

Waterford Invitational

With a short break on the regional calendar, swimmers took advantage of the opportunity to attend the annual Waterford Crystal Invitational Gala recently. The meet offered a full range of 100m & 200m events, in all age groups. Swimmers were limited to a maximum of four events.

Sundays Well Swimming Club (SWSC) travelled with a small team of 11 swimmers with each member of the team reaping the reward for a commitment to training. The star of the team was 12 year old Paul Higgins who won gold in all four of his events. The most impressive of his victories came at 200m IM 2:41.68 when he improved on his previous best by 6 seconds. Higgins also won gold at 100m freestyle 1:03.74, 100m butterfly 1:14.80 and 200m freestyle 2:18.38. He was joined on the 200m freestyle podium by club mate Marc Galland in 3rd 2:32.44 with Andrew Byrne having to settle for 4th as Conor Foley of Dolphin denied the SWSC boys of a complete podium finish, when he touched for second behind Higgins. The roles were reversed at 100m butterfly when Andrew Byrne improved by 4.5 seconds to place second 1:22.76 behind Higgins and young Galland with a 6.57 second personal best (PB) 1:27.35 was the one to lose out on the podium finish, when Evan Bailey of New Ross pipped him into fourth. Andrew Byrne added a bronze at 200m IM 2:52.62 while Galland also won two silver medals, at 200m IM 2:51.50 and 200m backstroke 2:46.86 The backstroke time was a 9.43 second improvement on his previous best.

Another to shine for the Well was Alex Walsh (14) who picked up three golds for his day at 200m backstroke 2:27.27, 100m backstroke 1:12.40 and 200m freestyle 2:18.77. Neddie Irwin (13) also medalled in all four of his events, victorious at 200m backstroke 2:27.47 and 200m IM 2:42.85. He also won two silver medals at 100m butterfly 1:18.98 and 100m backstroke 1:11.81. Neddie's two younger sisters Kitty (12) and Mae (10) also competed and although not in the medals both had impressive PB performances, notably Kitty at 200m IM & 100m breaststroke and Mae at 100m backstroke.

Other medallists for the club were John Curtin (14) silver at 200m IM 2:46.90 and Aoife Gallagher (16) silver at 200m breaststroke 3:10.83.

The youngest member of SWSC to travel to Waterford was 9 year old Zara Byrne who had PB's in all three of her events. Although not in the medals she had a 6 second PB at 200m IM 3:04.97, 3 second PB at 200m backstroke 3:11.66 and 0.49 second PB at 100m backstroke 1:31.37. It should also be noted that Zara was in action the previous week at the Mallow Invitational where she took on a commanding 7 event programme, medalling in each event, three golds and four silver medals. To achieve significant PB's in two 200m events, just a week later is remarkable.

Next up will be the Munster Grade 2, followed by Munster Minor Schools Championships.