

Alex Strachan Cup 22-24 February 2008

This year's competition took place at the Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading. It was the largest National Competition to date, entered by all the clubs from around Great Britain. Heathrow Aerobic Gymnastics Club worked really hard prior to this competition and everyone was really looking forward to the weekend. Heathrow had 19 gymnasts entered for this event. For some of our youngest competitors this was their first ever competition, for some of our more experienced gymnasts this was a very important event as it was a selection trial for the GB Team to the upcoming World Championships.

Friday and Saturday - NAC competition

Competition on Friday night was dedicated to the NAC Foundation and National Development (10-11) gymnasts. Heathrow Aerobics had 3 very young gymnasts, Molly Bevan, Niamh Keane, Caoimhe Blair competing in this category for the very first time. Understandably they were very excited and at the same time very nervous. However, all three gymnasts performed well showing their talent and potential for the future. Molly surprised everyone with her fantastic showmanship and perfection and ability to stay in control all the way throughout her routine. She scored the highest artistic score in this age group and received all her difficulty. Caoimhe was also very confident and very precise, she scored all her difficulty elements and had very good presentation. Niamh presented very beautiful composition and looked as if she enjoyed every minute of her performance! Unfortunately she made two mistakes in her difficulty elements and had a difficulty deduction. But even with the mistakes she had made it was still obvious how much potential she has got and how good she can be in the future.

On Saturday, the next group on the competition floor was the NAC Group 1 (12-14). Heathrow was represented by Venetia Wainwright, Hannah Khalfan, Ella Decruz, Siana Williams and Rhian Thomas. This was one of the biggest categories entered by 37 gymnasts from 10 different clubs. Heathrow's girls did not get fazed by the opposition. For Venetia Wainwright and Hannah Khalfan this was their first ever aerobic competition and both girls did a fantastic job with their performances. Venetia had lovely presentation and performed her routine with a lot of charisma, she was cleaner in the technical skills scoring all of her difficulty elements. Hannah was a natural performer and looked very confident and enjoyed every second of her routine also scoring all of the difficulty elements. Siana Williams presented her new routine and was much better this time in artistic and also looked more confident and had better perfection in the technical skills. Ella Decruz as always had beautiful presentation and was very precise in her elements

receiving all the difficulty. For Rhian Thomas this competition proved to be a challenge. She had an injury prior to the competition and it affected her performance.

Later on both Siana Williams and Ella Decruz came back to compete in the pairs competition and were clearly the best - winning this category with 0.55 over the nearest contenders.

NAC results:

ND IW:

Molly Bevan	2nd (Silver medal)	out of 29 gymnasts	14.85
Caoimhe Blair	7th	out of 29	14.2
Niamh Keane	23 rd	out of 29	12.85

Pairs competition:

Siana Williams,
Ella Decruz 1st (Gold medal) out of 6 total score 14.75

Group1 IW:

Ella Decruz	8th	out of 37	total score	14.6
Venetia Wainwright	10th	out of 37	total score	14.55
Siana Williams	12th	out of 37	total score	14.35
Hannah Khalfan	16th	out of 37	total score	13.9
Rhian Thomas	35th	out of 37	total score	12.45

Sunday - FIG Competition.

Sunday saw the FIG competition. For those gymnasts, hoping to qualify for the World Championships and the French Open, it was the second selection trial. Also this was going to be the first experience of FIG level competition for many of Heathrow's younger girls who, having passed the benchmark score at the British last year, had taken the decision with their coaches to move up to the FIG categories. There was lots of excitement and tension.

In the National Development category, Hannah Lim led the way for the Heathrow girls coming 8th with 15.050. Hannah's nerves possibly hid her normal fantastic smile as this was only her second ever competition, but her execution was great and she showed just how much potential she has got. We're certain that with a little more confidence this young gymnast will wow the judge's in future competitions. Chloe Byne and Hayley Keattch both coped admirably with the step up to FIG scoring 14.650 and 14.000 respectively. Unfortunately Hayley lost two element families and had a very big difficulty deduction. She will have to work really hard for the Welsh Open to increase her score.

The National Development trio of Chloe, Hayley and new team mate Molly Bevan were very much looking forward to demonstrating their new composition. The girls worked very hard on the new routine and did a brilliant job performing it for the first time, coming second with 14.900. Just 0.05 less than a gold medal position.

Group 1 is one of the biggest categories in the FIG competition with 30 gymnasts. For all three Heathrow girls in this age group it was their first taste of FIG competition. Isadora Wainwright surprised everyone with her progress since last year, coming 6th with 16.550. Emma Bevan scored 15.750 - her 21st place masking the huge improvement she's made since her very first competition which was the Alex last year when she scored 14.600. The same is true for Helen Turner who came 27th with 15.300 this year, but who's made even greater progress since scoring just 12.900 at the Alex last year.

Isadora and sister Venetia Wainwright, who's new to the sport, then teamed up with Emma in another new trio for Heathrow - a fifth place with 15.250 is a good start to the competition season.

In Group 2 Rosie Webster, performed her routine, with the second highest difficulty score of the category, but just missed out on a medal place coming fourth with 17.600. Sian Hill was right behind her in 5th place with 17.400. Both girls were pleased to have secured their individual places on the French Open squad with these scores. Sophie Lewis, new to this age group and with a new routine, had a better execution score than her team mates but didn't meet the difficulty requirements on two of her elements - she came 7th with 17.100.

All three girls then teamed up for their trio routine taking a deserved first place with 17.400 winning the Gold medal and successfully securing places on the GB Squad for the International Age Group/ World Championship and the French Open Championships.

The senior category this year was the biggest it's been for some years. There were many gymnasts in it who could realistically aim for the medals, making for an exciting round. In an undeniably good routine Caryl Griffiths from Martines Action Pack took the lead, very closely followed by Heathrow's Christina Fossheim in second place, who scored 18.650. Christina had been unable to compete in the first trial owing to an injury and was still recovering, so some of her elements had had to be reduced for her to compete. Stephanie Fois came 4th with 18.300 and Kirsty Banfield came 10th with 17.050. There were some tense moments while an appeal was made over one of Christina's elements, which hadn't been credited, but the result of the appeal was irrelevant as Christina and Steph had already secured their places (on average across the two selection events) as the only two

senior individuals representing Great Britain at the forthcoming World Championships in Ulm, Germany in April.

It was a double celebration for Christina and Steph as they also qualified for the Worlds with their trio with Kirsty Banfield, even though they came second at this competition, scoring 17.100.

FIG results:

Nat Dev:

Hannah Lim	IW	8th	15.050
Chloe Byne	IW	15th	14.650
Hayley Keattch	IW	19th	14.000

Chloe, Hayley and Molly Trio 2nd 14.9

Group 1:

Isadora Wainwright	IW	6th	16.550
Emma Bevan	IW	21st	15.750
Helen Turner	IW	27th	15.300

Isadora, Venetia and Emma Trio 5th 15.250

Group 2:

Rosie Webster	IW	4th	17.600
Sian Hill	IW	5th	17.400
Sophie Lewis	IW	7th	17.100

Rosie, Sian and Sophie Trio 1st 17.400

Seniors:

Christina Fossheim	IW	2nd	18.650
Stephanie Fois	IW	4th	18.300
Kirsty Banfield	IW	10th	17.050

Christina, Steph and Kirsty Trio 2nd 17.100

For Heathrow it was a great weekend. Results on both days were excellent for the club. Well done to all the gymnasts and coaches.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our selected gymnasts the best of luck for the World Championships and the French Open later this year.