

At this stage in the swimming season, coaches start to look for evidence that their training plans are working well and producing the goods. The Swim Ulster Burns Graded Gala last weekend, which was attended by 20 swimmers from the club, proved exactly that, with a total of 10 gold, 10 silver and 10 bronze medals as well as 46 additional top 10 places and 57 pb's.

The gala got off to an amazing start with the 200 freestyle which set the tone for the whole weekend and confirmed that Banbridge swimmers are a force to be reckoned with. Michael Rafferty pulled a fabulous swim out of the bag, taking 32.55 seconds off his previous swim in a time of 2.34.38, closely followed by Caolan Quinn with a time of 2.36.26.

The 100 breaststroke event also produced impressive results with Cameron McDonald making the final, achieving 5th place with a time of 1.18.07, and Patrick McNiff and Eunan Quinn winning silver in their age groups with times of 1.27.79 and 1.37.20 respectively. Eunan also went on to win bronze in 200 breast stroke, taking 12.89 seconds off his previous time. In the tough 400 IM event Jenny Wilson won gold in a time of 5.42.22, a pb of 12.06 seconds, and Jane Kilpatrick took bronze with 6.06.64, also going on to claim bronze in 200 breast stroke.

On Saturday the superb performances continued unabated with brilliant performances in backstroke, with Patrick Morgan coming 1st in the prelims for his age group and achieving 4th place in the final in a time of 1.08.55, and Daniel chambers taking bronze with a time of 1.09.39. The girls also performed stunningly with Jenny Wilson and Megan McKenna going head to head in the final, Jenny taking silver in 1.12.73 and Megan bronze in 1.15.68. Ellie Purdy, who was competing in her first graded gala swam a time of 1.29.64, giving Ellie her first well deserved Division 2 Qualifying time.

As the competition continued, the medals kept coming thick and fast with Abbie McCullough swimming 200 fly for the first time in a time of 3.14.80, winning silver in the process and Poppy Robinson winning silver in 50 free with a time of 32.15. In the 400 freestyle two more medals were secured with Alex Donnelly winning silver in a time of 5.41.88 and Jenny taking bronze in 5.05.92. Jenny won a superb four medals in total over the weekend, also claiming silver

in the 200 IM. Alex's second medal of the weekend was in 200 IM where he came 1st in a time of 3.08.73.

Regardless of event, the swimmers kept producing fabulous times and even more medals. To make the final in 100 fly was achievement enough, but both Patrick Morgan and Megan McKenna managed to win gold with times of 1.05.18 and 1.18.80 respectively. Other notable achievements over the weekend were by Olivia Knox, who won two medals for backstroke and 200 IM and Jodie Doyle, who managed to win a trio of medals, gaining silver in 100 free and bronze for both 200 breaststroke and back.

An overall magnificent performance by Banbridge concluded with Cameron McDonald swimming 1500 freestyle in a time of 1.18.80, a massive 40 seconds inside qualifying time for Division 1. Job well done, Cameron!

As usual swimmers were accompanied by coaches Ying and Yang, otherwise known as Davy and Graham, whose complementary styles of coaching have been instrumental in enabling swimmers to progress exponentially. Thank you!