

Report from Plymouth Diving
Thomas Daley is talk of World Diving
11th June 2007

For some time, Plymouth Diving's young star, Thomas Daley, has been considered one of the greatest talents ever to grace a diving board in the UK. However because of his age, he has had very few opportunities to demonstrate his true potential on the international stage.

That changed this year, when British Diving Managers took the bold step of allowing him to compete on the Senior Grand Prix circuit where, unlike the major championships, there is no specified lower age limit.

His first outing was in Canada just a month ago, where he remarkably made the semi-final (top 12), finishing 10th against some of the World's leading talent.

Just 5 weeks on, the confidence that gave him was evident at the Madrid leg of the FINA Grand Prix circuit. He stunned everyone with one of the most outstanding performances ever witnessed by a diver, who turned 13 just weeks ago.

He qualified for the semi-final stage of the contest with an astonishing second place in the preliminary, just 10 points behind the Olympic Champion from China, Hu Jia. His score of 480 was a personal best by some 30 points and the highest score achieved by a British male in 2007 – including our Olympic Silver medalist Peter Waterfield.

Keen to demonstrate that performance was not a one-off, Thomas went on to win his semi final with a score of 450 and book himself a place in his first Senior International final (top 6) at only his second attempt.

He finished 4th in the final, an agonizing 6 points away from a medal, with a score of 420 points. In each round of dives, Thomas had to perform his 6 most difficult dives and over the 3 rounds, he missed just one of those 18 dives. It is difficult to describe just how remarkable this performance is from a 13 year old boy on just his second outing at this level.

Thomas's goal had always been 2012, but with performances like this, Beijing is certainly beckoning.

There are still a lot of what if's at the moment, but it all comes down to January's British Championships and the World Cup Trial, where Thomas will have his first opportunity to make a full major championship team. If he achieves that, then a top 18 place at the World Cup will almost certainly secure him a place on the Beijing Team.

** Plymouth team-mate Sarah Barrow was also in Madrid with the British Team, but after injury niggles and a throat infection, she was diving below par and took 16th place in the Women's Platform event. Her score of 259 was disappointing after some excellent recent results in China and Canada, where she had scored over 300 points. Sarah was also 5th in the Synchronised platform where she was trying out with a different partner, Rebecca Gallantree from Leeds, there score of 273 was an excellent score for a first time competing together.