

Armada Cup Diving Championships – Plymouth 2016

The prestigious annual Armada Cup Diving Event in Plymouth attracted Clubs from around the UK, and from as far away as Edinburgh. Coach Bill Clark said 'The Armada Cup Event conditions enabled Southend Diving to send some very young and inexperienced divers to their first age group event, other divers seeking to achieve their National Age group qualifying scores, and 6 of our more experienced Junior National Age group divers to compete against their peers - including some junior International divers. The event is held over 4 days and provides a challenge to all the divers to maintain their concentration and performances in up to three individual events, and synchro for some, over such a long period of time'

Of the Junior National Age Group squad all 6 divers made finals and collected a total of 2 Gold, 5 Silver and 3 Bronze medals. Jessie Millham won individual Gold on the 1m springboard, and Silver in the 5m Platform event. Max Lano, 13yrs, won gold in his favourite event the 3m springboard, and Club mate Hudson Lawrence, 13yrs, took Silver in the 1m springboard. Marney Easen 13yrs, won Silver on 3m and Amie Hudson, 14yrs won a Bronze on Platform. Sasha Brook, 13 yrs won Bronze in the 13&under Synchro with Jessie.

In the 1m springboard 11& under Girls event Jessie Millham made the final in 3rd place after slightly dropping two dives that simply fuelled her determination to do better in the final. And so it proved to be with Jessie hitting her opening dive - a back 1 ½ Somersaults for 7's from the judges and making the girls behind her fight to catch up. That wasn't to be with Jessie then doing a good forward 2 ½ s/s that the other girls couldn't match and she went on to win Gold and the Title. In the 5m platform Jessie was using her newly learned forward 2 ½ somersault dive piked and successfully performed it in the semi and final to take a well-deserved second medal on the final day – this time Silver behind the eventual winner Summer Radcliffe from home Club Plymouth Diving.

The Group B 14/15yrs platform event had 16 entries with Marney Easen, 13 yrs and Amie Hudson 14 yrs, making the 6 diver final in 3rd and 4th place respectively. In the final it was Amie who reversed the placings when confidently attacking her two new dives and finishing in an excellent 3rd place with Marney missing the entry on her final dive, a forward 2 ½ somersaults piked, that dropped her down into 5th spot.

Max Lano and Club mate Hudson Lawrence won a Silver each when pairing up in their Synchro event and then went on to battle it out in their individual events. On the 3m springboard Max fine-tuned his entries on his forward and Inward 2 ½ somersaults and moved up from qualifying in 5th in the prelims to win a well-deserved gold! Then Hudson reversed the placings by taking an excellent Silver in the 1m ahead of Max in 5th.

The Club's talented youngsters, Todd Geggus, Brooke Cullen, Evie Ledger, Ruby Day and Kiera Jones were all competing in their first age group event primarily for experience at this level, and all dived with great determination and enthusiasm under the guidance of Club Coach Aaron Paul. Tom Geggus, 9yrs was diving well in the E/D 11&under 5m platform event until he performed one of his dives in the wrong order and had it failed by the Referee. Whilst very disappointed, he remained calm and handled the setback without letting it affect his last dive. He went on to make another final in the Boys E/D 3m where he moved from 5th in qualifying to 4th in the Final. He also made the Final on 1m where he finished 6th.

Ewan Russell, 14yrs, Sam Mansfield 14 yrs, and Nadia Tudor-Ward 14 yrs had mixed performances but fought hard in their respective events to either achieve/be near to their National qualifying standard scores. Coach Ian Macleod said 'the divers deserved to be here on merit and now have to put in that extra hard work in training needed to ensure a better performance at the National Age Groups later in the year'