



From The Derby Telegraph

DX at the Midland Short Course Championships

At the beginning of November, Chris Steeples and Ann Morris produced outstanding performances for Derventio eXcel at the Midland Short-Course Championships.

Steeple showed fine form in the breaststroke events at the Braunstone pool, Leicester, and head coach Mark Rose believes the Etwall swimmer can now establish himself as a contender for international honours. Having moved into the open category this year, the 16-year-old comfortably won the 200m, finishing nearly five seconds ahead of his nearest rival in 2.23.82. He made it double gold in the 50m final in 30.43, touching home just 0.07 seconds ahead of Birmingham University's Ben Pardoe. And he was only just edged out by Matt Cope, of Walsall, in the 100m, clocking 1.05.79.

Rose said: "Chris has moved on to another level. He is now knocking on the door of full international teams. He is looking after himself better, eating better and training better and I think he really wants to wear the Union Jack on his chest."

Morris, making her final appearance for Derventio, having decided to train with Nova Centurion, claimed glory in the distance freestyle events, starring in both the under-15 and open categories. She took both titles in the 400m and 800m and was second in the under-15 100m and third in the open. And she left with praise ringing in her ears from Rose, who predicts a bright future for the Ripley swimmer.

Mark Rose said: "We wish Ann well with her new club. She has great ability and I expect her to go under two minutes for the 200m freestyle before very long. I discussed her move with the Nova coach, Bill Furniss, and we both agree that this is the best move for her to progress her career."

Another swimmer whose performances gave Rose cause for satisfaction was James Lovatt, now studying and training at Loughborough University. He won the 100m open backstroke final – in which he was joined by Zichen Liu and Kane Haggett – by more than a second in 56.10 and followed up by taking the 50m in the same stroke (26.92). He was second in the 200m backstroke, again with Haggett and Liu in the final, and achieved a similar placing in the 100m freestyle as well as third in the 50m butterfly.

"James chose to compete under the Derventio banner and it was really good to have him back on board," said Rose. "He's very popular among the other swimmers and he did everything correctly. Not only did he swim very well, he warmed up properly, had a great attitude on poolside and did everything that you would want of a senior swimmer. He was a fine example to the others."

Derventio eXcel SwimSquad



www.derventioexcel.org.uk

There were also gold medals for Fiona Donnelly in the under-15 100m backstroke and 50m butterfly, while Liu claimed silver in the 200m open individual medley and Livvi Sefton achieved the same placing in the 200m open butterfly.

Derventio's medal total was undoubtedly hit by the absence of Emma Smithurst and the fact that the squad are currently in the middle of their arduous winter training schedule, having only arrived back from a training camp in Italy two days before the Midlands event. However, Rose was happy with the performance of his swimmers. He said: "We had a good weekend. It was a little bit of an unknown as to how the swimmers would get on because they had only got back from their training camp in Italy 24 hours earlier. I was really pleased with the swimmers' ability to cope with it mentally. They had to be tough enough to go for it without being fully prepared. They coped very well and the experience will serve them well for the future."

Derventio eXcel is a partnership between all Derbyshire Swimming Clubs, Derby City Council, South Derbyshire District Council, North East Derbyshire Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire Amateur Swimming Association, British Swimming, Derbyshire Sport, the University of Derby and Derby College. It is one of a select number of squads that are endorsed and supported by British Swimming.

Swimmers at Derventio eXcel train for up to 27 hours per week, with six sessions starting at 5 30am. They train in a wide range of facilities over the county including: John Port School, Middlecroft, Moorways, Queens, Queens Park, Ripley, Eckington & Sharley Park Clay Cross Leisure Centres

For further comment regarding this press release or to discuss any aspect of the Derventio eXcel programme, please contact Mark Rose – Head Coach on: 07956 516618