

# UK SPORTS ASSOCIATION

## For People with Learning Disability

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## PRESS RELEASE

### “GB Swimming Squad Focus on Gold”

For Immediate Release – (23.7.05)

In search of Gold medals, a group of 19 talented swimmers with learning disability head to the INAS-FID World Swimming Championships in the Czech Republic on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2005.

Tipped to be placed in the top 4, the strong British Team comprises a number of experienced swimmers with World, European and British records, mixed together with a host of promising new talent – a combination to make this Squad a force to be reckoned with.

Team Manager, Carol Halpin said *“Any Team Manager would hope for a 1<sup>st</sup> place and I am no different in that respect. Realistically I would expect the Squad to be placed in the top 4. Gold medals are well within the reach of this team – but you will have to watch this space! The squad has a good balance of experienced senior and juniors and I am thrilled that we have swimmers from all 4 Home Nations - Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. I am very excited at the prospect of leading a squad to international championships and am privileged to be working with dedicated coaches, volunteers and swimmers. This should be a great trip and a great experience for all involved”*.



This impressive line up is led by Team Captains Chris Pugh (Leigh) & Francis Dart (Reading), Ainsley Blease (Maghull) and Louisa Eames (Worthing), followed by Andrew Hart (Bracknell), Aidan Montgomery (Grantham), Leah Halpin (Nottingham), Rebecca Lee (Fife), Bryan Wibberley (Reading), Nick Boylan (Ashford), Craig Moate (Barking), David Vaughan (Swansea), Zoe Clayton (Doncaster), Stephanie Bird (Lowestoft), Chloe Williams (Benfleet), Daniel Pepper (Cheshire), Matthew Bell (Co. Down), Adrian Dyer (Reading) and Ben Procter (Oldham).



At just 15 years old, newcomer to the Squad, Matthew Bell (Co. Down), is one of the youngest members of this line up. Already a seasoned competitor, Matthew confidently secured 3<sup>rd</sup> place bronze in the 2005 Open Swimming Competition in Denmark. *“I’m excited to be in the GB Squad”*, says Matthew, *“I want to be seen as a World Class swimmer. My dream is Gold at the Paralympics!”*

Team performances have been going from strength to strength with many achieving personal bests time after time.

*“This really is an exciting Squad” says Tracey McCillen, National Director, UK Sports Association, “the absolute commitment demonstrated from both swimmers and staff will make GB a fierce opponent at this event. UKSA wishes this Squad every success and extends its thanks to the Staff for their continued dedication and support.”*

Competitors are supported by GB staff Chris Lineker (Head Coach), Diane Dart, Gerwyn Owen, Geoff Smedley, and Neal Clayton.

In the absence of funding, swimmers and the group of voluntary staff supporting them must fund the costs of their trip to this event.

The International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) continue to work together to include athletes with learning disability in the next Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

The decision to include athletes with learning disability in the IPC programme of events was taken at its General Assembly in November 2004. INAS-FID athletes still await the outcome of INAS-FID and IPC discussions, to see what will be the first event at which they are welcomed back by the IPC.

**ENDS**

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#### **NOTES TO EDITOR**

1. The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability is the national body that co-ordinates sport for people with learning disability in the UK and is the organisation responsible for the selection and management of Team GB to international events. It is also the officially recognised GB representative on INAS-FID.
2. The event is being hosted by the Czech Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped, under the auspices of INAS-FID, the Intellectual Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability. INAS-FID, founded in 1986, is a member of the International Paralympic Committee. See further information at [www.inas-fid.org](http://www.inas-fid.org)
3. Further information on the Event can be obtained by visiting, [www.inas-fid.org](http://www.inas-fid.org) ,
4. Interviews, comments, photographs and profiles of individual team members are available by contacting Tracey McCillen on the above numbers.