

Report for Glasgow – British Para International meet 24th – 29th

April 2019

We had several Orange Squad swimmers taking part in this event that took place at Tollcross swimming centre in Glasgow.

Day 1

Travelling to Glasgow – 300 miles.

On Tuesday 23rd April, I drove the 300miles to Glasgow with swimmers Scott and Anna. Once we arrived at Glasgow, I got totally lost trying to find the car park in the one-way system. The sat nav system was about as helpful as a chocolate teapot, telling me to turn right when there is no right turn, and then announcing to me ‘You are lost!’ Having eventually found my way, the swimmers attended a land training session, before we finally settled in for a good night sleep.

Day 2

On Wednesday 24th April, we were joined by Jamie and Joshua who had travelled up by train, and we took part in a morning training session at the pool, getting used the layout. Although some of swimmers had competed here before, not everyone had and for Jamie it was his first International meet.

After lunch, we returned for a second session, when Emily- Jane also took part, coached by Robin, and Megan joined us.

Whilst Robin and I attending the coaches meeting, the swimmers had the opportunity to socialise and meet their competitors, many of which from other countries. It is always nice to chat to people from other parts of the world, find out about the travelling, where they are staying and just to get to know other people, overcoming language difficulties.

We returned back to our hotel for the evening, ate a nice meal and then rest and recovered until the next day. We were joined by Pam and Steve later on in the evening, who had also completed the 300mile drive. Everyone was housed on the 4th Floor except Jamie who was on the third floor, which made getting up very early in the morning a little easier.

Day 3

On Thursday, saw our first competitive swims. Everyone was competing in either 100m Freestyle and/or 200IM with Joshua and Megan reaching the finals. Scott swam a fantastic backstroke length within the 200IM, and Jamie proved he can swim 50m butterfly, without getting disqualified. Emily-Jane achieved a PB time in the 100m freestyle.

Anna had a problem with her hat and as far as I know it is still lying at the bottom of the pool. She had to buy a new one.

In the evening, we all went back to the pool to watch the finals and to complete a short aerobic training session, as Jamie had a day off the next day. We cheered on Josh and Megan, and Josh achieved PB times.

We also watched 3 world records being broken, which was exciting for all and we had the experience of watching a S2 swimmer compete – what an inspiration to everyone she was. She had no arms and

no legs but managed to swim 100m freestyle. She competed throughout the week and she was totally awe inspiring.

In the evening, following a nice meal, the swimmers recovered in their rooms, watching tv and resting, in preparation for the competition events the following day.

Today brought the first of the rain that I gather the West Midlands had most of the week, so everyone got wet going backwards and forwards from the hotel to the car to the pool and back again. My sweatshirt is still damp even now.

Day 4

Jamie had the day off so went off with his mum to explore Glasgow town centre, whilst Josh, Scott, Anna, Emily-Jane all returned back the pool for 8am warm up. Today was the 400m free and 200m free, with Scott and Josh making the finals. We decided to travel back to the pool in one car for the late session, good thinking or was it. As we piled into my car to make the 15minute journey to the pool, it was realised that someone had left their accreditation in the hotel. You cannot get into the pool without your ID or you pay £20 fine whilst they check your details with the Swim England database, so back we went, again in the pouring rain.

The evening brought several parents and coaches together, where we could discuss the day's events and spent some quality time, just socialising. (Yes, it involved a visit to the hotel bar and a large cocktail)

Friday was a very good day – PB times achieved, swimmers in the finals, no parking tickets (that makes a change), Pam had some good news, and I managed to get a Primark shopping trip in (a must when you are in Glasgow)

Steve attempted to book a table in the restaurant for the following day– very difficult when the person on the end of the phone does not understand Black Country dialect and Steve does not understand the Scottish accent – what a hilarious telephone conversation, all those who were listening to Steve's part of the phone call, ended up crying with laughter.

I won't mention the lift being overloaded when going back to our rooms! Don't lift's make a funny alarm noise when there are too many people in it. All sorts of lights come on well and flash on and off. New experience for me! It did say that it takes 8 people but there were only 5 of us. Steve had to get out and wait for the lift to come back down. He could hear us laughing all the way on the 4th Floor.

Day 5

Anna had the day off today, so she went out to the shopping centre and off for her Primark shopping trip. Steve was quite tired this morning, with the drive up catching up with him plus the late night in the bar. Steve left his car keys in the room (4th Floor) and managed to persuade Scott to go and fetch them. When Scott returned, having walked to the car, it appeared that Scott also forgot to collect the car keys that he went upstairs for, so all the Hadley's were standing in the rain (it was pouring) by the car getting soaking wet, all pointing the fingers at each other as to who was going back to the hotel to get the car keys. The term teapot brains came to mind. In the meantime, I drove to the pool with Jamie and his mum.

Today was the 100m backstroke and 100m breaststroke, with Megan and Josh both making finals. Scott and Jamie both swam a great heat but competition was very high and not only would they need a PB time but several seconds over and above a PB to gain a place in the final. Both very happy with their achievements. I think Scott's run up the stairs to the 4th floor earlier had prepared him well for his swim.

The start sheets for the finals were very late in being published, so no one knew for sure who was in and who was out until after the warm up (around 4pm) but Josh, Megan and I went back to the pool in preparation. Scott and Jamie went for a walk around with the town with their parents.

Tonight, proved to be a very good learning curve for all swimmers. If you are late for the call-up room, even by only one or two minutes, you are scrubbed from the final. Take note guys, who maybe fortunate to compete at international level – do not be late for call up room if you intend to swim the final. One swimmer learnt that lesson today, leaving them very disappointed, one extremely upset and angry parent and one very frustrated coach.

Today was also Steve and Pam's wedding anniversary and they invited everyone from Orion to come out for a meal with them. We had a lovely evening and found out the secrets of how to be happily married for 34 years.

Day 6

Last day today. This brought 50m freestyle and 100m butterfly. The S14 swimmers could not enter the 50m event, so Emily-Jane, Anna, Scott, Megan and Jamie all competed and everyone either matched or achieved a PB time. Megan made the final. Josh, Megan and Scott swam the butterfly, with Megan and Josh making the finals again. Megan after a discussion with her dad and with her GB coach, decided with withdraw and to make the journey home, whilst Josh stayed and competed.

Having had a large discussion, we all decided that the 5-6hour journey home needed to be started in day light. It meant Josh was left with the British Swimming Coach, as he wasn't travelling home until Monday. After being at the pool all morning and into the afternoon, it proved to be very tiring journey that required 2 stops. Steve and I drove back bringing Pam, Anna, Scott, Jamie and Jamie's mum Julie back with us, car sharing. Jamie and Scott travelled with Steve and Pam, whilst the ladies travelled with me. Steve ended up being the only person awake in his car at one point.

We had a great meet, some great achievements, and I really enjoyed the week. A bit of a long way to go, and definitely needs an extra day to travel up, so that swimmers have the opportunity to recover from the journey before competing. I think all the parents, coaches and all the officials deserve a day off from work on the Monday, certainly those who drove back but I strongly suspect that is very wishful thinking. I know I was back at work on Monday morning. However, the pool is one of the best we have ever swam in, everyone agreed that the venue was well organised and very suitable for para swimmers. Even the café was well stocked with both hot and cold food with very little queuing (Manchester take note). I got supplied with those all-important cups of tea during the day (thanks guys) and this meant I could concentrate on the swimmers.

An extra thank you to Pam who brought the printer so we could print off the starts sheets every day (we had to print off our own sheets as the signal at the pool was awful, which meant the electronic sheets were difficult to access on phones)

Looking forward to next year.

Karen

