

MASA AA Grade Gala, Feb.11th & 12th

This gala epitomised all that is good in a sport. For such an individual sport, to see fellow competitors cheering on their team mates was great. Without exception, all the clubs taking part in this gala deserve “a big pat on the back” for fostering this culture. In addition, Middlesbrough and all the officials and volunteers, deserve a hearty congratulations, the meet ran like clockwork.

During the meet, again incidents arose that exemplified the spirit of good sport.

- A young girl beaming, clutching her medal and explaining to her friend that although she was sixth, she had won this medal. It materialised that this was the girls first gala, she had just turned nine and she was thrilled. For Middlesbrough to give medals down to sixth place is brilliant, as testified by the reactions of this young girl.
- Sitting next to a grandparent who was “up and down” out of his seat. It transpired that it was his and his grandson’s first meet. They had travelled down from Sunderland and he had been told to leave his grandson at the changing village. He was naturally nervous that his grandson was OK and had changed and found his team mates. He was soon reassured when he saw him chatting with his friends.

It is these instances that help create a special memory for all concerned.

Middlesbrough ASA had 63 members taking part in the gala. This was great considering that approximately half of them had taken part in last weekend’s N&D Championships. It was particularly good to see swimmers from the Academy taking part in their first gala and they should all be very proud of themselves, they did extremely well.

Where do you start when the medal count comprised, 116 golds, 73 silver and 61 bronze, countless PBs and 17 races in which Middlesbrough swimmers had a clean sweep (1st, 2nd and 3rd). Two of the best races were provided by our 9 year old girls. In the 50m freestyle Jessica Scott and Isobel Keetley had a great battle, with Jessica winning by 0.12 sec. with her plunge for the line. Similarly, in the 100m butterfly Libbi Upton and Angie Zhu fought out a desperate finish with Angie trailing by some 2 seconds, after 50m, managing to claw back much of the deficit and just getting pipped by 0.33 sec. Well done girls, great racing.

The gold medal winners were as follows:

9 year old age group – girls

Angie Zhu 400m freestyle

Elisha Rhodes 200m IM, 200m butterfly and 200m backstroke

Isobel Keetley 200m freestyle and 100m backstroke

Jessica Scott 100m breaststroke, 50m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, 200m breaststroke and 100m freestyle

Libbi Upton 50m butterfly and 100m butterfly

As you will see from the above, the results were phenomenal. From the 14 events swum, Middlesbrough girls won 13. KEEP UP THE HARD WORK!!

9 year old age group – boys

Isaac Buchan 200m backstroke, 50m backstroke, 100m freestyle, 50m butterfly and 100m backstroke. Well done young man!!

10 year old age group – girls

Millie Bozbayir 200m IM, 200m butterfly, 400m freestyle, 200m backstroke, 100m butterfly and 50m backstroke.

Violet Hearfield 200m freestyle, 50m butterfly, 100m breaststroke, 50m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 50m breaststroke (club record) and 200m breaststroke (club record) Well done young lady!!

As you can see Millie and Violet were “not to be outdone” by the 9 year olds, winning 6 and 7 events respectively and achieving a similar outcome winning 13 out of the 14 events. Again well done young ladies!!

10 year old age group – boys

William Morris 400m freestyle, 200m freestyle and 200m IM.

Thomas McDermott 50m breaststroke, 100m butterfly, 200m breaststroke, 50m backstroke, 100m freestyle, 50m butterfly and 100m breaststroke.

Maximus Potter 200m backstroke.

The boys battled to emulate the girls and came very close winning 11 of their 14 events. Again well done young men.

11 year old age group – girls

Bethan Palfreeman 50m butterfly, 100m breaststroke, 50m freestyle and 50m backstroke.

Evie Dilley 200m IM, 100m backstroke, 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle.

Megan Cairns 200m butterfly and 200m breaststroke.

Bethan, Evie and Megan helped to maintain a fine winning streak for Middlesbrough swimmers by winning 11 of their events, again (I'm sorry about the repetitiveness – I'm blaming the fine swimming) well done young ladies.

11 year old age group - boys

Toma Saha 50m breaststroke, 100m butterfly, 50m backstroke, 200m freestyle, 50m butterfly, 100m breaststroke, 100m backstroke and 50m freestyle. Well done Toma, best return of all the Middlesbrough swimmers – 8 golds.

12 year old age group – girls

Ellie Baister 200m freestyle, 100m breaststroke, 200m IM, 400m freestyle and 200m breaststroke.

Emma Bell 50m butterfly, 50m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle

Ellie Tibbett 100m backstroke, 200m backstroke and 50m backstroke

Well, the girls were at it again, 13 golds from 14 events – breath-taking.

13 year old age group – girls

Chloe Mathewman 200m butterfly

Rachel Bradley 200m freestyle, 200m IM, 100m backstroke, 200m breaststroke, 100m freestyle and 100m butterfly.

Rebecca Keetley 100m breaststroke,

Robyn Cunningham 200m backstroke and 50m backstroke

Sadie Dickinson 400m freestyle and 50m breaststroke

12 events won out of 14 – Splendid!!

13 year old age group – boys

Jack Atkinson 200m backstroke, 100m butterfly, 100m breaststroke, 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke

James Woods 400m freestyle, 200m freestyle and 200m IM.

Oliver Hall 50m freestyle and 200m butterfly.

Jack, James and Oliver upheld results for the boys with 10 excellent wins from 14 events.

14 year old age group – girls

Robyn Dickinson 100m breaststroke, 50m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle. Terrific!!

14 year old age group – boys

Jacob Ross 400m freestyle, 200m backstroke, 100m freestyle and 100m backstroke. First-class.

15 years/ and over age group – girls

Lucy Turnbull 200m freestyle,

Georgia Stockdale 50m butterfly, 200m butterfly

Rebekah Worth 50m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle.

Flora Finley 200m backstroke.

More great performances by the Middlesbrough girls, obviously spurred on by their captain – Lucy.

Overall in the girls' events, out of a total of 98 golds "up for grabs", the Middlesbrough girls won 76 – prolific!!!

I am certain that ALL the swimmers would like to thank all the officials, the referee and the starters for a gala that operated seamlessly and also to thank their parents, grandparents and friends for all their vocal support in making this as a SPECIAL GALA. In addition, I am sure they would like to thank Tom, Joe, Jim, Stuart and Sue for all their support, encouragement and their after race feedback. Roll on the 2nd weekend of the N&D championships GREAT SWIMMING TO THOSE TAKING PART.