



FINA World Junior Championships Belem, Brazil 26-30 October 2004

Belem is the entrance to the Amazon and is certainly very different from the usual countries we compete in.

The team consisted of 11 divers, 6 coaches, 5 staff (including a Doctor, Physio, 2 Team Managers and myself), plus a FINA A Judge.

Travel time was about 30 hours in total to get to the hotel (1.5 days) and so due to the travel fatigue, jet lag and acclimatization required we arrived with 5 full training days to the first event. Although there were in fact only 4 as the pool was closed all day 3 days before the event and FINA could do nothing about it.

The Team Managers report will take care of all other aspects of travel, accommodation etc so I will just concentrate on the performances.

Day 1:

Girls 14-15yrs Platform (5m &/or 7.5m only)

Both our divers were expected to final and indeed Claire Blencowe from Sheffield, still in her first year in this event finished 3rd in the prelims. This was a great performance from Claire and more importantly a very steady one. Although Claire slightly dropped her 205c on 7½ m for 5½, 6, it was a very creditable and consistent performance and one where she finished 7th in the World.

The other diver was Tonia Couch from Plymouth in her second year in this age group. Tonia got off to a flying start with a great first 4 dives on the 7½ m but dropped her first 2 optionals for 5, 5½ and her final dive (205c) for 3, 3½ which put Tonia out of the finals in 19th position. Tonia was only 25 points from the final and with 3 optionals like in training would have easily made the final.

Girls 16-18yrs 1m

Louise Van Hoof from Luton looked steady and a possible final chance until she dropped her 6th round dive, her first optional 403b for 1½, 2. The way back after that was tough and Louise was unable to pick herself back up on any of the other optionals, hence a very disappointing 23rd place, some 71 points from the final.

Hayley Sage from Beaumont Diving Academy had been having balance problems for some time on back and inward take-offs and this event was no different. However, apart from a dropped 5th round 5132d her list was steady finishing 17th just 18.75 points from the final.

Boys 16-18yrs 3m

Both Ben Swain (Sheffield) and Nicholas Robinson-Baker (Bagiu – Crystal Palace) missed the final and I can only put that down to them not being competition fit this year following the broken arm and foot respectively, earlier this summer.

Ben narrowly missed the final by just 9 points. His required dives were very steady and after dropping his opening optional dive 205b for 3½, 4 he fought back with a good 305b in the pouring rain for 6's. With the other 3 optionals only scoring 5, 6 Ben could not afford to drop an optional.

I am very pleased however with the way that Ben has developed with his coach Adam Sotheran and how much he has grown in strength and character since joining Adam and the JOP. Ben is a WC Performance diver of the future but must make the transition from Potential to Performance very soon as he is a senior next year.

Nick-Rob was a long way from the final with a very disappointing performance. But to be fair it did look at one stage like he would not make it here at all, as he was not fit for any previous events this year due to his broken foot. Nick also had 2 new dives in his list 307c and 407c which are very tough dives and although neither one was successful it is good to see our juniors competing the difficult dives earlier.

Day 2:

Boys 14-15yrs Platform (5m &/or 7.5m only)

Historically Great Britain has often had success in this event and this year was no exception. Both our competitors were from Leeds but there were some great divers in this event including the tiny Malaysian boy that stole everyone's heart in Athens when he finished 19th in the Men's 10m Platform event and also Thomas Finchum the young American superstar that is on the US Senior National Team on 10m Platform.

Callum Johnstone dived really well in the prelims just missing 305c slightly for 5, 5½ to final in 7th place.

His training partner Charles Calvert was so unlucky to miss the final in 13th place by just 0.05!!! Charles also dived really well just missing (of all things his best dive) 405c for 4½. Charles lost his spot and went over on the finish on the same dive that scored him 8, 8½ at the European Juniors earlier this year.

This was an unexpected disappointment.

