

Junior sport

Surviving: Annual club championships are so important

Barracudas still alive and kicking

Swimming

BLAENAVON Barracudas recently held their annual club championships at Pontypool Active Living Centre.

It has been a very difficult year for the club since the closure of Blaenavon Leisure Centre and its swimming pool, the Barracudas home.

With swimmers travelling to various swimming pools across Torfaen due to the availability of appropriate pool time for training sessions, it was important for the club to hold this annual event to show the club was still operating and full of life.

There were 38 young swimmers aged seven to 16 taking part in the championships and a total of 36 separate events taking place, including butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle and individual medley.

The Barracudas demonstrated that the club was still alive and able to compete at the highest level.

A total of 36 personal best times were set by the swimmers during the course of the championships and this alone demonstrated the commitment they showed to an enjoyable but competitive evening.

Many of the Barracudas



GOING SWIMMINGLY: Blaenavon Barracudas swimmers show their enthusiasm for the club

young swimmers take part in regular organised and competitive meets and club galas across the south Wales and Hereford areas. Several of the Barracudas

swimmers compete in the Western Speedo League as members of Team Torfaen who have finished third out of 18 teams after their recent win against Bath.

They are now set to compete in the finals. The club would welcome any new swimmers who would like to join and develop their swimming skills

and ability. Interested swimmers can contact club chairman Kevin Rogers via email at kevin.rogers@btconnect.com.

Maisie, 6, to be star for Wales

Gymnastics



YOUNG Maisie Methuen is celebrating being picked to represent her country at just six years of age.

Maisie, pictured with her younger sister Kayla, from Cwmbran, are members of Torfaen Gymnastics Club. The pair, who attend Griffithstown Primary School, got into gymnastics after Maisie received an invitation to a party at the club.

"Maisie started doing cartwheels in the house when she was three," said mum Louise. "She went along to the party and the interest grew from there. Kayla followed her into it and they both love it," she added.

Under the close attention of head coach Helen McKenna, Maisie has progressed rapidly in just two years of competing.

She won six gold medals, one silver and the gold for overall gymnasts at a tournament in Bargoed recently and came second out of 40 in her age group in the Welsh squad trials. And Kayla is also showing promise of following in her big sister's footsteps in various in-house competitions.

Louise and husband Mitch, director of local company MSM Partitions Ltd, are so proud of their daughters that they decided to sponsor the club to the tune of £2,000, which was matched by Sports Match, the government-funded organisation to promote grass-roots sports.

"We're very proud, the girls are doing so well," said Louise, "but they all looked so scruffy when they competed at the competitions that we decided to donate the money for tracksuits and equipment."

Junior sport

Success: Taekwondo youngsters dominate tournament

Medals galore for martial arts kids



WINNERS: Members of the Martial Arts and Fitness Centre in Newport show off their medals

STUDENTS from The Martial Arts and Fitness Centre, Maindee, Newport, competed in an ITF taekwondo tournament in Cardiff recently, coming home with more

Martial arts

than 60 medals.

The 44 students were taken to the tournament by coach Leanne Gassor, a fourth degree black belt, and assistant coach Aaron Gassor.

Miss Gassor said: "I'm delighted with the way the team is going from strength to strength and am extremely pleased and proud of all the students who took part in the tournament.

"I'm really looking forward to taking the students to the many up and coming

tournaments we have in the new year.

"Myself and all the staff at the Martial Arts and Fitness Centre would also like to say a special thank you to our sponsors, Croydon Coaches, and to all the students, parents and their families who continu-

ally support us throughout the year."

If you would like information on classes held at The Martial Arts and Fitness Centre you can visit their website at www.mafcmartialarts.com.

Alternatively, contact the club on 01633 222260.

National centre for judo stars

Judo

A DEDICATED facility designed to cultivate the judo talents of the future is set to be established at the Welsh Institute of Sport (WIS) in Cardiff.

The National Dojo will be available all day and every day to squads of all ages and abilities and provide vital mat space for local clubs.

Its introduction will also ensure that it meets the needs of Wales' elite judo players and gives them access to high levels of coaching to give them the best possible opportunity to fulfil their future potential.

The Welsh Judo Association (WJA) has for many years advocated establishing a dedicated, permanent training facility in Wales.

