



UK SPORTS ASSOCIATION For People with Learning Disability

NEWS RELEASE

- For Immediate Release -

Six Gold Medals for Super Swimmers in INAS-FID European Championships



Six Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze and a World Record for Team Great Britain yesterday on Day 1 of the INAS-FID European Swimming Championships in Poland.

With the best start imaginable for Team GB, first time international Craig Rodgie (Dalgety Bay) working with Craig Moate (Barking), Dan Pepper (Poynton) and Ben

Procter (Oldham) set the standard for the team in their first event winning Gold in clear water and setting a new World Record in the 4 x 200m freestyle of 8.44.12.

Rodgie took his place amongst the individual medallists by earning bronze in the individual 100 backstroke and scooping another gold in the 4 x 100 mens relay, with individual gold for Craig Moate in the 400m freestyle, Ben Procter in the 100m backstroke and double gold for Dan Pepper in the 50m breaststroke and 400m Individual medley. Stephanie Bird (Lowestoft) the only lady on the team swam a superb 50 freestyle in 31.46 achieving a well deserved silver medal completing Team GB's sweep of the medal table on an incredible Day 1.

A solid performance by newcomer and youngest member 13 year old Jack Thomas (Swansea) saw him set a new personal best of 4.12.60 in the 400 freestyle whilst Nicholas Boylan (Ashford) achieved 4th in the 50m breaststroke, and Matthew Bell (Newtownards) taking 5th in the 400m Individual medley.

Commenting on the days events, Jack Thomas said *"I am so happy to be here. I would like to make as many finals as possible and just try my best. My target is to get in the top 6 in most of my events. My 200 backstroke is my favourite event and getting into the final for that is going to be my top aim"*.

Tracey McCillen, National Director, UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability said *“We have had high expectations for this tremendous swimming team – and by the looks of it they are exceeding those already! I couldn’t ask for more on Day 1 and am excited to see what the remainder of the Championships may produce. We have a good combination of newcomers and very experienced swimmers in the Team and it’s proving to be a winning combination. It’s high time that the 8 year Paralympic ban is removed so that these talented British athletes have the opportunity to bring home Gold from the Paralympic Games and are recognised for the truly talented sportsmen and women they are”*.



Stephanie Bird in preparation

The INAS-FID European Swimming Championships in Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski, Poland, 16th – 22nd August, are run under INAS-FID and FINA swimming regulations at the Olympic pool and are attended by swimmers with learning disability from across Europe.

The ban on athletes with intellectual disability competing in the Paralympic Games, imposed after the Sydney 2000 Games continues. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the International Sports Federation (INAS-FID) continue to discuss how and when athletes with intellectual disability will be re-admitted. There is no programme for athletes with intellectual disability in the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing. The situation for London 2012 remains undecided.

The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA), working with its members and other organisations across the UK, has been leading a campaign since 2001 for the ban to be lifted. UKSA continues to urge Government to address the lack of funding for athletes across the UK as a result of the continued IPC ban and to ensure that this group of athletes are re-admitted in time for London 2012.

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1. The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA) is the disability specific National Governing Body in the UK for sport and people with learning disability. UKSA is a national umbrella charity that co-ordinates and promotes sport and recreation for all people with learning disability across the UK. UKSA is recognised by

UK Sport and is the official Great Britain member of the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID), a member of IPC.

Its members are Scottish Disability Sport, Welsh Sports Association for People with Learning Disability, Disability Sports Northern Ireland and Mencap Sport in England. All are working together through UKSA to ensure that this group of athletes compete in the Paralympic Games.

2. INAS-FID, the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability. Founded in 1986, is a member of the International Paralympic Committee and is the body responsible for the international competition for athletes with intellectual disability. This event is run under the auspices of the European region See www.inas-europe.org
3. Team GB is led by Wendy Thomas (Swansea), supported by Head Coach Mark Thomas (Swansea), coach Mark Watson (Pembrokeshire) and support officer, former Paralympian, Francis Dart (Reading).

4. Team GB Results - Day 1

Gold

4 x 200m relay	Dan Pepper, Ben Procter, Craig Moate, Craig Rodgie	WR
4 x 100m relay	Dan Pepper, Ben Procter, Craig Moate, Craig Rodgie	
400 freestyle	Craig Moate	
100 backstroke	Ben Procter	
50 breastroke	Dan Pepper	
400m Medley	Dan Pepper	

Silver

50 freestyle	Stephanie Bird
100 backstroke	Craig Rodgie

5. The ban on athletes with learning disability was imposed by the IPC following an incident at the Sydney Paralympic Games in 2000 when a group of adult non-disabled athletes infiltrated the Spanish learning disability basketball team. The IPC banned every athlete with learning disability across the world from competing at future Paralympics and IPC sanctioned competitions as a result. This has had the additional impact of funding being stopped across the UK and some athletes not having the financial means to continue in their sport. UKSA has since Sydney 2000 been working with the British Paralympic Association, INAS-FID and other agencies, plus throughout 2007 with the former Disability Rights Commission to have the IPC ban removed.
6. Learning Disability is a term used in the UK, with intellectual disability being used internationally. Both refer to the same group of athletes.