In the final Callum Johnstone stepped up a gear and did 3 great optional dives each for 7, 7½, 8 and finished in the Bronze medal position getting Great Britain up on the rostrum at last. Callum was just 3.5 points from the silver, which was won by the American Thomas Finchum.

It is worth noting some of the outstanding dives done in this event:

107b 7.5m for 6½, 7. 107c 7.5m for 7½, 8. 205b 7.5m for 8, 8½.

5235d 5m for 6½, 5235c 7.5m for 6½ and 405b 7.5m for 6½.

Boys 16-18yrs 1m

This event was Ben and Nick's chance to make up for missing the final the day before and they did just that, but by the skin of their teeth in 11th and 12th! Ben dived well just missing 205c and 305c both short for 3½, 4. Nick badly missed his 5th round dive 5132d and this did affect his confidence. Nick had some very difficult dives in his list and missed 3 of them for 4½, 5 but hit his last dive, 405c to scrape into the final.

Once in the final it was a different story with Nick doing the first dive of the final 107c for all 7 ½'s! In the final your required's score is carried through which meant that Nick had a big deficit due to the dropped 5132d earlier that day. I believe this was what cost Nick the Bronze medal as he finished in 4th place behind the Russian missing the rostrum by only 8 points!

However it is important to note that Nick was also 4th in this event but the younger age group 2 years ago at the last World Junior Championships and I am sure that Nick would have had a medal around his neck had it not been for his confrontation with the 3m platform in training at Crystal Palace earlier this year.

Also in the final young Ben stepped up a gear to finish in 8th place with a much-improved list of dives. Ben's broken arm earlier this summer, also from training, was most definitely a hindrance in respect of getting competition fit this summer but like Nick he gave it his best shot.

Day 3:

Girls 16-18yrs 3m

Girls springboard has never been a strong event in British Diving and it continues to be one of our major weak areas. We have to find a way to improve on their technique and entries and learn to use a springboard more effectively.

Louise Van Hoof finished 20th, 32 points from the final and with 2 dropped required dives and a first 5 dives score of only 157 points you can see why. Hayley Sage finished 24th, 43 points from the final. Hayley's first 5 dives score was only 167 points so dropping her last 2 optional dives didn't really help. Our divers cannot expect to make a final at this level with such poor required dives and it is fair to say that this is a weakness in most of our current junior girl springboard divers.

Boys 14-15yrs 1m

Our 2 boys from Leeds, Charles and Callum are much smaller and lighter than most of the older boys in this age group so their dives in particular on the one metre board will be a lower degree of difficulty. Nevertheless they could both make the final diving at their best and their goal setting was top 12 in this event.

Charles achieved that goal with a very steady and unblemished performance, not missing a dive but simply not getting high enough to score in the 7's. In the final, Charles remained in 12th place and could have moved up to 10th place if he had not missed his hurdle in his opening dive, however, a great achievement to final in your weakest event.

Callum finished in 14th place only 3.35 from the final. A dropped 5th round dive, 103c for 4½, 5 did not help the situation. Callum was unable to capitalise on his previous days Bronze medal winning performance.

Day 4:

Girls 16-18yrs Platform

Both girls are from Plymouth and had been looking very good in training leading up to the event, however neither girl made final which was indeed a big disappointment.

Brooke Graddon got off to a good start scoring mostly 7's on her first 4 required dives and also on her first optional dive 405b. But then Brooke dropped both her usually better scoring optional dives for 4½, 5 together with her last dive 107c for 4½. Brooke finished in 17th place some 29 points from the final, which could have and should have been easily achieved. I did not see any reason for this at all other than possibly losing her focus and not thinking about the process goals but instead the outcome. This was uncharacteristic of Brooke for sure.

Sarah Barrow looked a little inconsistent occasionally in training and indeed was very nervous on her opening dive which she dropped for 5, 5½. Sarah then also dropped 3 of her 4 optional dives finishing in 19th place, 50 points from the final.

It was a bad day for our platform girls.

