

Banbridge swimmers face their first PTL gala of the season with Newry & Mourne.

Saturday 24th of September saw the first swimming gala of the season with the Banbridge PTL (Provincial Towns League) squad ready for action. With only a few vital squad members missing from the team, the swimmers looked strong and hopes were high. We were ready with several superb new swimmers to our club, Daniel Chambers, Lauren Robinson, Aaron Keegan, Abbie McCullagh and William Pinkerton being among those to help us stay in the First Division.

Group A girls took to the water with a good beginning to the gala with a second place performance. Group A boys were only just pipped at the post by a competitive Newry & Mourne team.

Group B girls, swam an excellent race with a strong time in first place. The four swimmers were Olivia Knox, Emma McElderry, Abbie McCullagh and Elli Robinson. Group B boys, (Alex Donnelly, Patrick McNiff, Joel Milligan and Caolan Quinn) didn't hold back, bringing in another superb first place for the home team.

Group C girls, (Jenny Wilson, Allyce Nixon, Megan McKenna and Poppy Robinson) followed the next medley relay with a fabulous win once again. Group C boys brought in second place for their medley relay.

Group D girls came in second, as did the Group D boys. At this stage of the competition, Banbridge were just behind but the competitive individual events were to follow.

Group A girls backstroke began with fourth, fifth and sixth places going to Sophie Mount, Julia Knox and Eimear McMullan.

Group A boys, Harry Farson, Harry Dougan and Rory McNiff swam well in third, fourth and sixth places.

One of our newcomers, Abbie McCullagh swam a wonderful first place performance and third and fourth from Elli Robinson and Olivia Knox completed the fine performances from the Group B girls. Group B boys swam third, fourth and fifth from Joel Milligan, Patrick Mc Niff and Alex Donnelly.

Group C girls Jenny Wilson, Megan McKenna and Allyce Nixon took second, third and fifth place. Group C boys Kealan McCambridge, Scott Donnelly and Nicholas Reid secured third, fourth and sixth place.

Group D girls Kate Farson, Heather Wilson and Caroline Mc Ilroy took third, fourth and sixth places. Group D boys finished off the backstroke with a second from Patrick Morgan, a third from Daniel Chambers and sixth from Conor Morgan

At this stage both teams were neck and neck. Everyone could feel the excitement and anticipation for the final result.

Breaststroke events were underway with the Group A girls and wonderful performances came from Charlotte Walker, Julia Knox and Caitlin Kearney who took first, third and fourth place. Their team-mates Group A boys saw a

second, third and fourth place from William Pinkerton, Daniel Kilpatrick and Harry Dougan.

Group B girls won a superb first, second and fifth places from Olivia Knox, Abbie Mc Cullagh and Emma McElderry. Patrick McNiff, Michael Rafferty and Joel Milligan secured second, third and fourth places for Group B boys.

Group C girls brought in excellent top three positions with a superbly fast time from Allyce Nixon followed by Lauren Robinson and Jane Kilpatrick. Likewise Group C boys brought in a super first position from Scott Donnelly, second from Nicholas Reid and sixth from Sam Farson (welcome back to the club).

Group D girls saw Kate Farson coming in third with Hannah Dunbar and Caroline McIlroy coming in fifth and sixth position. Group D boys collected second, third and sixth place from Cameron McDonald, Graham Stevenson and Thomas Kerr.

The butterfly events began with Group A girl, Sophie Mount, swimming at an incredible pace to take first place, followed by her team-mates, Julia Knox, taking third place and Caitlin Kearney fifth place. Harry Farson was in tremendous form with a superb time in first place for the Group A boys followed by his team mates Harry Dougan and William Pinkerton who came in third and sixth position. The swimmers Abbie McCullagh, Olivia Knox and Elli Robinson (Group B girls) achieved a fine first, third and fourth place in this event. Group B boys Joel Milligan and Michael Rafferty swam excellent second and third place positions.

