

PORTMAN ARMADA CUP REPORT

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PRIOR STARS AT TOP CITY EVENT

Young city diver Kyle Prior was the star performer at a sensational diving competition held at Central Park Pool at the weekend.

The Plymouth Diving 15-year-old won three gold medals in the 16 and over category at the now annual Portman Armada Cup.

The event, which took place over three days, saw the UK's rising young stars pull out all the stops for top individual and team honours.

Experienced divers, including internationals from all over the country, including Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Southampton, performed magnificently.

But it was Prior who stole the show, claiming victories in the individual one-metre, three-metre and platform events.

In the team competition Plymouth finished fourth overall on 287 points, with Southampton taking first place with 451 points.

City of Leeds and City of Sheffield teams came second and third, respectively.

Plymouth's Claire Wonnacott, who at just 18, coaches the city's up and coming young divers, enjoyed a successful competition.

She came second in the 16 and over girls' one-metre section, behind Commonwealth Games team member Rebecca Gallantree from Leeds.

This was a nice surprise for Wonnacott considering her focus was currently on coaching the club's youngsters, not on her own diving.

Others who shone for Plymouth were Harry Glover (16), winning a well-deserved bronze medal in the boys' 16 and over and Aaron Walters (14) who picked up a fourth, fifth and sixth place in his final.

Like Walters, Ashleigh Thatcher, 15, was in three finals, collecting two fourths and a fifth.

Plymouth's fourth-placed team position was partly due to losing several of their top stars to illness and injury.

These included superstar Thomas Daley, who has been unable to dive head first since suffering a thumb injury at the Youth Olympics in Australia last month.

However, the 13-year-old demonstrated just why he is considered the most natural diving talent in the UK by deciding to compete in the 12-13 boys' three-metre event despite his injury, opting to land feet first in the dive, which was a difficult thing for him to do as he is not used to diving that way.

And even though he could not dive head first, Daley still managed to make the final against all of the UK's 28 leading young divers and came fourth.

Fellow city international Tonia Couch, who came collected a fourth place at last year's Commonwealth Games, has also been troubled by a thumb injury.

That injury prevented her from competing in her preferred 10 metre board event.

However, she did take place in the girls' 16 and over one-metre event, where she finished sixth.

Plymouth Diving coach Sam Grevett was delighted with how the event went.

She said: "It was the best diving competition of the year. The organisation was phenomenal and our team performed exceptionally well, some above the level we expected.

"But Kyle Prior is our most experienced diver and performed convincingly under pressure.

All the team did brilliantly.

The fourth place in the team event was, although disappointing, a result of top divers sidelined through injury.

Nevertheless, the team's less experienced divers proved that they are ready to embrace the challenges provided when competing at this level.

Plymouth can undoubtedly congratulate themselves on holding such a sensational event, and the divers can be proud to have performed so well in such a prominent UK diving event."

The Armada Cup event was sponsored for the seventh successive year by the Portman Building Society.

We are indebted to our volunteers who help to make this event possible (before, during and after) and whilst remembering to say thanks to each and every one of them during the event is just not possible, so we'd like to take this opportunity to make sure they all know how much they are appreciated.

A great big thanks to one and all, we couldn't do it without you!

Merci

Gracias

Danken
Dank

Obrigado!

Grazie

Thanks