Girls 14-15yrs 1m

Our 2 competitors in this event were Jodie McGroarty from Bagiu Diving (Crystal Palace), who won Silver in this event at the earlier European Juniors and Claire Blencowe from Sheffield who had just finished 7th in the world that week on platform.

Claire never really dropped anything but never hit anything either so missed final by 36 points in 19th place. To be fair to Claire, a final on 1 metre was only an outside chance as her main event at the moment is platform.

Jodie missed too many of her optional dives to get anywhere near the final (finishing 22nd) and mainly due to her injury it is fair to say that Jodie was simply not

competition fit and not as confident as she was at European Juniors. This was not apparent until we were in Brazil.

Jodie was out for 6 weeks after the European Junior Championships with a bad back injury and her attendance here was thanks to the medical support she has received from our British Diving Medical Team, her Crystal Palace Physio and the EIS. Jodie is now in a back brace for 9 weeks.

Day 5:

Boys 14-15yrs 3m

Once again our 2 boys from Leeds, Charles and Callum were ready to dive in our penultimate event. Callum got off to a great start with his first 5 dives but missed all of his optional dives for 4½, 5 and dropped down to 17th place but only 12 points from the final.

Charles was also really up for the final and was very steady right up to his 7th round dive, 205c which he dropped short for 3's simply by coming out too early. Followed by another early out on his last dive 405c. Charles unfortunately finished 14th just 3 points from the final!

Girls 3m Synchro

This was the final event of the World Championships and one, which we were quietly confident in. Louise Van Hoof and Hayley Sage were the current Bronze medallists in this event from this years European Junior Championships. Both girls were looking very good in practice and in the event their Synchro was good but not as good as they were capable of. The main problem was their individual dives. Hayley dropped her 205c for 4, 3 ½ and Louise dropped 201b for 5, 6 and her first 2 optionals, 405c and 205c for 4½, 5. They did both finish on a very good 305c with good individual scores and Synchro scores. This left them in 7th place, in a very tight competition just 10 points from the Bronze medal and 11 points from the silver medal.

For sure a medal in this event was within their grasp for these 2 girls. Brian Hazelton did an excellent job coordinating and choreographing their Synchro.

Summary

As a team Great Britain only finished 11th out of 26 nations and that was due to most of the girl divers not making finals but it is important to note that our Goal Setting for this event was to get x6 top 10 places and it did not include a medal. We actually achieved x5 top 10 places but one of these was a Bronze medal so that was a huge success for the whole team.

There were some excellent results in Brazil, in particular from the boys who all made a final. There were also some very poor results, mostly from the girls, with the exception of Claire Blencowe who did herself proud.

Every diver and coach has had their individual and/or group feedback about each event and we have identified which areas need more work, what to do to improve etc and which plans really did work.

Without exception, Callum Johnstone was our diver of the meet with his spectacular performance on platform. It should also be known that his coach Adrian Hinchliffe, fresh from the Olympic Games, produced exactly the same medal 4 years ago at the World Junior Championships in 1999. Great job Ady, you obviously learnt from your experience.

My thanks to all the support staff and coaches that worked so well as a team for the whole 2 weeks. My thanks also to all the JOP Support Staff that stayed at home because their job had already been done. Lastly, well done to so many parents that came to support Team Great Britain.

Results:

<u>Girls B Platform</u>		24 divers
1. Mariya Voloschenko	UKR	359.09
2. Julia Koltunova	RUS	338.06
3. Fernanda Gonzalez	MEX	319.56
7. Claire Blencowe	GBR	301.22 Prelims 3 rd 309.60
19. Tonia Couch (Prelims)	GBR	269.20
(12 th place score in Prelims was 294.80)		

<u>Girls A 1m</u>		27 divers
1. Paola Espinosa	MEX	403.46
2. Nora Subschinski	GER	398.88
3. Olena Federova	UKR	396.73
17. Hayley Sage	GBR	315.95
23. Louise Van Hoof	GBR	263.25
(12 th place score in Prelims was 334.70)		