In particular, Neil Adams MBE, the Welsh National Coach, had stated that a dedicated base is essential for the development of the sport.

In response to the WJA's long-standing lobby, the Sports Council for Wales' Council members have taken the decision to invest into the future of this priority sport by converting the swimming pool at the WIS into a dedicated dojo facility.

And as Adams looks to hone the talents of his current crop of players into the medalists of the future, he has welcomed the announcement with great enthusiasm.

Widely touted as one of the most acclaimed technical fighters ever produced by the sport, Adams' most notable achievements include Olympic silver medals in the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games. He was recruited to Welsh Judo in March 2006.

He said: "Judo is one of the most successful sports in Wales - and in the UK as a whole.

"When I first took on the role at Welsh Judo, the focus was very much on developing the top five or six judo players in Wales."

"Very little attention was given to the potential athletes - the ones that are likely to feature in the London 2012 Games for example. And that was a key factor in my job description - to bring the talent through - to bring the talent through - and we're starting to do that."

Newport schools hammer Hereford

NEWPORT & District Schools under-15 team has reached the fourth round of the English Schools Football Association Trophy after beating Hereford Schools FA 5-1 at Newport YMCA's Mendalgief Road ground.

Goals from Zak Thomas and Joe Gibson gave Newport a 2-0 half-time lead.

Gibson added a third goal early in the second half before Hereford snatched a goal to spark hopes of a revival.

However, this was short-lived as further goals from substitute Ryan Smith and Jamie Davies ensured Newport's smooth passage into the next round.

Newport will entertain Plymouth Schools FA at

Football

Caildicot Town's Jubilee Way ground on Wednesday, December 12, at 6.45pm.

The Welsh Under 16 squad's hopes of winning this season's Sky Sports Victory Shield slipped away in freezing conditions at Park Avenue, Aberystwyth last Friday as they lost 1-0 to their Northern Irish counterparts.

There was an excellent turnout of over 2,300 supporters on a cold night but it is now down to Scotland and England to fight out for honours at Falkirk this week.

Both sides started the game in tentative fashion and gave the ball away easily.

There were few goal oppor-

tunities and it wasn't until the 20th minute that Northern Ireland threatened.

A long throw level with the edge of the penalty area was headed on and central defender Shane Duffy headed just over the bar when well placed.

This seemed to spur the home side on. Clowes fed captain Matthews down the right flank and his excellent weighted cross fell to Reece Jones who controlled the ball well but pulled a half volley just wide when well placed.

Within minutes Wales were awarded a free kick 30 yards from goal and free kick specialist Lee McArdle stepped forward to send in a swerving effort that the Irish keep-

er was fortunate to save with his legs.

The ball fell to Billy Bodin who had anticipated well but his effort was well saved by Dickey.

Manager Martin Evans quite rightly was disappointed that Wales did not go in at half time with a one or two goal advantage from chances created.

And the first opportunity of the second half also fell to Wales.

Shane Williams was set free down the left but he fired over the bar and was then pulled back for offside.

The Irish at half time had put on Jamie Douglas and his telling runs started to cause havoc in the home defence.

He slipped past three defenders before firing just wide and then latched on to a poor clearance but Leon Clowes was alert to the danger and slid in to clear the danger.

With 12 minutes to go the Irish won a series of five consecutive corners which the Welsh were unable to clear from the danger area.

All corners were well delivered and the fifth was partially saved by the keeper but fell to substitute Robbie Hume who clipped it into the net from a narrow angle.

As time ran out Wales pressed forward but, racing towards goal, Williams unfortunately did not see that three of his team mates were well placed and he fired

straight at the keeper.

Dickey in the Irish goal then failed to hold a cross but team mate Hegerty was on hand to clear.

It was a fairly even game with neither side playing to their ability.

The main difference between the two teams was that the quality of the delivery from dead ball situations by the Irish was far better; their goal coming via this route from a left wing corner.

Wales Squad: Paul Walker (Northampton), Adam Matthews (Cardiff City), Leon Clowes (Wrexham), Lee McArdle (Everton), Jonathan Meades (Cardiff City), Joshua Dawkin (Norwich City) substituted with Ben Jones (Preston North End), Jack Rea (Chester City) substituted with Jack Macgregor (Tranmere Rovers), Reece Jones (Fulham), Liam Newman (Burnley), Billy Bodin (Swindon Town) substituted with Lee Lucas (Swansea City), Shane Williams (Mornmouth C of E).

