

Southend-On-Sea Sports Awards 2014



BIG NIGHT HAS TOWN SPORTS STARS SMILING

CONNOR Van Dal capped a successful year diving by being named Southend's Sports Personality of the Year.

The 13-year-old Southend Diving member has won medals at national and international level in 2014 and was given his award at a presentation ceremony.

The talented Belfairs Adcademy pupil claimed a gold and a silver at the National Championships earlier this year.

And he followed that up with a gold medal at the Bimbingamba international competition in Italy in July. The teenager is keen to follow training partner Oliver Dingley to senior success.

Connor's success made it a double for Southend Diving as the organisation was also named club of the year at the awards, which were held at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre.

The awards were presented by Southend's deputy mayor Cllr Andrew Moring and Active Southend chairman Cllr Mike Stafford.

The guest compere was television mountain biking commentator Dan Jarvis.



Teenager Connor's superb year is capped by winning Southend Sports Personality of the Year

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UP-AND-COMING diver Connor Van Dal is aiming to build on a successful year as he prepares for the new season.

The 13-year-old from [Leigh](#) won national and international medals in 2014 and his year has just been capped off by being crowned Southend's sports personality of the year.

Now the Southend Diving youngster is preparing for

his first competitions of the new season and stepping up an age group.

"Connor has an England training camp at the end of the month and then starts his new season," said mum Stephanie Van Dal.

"He is moving up an age group from Group C to Group B in January and it will be harder for him.

"We are not sure how things will go for him competition wise because he will be the youngest in his age group.

"It will be a lot of hard work but he is not afraid of that."

The Belfairs Academy pupil is still putting in nearly 20 hours of training a week at Southend Diving's Garon Park base.

And despite his coach Damian Ball leaving Southend Diving for a new job in Ireland, it is business as usual for Connor.

He is working with veteran Southend coach Bill Clark, who has guided Alison Childs, Karen Smith and Tracey Richardson to the Olympics.

"Bill coached Connor when Damian wasn't available so the continuity is there," added Stephanie.

"Bill is brilliant and Connor is happy training with him. He was quite upset about Damian because he has been his coach for the last three years and they had a good relationship."

Clark is currently putting Connor through his paces but the youngster will spend five days away from Garon Park next week at an England age group training camp.

Connor was selected in September following a trial and it is the second time he has got the call from England selectors.

He won a gold at an international event in Italy in the summer representing England and Stephanie hopes her son will compete for his country again this season.