opposing athletes. With nothing to lose, he followed his plan to go out faster and use all his character to produce an improved performance. With split times (50m 29.74) (100m 1.03.89) (15 m 1.39.95) Adam proved he had the strength of character to squeeze out a time of 2.19.58 and an improved National Final 9th place finish in his first ever Nationals. He also improved his lactate PB to OBLA 13.9 mmol/L!!



SARAH WRIGHT

15 years old YOUTH/SENIOR PERFORMANCE Athlete Sarah continued to make progress throughout the season, breaking no less than 9 OPEN, club records, winning an NER OPEN 50m Butterfly silver medal and qualifying for both British 50m Butterfly and English National 100m/200m Butterfly events.

At the British champs, Sarah finished in the country's top 20 with a 19th place in the 50 Butterfly. Her time of 29.88 seconds was just 0.63 off a final place and 0.87 off her LTB of 29.01.

Moving on to the Swim England championships for the 100 Butterfly, Sarah gave it her all to swim a 1.07.92. Just 1.22 seconds off the final and 1.89 off her LTB.



ZOE PRICE

Although 15 years old YOUTH/SENIOR PERFORMANCE Athlete Zoe ("ZIPPY") gained medals at county championships and finals at regionals, her early season form outside the national qualifying window evaded her for several months as she pressed time and time again to gain place in the summer nationals.

Breaking all OPEN 50/100 m Breaststroke long and short course club records on the way, Zoe made every practice session for an unbelievable 10 months, a fantastic achievement at any level.

This persistence paid off in the 50 Breaststroke with her qualifying for the Swim England Summer Nationals with sub 36.00 swims at both Edinburgh and Sunderland.

In her Swim England Nationals heat, Zoe produced her best swim for 4 months, posting a time of 36.01 finishing 13th in the country, just 0.50 seconds off a final place.



RYAN ZHAO

Over two weeks this summer, AGE GROUP PERFORMANCE Athlete 13 Years old Ryan Zhao set up camp at Ponds Forge International Aquatics Centre to compete with the nation's most talented swimmers at both the British, and English National Swimming Championships.

Though swimming in the 13/14yrs joint age group category, Ryan managed to qualify for 5 events. His highest ranking going in to the events meant qualification at British Nationals in the 50m backstroke. He added 100m backstroke, 100m freestyle, along with the 50m and 100m breaststroke to his event list the following week at English Nationals.

Ryan's 50m backstroke kicked off his Nationals fortnight. Fresh from a warm weather Turkish training camp, Ryan went into the competition as the fastest 13yr old in Britain with a time of 29.97s. He performed fantastically well in his heat, dropping his time to 29.95s, an excellent performance that would have won him the silver medal in his own (13yrs) age group.

The following week Ryan began English Nationals on the Wednesday with a terrific personal best time in the 100m breaststroke heat of 1:13.38, making it through to the evening's final, his first ever. More would soon follow! The final saw Ryan, on his coach's instructions, take out the first 50m much harder, almost posting a 50m PB. Although he faded in the second 50m he had shown his desire not only to take part in finals, but also to compete with the best athletes in the age group above, for the podium places.

Next up, on Friday, for Ryan was the 100m freestyle. In perhaps his most impressive heat swim of the fortnight, and despite being tired (and grumpy) from travelling down on the morning, Ryan raised himself and produced an heroic performance in the very first heat of the day, scorching to a new personal best time of 57.63s, and earning another final appearance. His heat time moved him up to 2nd position in the British rankings. The final itself mirrored his previous final as Ryan pushed himself to the limit over the first 50m, putting himself firmly in the race. Although Ryan finished in 10th position, he was the fastest 13 year

old and a pleasing trend was emerging of Ryan. Rather than playing it safe, really pushing himself to extremes, a trait that would serve him well in finals to come.

Saturday was to be both Ryan's last day at Nationals, and his busiest. First up, Ryan competed in the 50m breaststroke where he performed well, narrowly missing out on a personal best time. In his 100m backstroke heat Ryan posted a fantastic personal best time of 1:04.60s, knocking almost a second off his previous best and easily earning him a place in the evening's final. This was to prove merely an hors d'oeuvre to his final bow. Ryan produced a stunning start and underwater phase, utilising the full 15m allowed and bursting into the lead, he maintained his form through the first 50m though the chasing pack had reeled him in by the turn. Ryan turned just about in 1st position in a time of 30.20s (just 0.25s off his 50m PB), and then produced another devastating underwater phase of around 12.5m to destroy most of the field. He maintained his stroke rate, and a much-improved leg kick, right through to the finish and was just touched out into silver medal position by the fast finishing Matthew Broughton of City of Lincoln. Ryan produced a stunning personal best, lowering his heat swim by almost two seconds, and touching in a time of 1:02.84s, putting him 4th in the all-time British rankings for the 13yr age group. A truly outstanding performance.

Over the two weeks, Ryan produced a magnificent 5 personal best performances, 3 finals and a fantastic English Nationals silver medal.



ELLA WATSON / WILL HARDY

Congratulations to Will and Ella on your qualification and despite all efforts to be fit and ready for Nationals both were not able to compete due to injury. Next season will be your time

As seen at the World Championships, athletes at all levels suffer from nerves while others embrace the occasion and excel. Either way, the experienced gained will enhance your self-confidence to achieve even better results next time



Congratulations swimmers from everyone

We are all proud of your great achievements and you all represented Team GAW with great distinction.