Rugby round-up

NHSOB U15s beat their ST JOSEPH'S counterparts 17-7 in the Young Gwent District Cup to reach the semi-final of the plate competition.

The first-half was dominated by NHSOB but they failed to turn territory into points and St Joseph's scored against the run of play.

NHSOB finally got a try when Rhys Marshall dived over and Russell Davies added a second after Louis Blacker had charged down a defensive kick.

Elliott Wheaton scored a third try under the posts after excellent work from Alex Lovell and Luc Evans kicked the conversion.

NHSOB U13s took on Bargoed in the cup and threw the ball around the park to produce nine unanswered tries in a 53-0 win. The impressive Jack Ford claimed four, Dan Southall (2), Rhys Anderson (2), and Evan Wynne (1).

TALYWAIN UNDER 12s continued their fine season with a hard-fought 14-7 cup victory away to New Panteg.

Talywain opened the scoring within the first four minutes with Dewi Taylor going over in the corner, converted by captain Lloyd Kinsella.

After some good work by both sets of forwards scrum half Mac Trinder went over for a well deserved try, converted by vice captain Ryan Ball.

CAERLEON U11s hosted CWMBRAN U11s on Sunday. The first half saw Caerleon scoring five tries and two conversions to lead 29-0.

They added one more after the break to win 34-0. Try scorers were Joshua Belcher, Jordan Taylor (2), Jake Sutherland, Ashley Burton and Jake Peake.

NEW PANTEG U11s travelled to Bettws last Sunday and came away with a seven tries to two victory.

Panteg scrum half Ethan Winstone opened the scoring, closely followed by tries from Adam Malson and George Collins, before Bettws replied with a well worked try in the corner.

The second half saw some good interpassing by Panteg which resulted in tries for Jack Beckinsale, Liam Bailey and Matthew Grantham.

Bettws scored their second try right on the final whistle.

NEWPORT WHITEHEAD STEELERS U14s recorded one of their best away victories against a previously unbeaten Bridgend Athletic and in doing so passed the 400 point mark already this season.

Immediately from the kick off the Steelers took the initiative and Alex Saleh in the outside

centre channel took his chance well to run in from 60 metres.

Lloyd Davies converted for a 7-0 lead within the first minute.

The game continued with sustained pressure by the Steelers on the home line for much of the first half, however a mixture of brave defence by the home side, a lack of 'heads up' rugby by the Steelers in looking for opportunities and some ill discipline somehow allowed the home side to protect their try-line.

At the end of the first half Bridgend scored against the run of play cut the deficit to 7-5 at the break.

The second half was a much more evenly contested game with defence very much to the fore for both teams.

However, a series of excellent positional kicks gave the Steelers a strong attacking position.

A planned line-out move, exe-

cuted to perfection, saw Matthew Williams crash over in the corner.

Lloyd Davies added the conversion to put the Steelers 14-5 up.

However, Bridgend were not going to give up their unbeaten tag without a fight and to their credit fought back courageously to 'muscle over' for another converted try.

The last few minutes saw wave upon wave of attack from the home side which was only repulsed by brave and resolute Steelers defence.

The final whistle was greeted with sheer joy by the exhausted team and their travelling support as the Steelers celebrated a memorable 14-10 victory.

NEWPORT WHITEHEAD STEELERS U13s also played away to Bridgend and went down 26-17 in a closely contested match.

The home team opened the scoring with a converted try 10 minutes into the game but the Steelers fought back with full back Taran Studdart scoring twice to put them ahead before half time.

This lead proved to be short lived as Bridgend ran in three more tries in the second and, despite a first ever try by Thomas Darosa, the Steelers could not overhaul a strong Bridgend team.

NEWPORT WHITEHEAD STEELERS U12s were caught cold and gave away an early try which Oakdale converted.

In a tough and physical game man-of-the-match Curtis Griffith tackled himself to a standstill, Tyler Lewis captained the Steelers and Bradon James made a fine debut on the wing.

Despite a sterling effort the Steelers could not overcome their early lapse and lost 7-0.