<u>Boys A 3m</u>		30 divers
1. Romel Pacheco	MEX	541.95
2. Julian Sanchez	MEX	533.48
3. Vikoulov Oleg	RUS	522.56
16. Ben Swain	GBR	438.35
25. Nicholas Robinson-Baker	GBR	393.00
(12 th place score in Prelims was 447.55)		

<u>Boys B Platform</u>		27 divers
1. Yury Kunakov	RUS	352.17
2. Thomas Finchum	USA	347.98
3. Callum Johnstone	GBR	344.40 Prelims 7 th 319.75
13. Charles Calvert	GBR	295.65
(12 th place score in Prelims was 295.70!)		

<u>Girls B 3m</u>		26 divers
1. Mariya Voloshchenko	UKR	369.88
2. Fernanda Gonzalez	MEX	358.80
3. Svetlana Filippova	RUS	354.49
No GB Divers entered		
(12 th place score in Prelims was 308.10)		

<u>Boys A 1m</u>		29 divers
1. Yahel Castillo	MEX	492.11
2. Matthew Mitcham	AUS	461.58
3. Alexey Kravchenko	RUS	459.61
4. Nicholas Robinson-Baker	GBR	451.49 Prelims 12 th 422.25
8. Ben Swain	GBR	432.12 Prelims 11 th 423.50
(12 th place score in Prelims was 422.25)		

<u>Boys B 1m</u>		21 divers
1. Artem Lvov	RUS	347.96
2. Yuriy Knunakov	RUS	339.96
3. Matthew Cooper	USA	335.16
12. Charles Calvert	GBR	267.38 Prelims 12 th 280.15
14. Callum Johnstone	GBR	276.80
(12 th place score in Prelims was 280.15)		

<u>Girls A 3m</u>	29 divers
1. Olena Fedorova	UKR 468.82
2. Paola Espinosa	MEX 464.64
3. Sharleen Stratton	AUS 430.12
20. Louise Van Hoof	GBR 333.05
24. Hayley Sage	GBR 321.50
(12 th place score in Prelims was 364.90)	

<u>Girls A Platform</u>	20 divers
1. Paola Espinosa	MEX 434.91
2. Natalia Goncharova	RUS 420.08
3. Brittany Viola	USA 412.65
17. Brooke Graddon	GBR 321.55
19. Sarah Barrow	GBR 300.50
(12 th place score in Prelims was 350.40)	

<u>Girls B 1m</u>	25 divers
1. Mariya Voloshchenko	UKR 359.91
2. Kelci Bryant	USA 335.10
3. Martina Andren	SWE 316.92
22. Jodie McGroarty	GBR 249.95
(12 th place score in Prelims was 284.95)	

<u>Boys A Platform</u>	26 divers
1. Rommel Pacheco	MEX 614.50
2. Matthew Mitcham	AUS 568.60
3. Wegadesk Gorup-Paul	CAN 539.29
No GB Divers entered	
(12 th place score in Prelims was 442.85)	

<u>Boys B 3m</u>	27 divers
1. Bryan Nickson	MAS 396.14
2. Yuriy Kunakov	RUS 395.95
3. Thomas Finchum	USA 389.16
14. Charles Calvert	GBR 318.85
17. Callum Johnstone	GBR 310.70
(12 th place score in Prelims was 321.95)	

<u>Boys 3m Synchrono</u>	11 teams
1. Anikine / Vikoulou	RUS 289.26
2. Robertson / Mitcham	AUS 287.91
3. Ortega / Vera	COL 285.60
No GB Divers entered	

<u>Girls 3m Synchrono</u>	12 teams
1. Fedorova / Ishchenko	UKR 297.03
2. MacDonald / Friesen	CAN 255.48
3. Espinosa / Lopez	MEX 254.55
7. Sage / Van Hoof	GBR 244.80