Group C girls Jenny Wilson, Megan McKenna and Poppy Robinson achieved excellent first, second and third places with the Group C boys, Scott Donnelly, Declan Loy and Sam Farson bringing in first, fifth and sixth.

To finish off this event, Kate Farson and Heather Wilson came in fourth and fifth place for their team. Group D boy Patrick Morgan swam an excellent time taking first position and his team mates Daniel Chambers and Cameron McDonald brought in fourth and fifth places.

The frontcrawl events began, with the Group A girls Caitlin Kearney, Sophie Mount and Lauren Lyttle achieving second, third and fifth places respectively. Group A boys also saw good performances from Harry Farson, Daniel Kilpatrick and Harry Dougan achieving second, third and fourth.

Group B girls, again with excellent performances from Abbie McCullagh, Olivia Knox and Ellie Purdy in first, third and fifth places. Group B boys Patrick McNiff, Joel Milligan and Caolan Quinn gave their best against Newry & Mourne's Conor Poucher to come in second, third and fourth.

Group C girls Jenny Wilson, Megan McKenna and Poppy Robinson swam strongly to come home first, second and fifth. Group C boy Kealan McCambridge was on top form to claim first position and Scott Donnelly and Sam Farson came in a fine second and sixth place.

Group D girls, Heather Wilson, Hannah Dunbar and Kate Farson came in fourth, fifth and sixth. To finish the freestyle, Group D boys Daniel Chambers, Graham Stevenson and Patrick Morgan brought home second, fourth and fifth place.

At this stage of the night, the swimmers had to prepare themselves with newfound energy to undertake the challenging individual medley Group A girls Sophie Mount, Julia Knox and Eimear McMullan took second, fifth and sixth positions in the I.M. Group A boys Harry Farson, Daniel Kilpatrick and William Pinkerton secured second, fourth and fifth place.

Group B girl, Abbie McCullagh, swam an excellent first place with Olivia Knox swimming in great form in second and Elli Robinson in fourth. Group B boys, Joel Milligan, Patrick McNiff and Alex Donnelly came in second, third and fifth with good performances.

Group C girls swam superbly with Jenny Wilson and Megan McKenna taking first and second places and Lauren Robinson brought in points too with a fifth place. Group C boys were represented by Scott Donnelly, Declan Loy and Sam Farson and these swimmers brought in second, fifth and sixth places. Group D girls, Kate Farson and Heather Wilson achieved fourth and fifth places in I.M. Group D boys added more points with second, fourth and fifth places from Daniel Chambers, Cameron McDonald and Graham Stevenson.

The freestyle relays were underway with much excitement, anticipation and at this stage exhaustion. The group A girls (Sophie Mount, Lauren Armstrong, Julia Knox and Caitlin Kearney) and Group A boys (Conor Woods, Harry Dougan, Daniel Kilpatrick and Harry Farson) both had a comfortable win.

Group B girls (Elli Purdy, Ellie Robinson, Abbie McCullagh and Olivia Knox) had a fantastic swim claiming first place as did their team mates Group B boys (Alex Donnelly, Patrick McNiff, Caolan Quinn and Joel Milligan) with another great swim claiming them first place.

Group C girls (Poppy Robinson, Allyce Nixon, Jenny Wilson and Megan McKenna) swam a fine freestyle relay coming first but the Group C boys couldn't match the pace of their female team mates.

Group D girls had to settle for second place but the boys this time (Group D Graham Stevenson, Cameron McDonald Daniel Chambers and Patrick Morgan) won their freestyle relay as the competition was called to a close.

At this stage of the competition it was anyone's guess as to who had won, but to our great relief the final score was:

Banbridge 570
Newry & Mourne 564

It was an excellent gala with a lot of extremely close races. Special mention also goes to the largest group of boys who certainly pulled their weight in several relay races: Ross Johnston, Adam Bell, Eunan Quinn and Ryan Porter.

The next P.T.L gala will take place in Banbridge against Dungannon on the 10th December 2011.

For further information on Banbridge Amateur Swimming Club, visit our website on www.banbridgeasc.co.uk