



GOLF: Streetly teenager Emily Sutton conquered one of Britain's most famous courses, plus a host of young rivals from across the isles, to claim the Girls' Open Quaich title. The 14-year-old Streetly Academy pupil – who plays at Walsall Golf Club – triumphed in the tournament, for females under the age of 23, at St Andrews last week. After a good qualifying round, she made the handicap matchplay competition and after two victories she reached the final that was played on the Old Course, where she beat Mirren Fraser from Powfoot Golf Club, Dumfries, G&S. Her brother Daniel, 16 also a pupil at Streetly and member at Walsall GC, played in the boys' event, where he qualified for the scratch matchplay competition and reached the semi-final, again played over the Old Course. Unfortunately, he lost to the eventual winner, Liam Sutton from Kent, who is an England under-18 international.

INSHORT

GOLF: Walmley Golf Club held its first Seniors Am-Am competition last week with members of more than 20 clubs among the 148 strong field. Winners on 93 points were John Quinn, Derek Cooper, Dan Smith and Rod Singer. Second on 91 points were Clive Robins, Roy Nicolas, Bob Clarke and Brian Cattell. Third, also on 91 points, were Steve Wakelin, David Harrison. Graham Pearman and Steve Holder from Drayton Park. It proved worth the trip for John Bryan, the Portuguese-based player who joined the line up on the day. He did his home club Vale de Lobo proud coming fourth with 98 points alongside John Griffith, Len Jones and John Parkinson. The points total was based on standard Stableford scoring.

GOLF: Sutton ace Victoria Mallett has been named in an eight-strong England team for the annual under-16s international against Spain. The international takes place at Pannal in Yorkshire on Tuesday. Mallett, 14, was the 2011 winner of the Midlands South Girls' Championship and was 12th in this season's English under-15s competition. Her sister, Elizabeth, is an England girl international.

GOLF: Talented golf star Patrick Ruff has retained his club champion title at Sutton Coldfield Golf Club. Ruff won by five shots, scoring level par over 36 holes.

LONDON 2012



Yvette Baker, Katie Clark, Katie Dawkins, Olivia Federici, Jennifer Knobbs, Asha Randall, Jenna Randall and Katie Skelton in action during the team technical routine at the Aquatics Centre.

Yvette hopes London can be stepping stone to great things

Water Sports

By **BEN BAKER**
Sports reporter



Erdington star Yvette Baker enjoyed her experience of London 2012

YVETTE Baker might not have featured in Great Britain's synchronised swimming farewell to London 2012 but there was no dampening the Erdington ace's mood as she reflected on making history in the capital.

The 20-year-old played her part last Thursday, as she took to the pool in the first part of the team event – the technical routine – helping Great Britain sit sixth out of eight at the half-way stage.

And although Baker was a reserve for the free routine, she could watch on knowing that she had fulfilled her dream of being part of the first Great British synchronised swimming team to perform at an Olympics.

In the end, Great Britain put

on a great final show, scoring 88.140 to finish their Olympic debut in a very credible sixth place overall with a total of 175.440 points.

And despite being away from the tussle for the medals, Baker is adamant the success of London 2012 is measured in something far more important than results – with the team leaving with a legacy intact.

"It was a really good routine and everything came off correctly, and they all managed to make all the corrections from warm up," she said.

"Everyone can be really proud of the effort they have put in during these Games and it has been a fantastic experience for the whole team.

"The crowd was really good again and they have been all the days that we performed and that has meant a lot to us.

"I think being a part of these Games has increased our confidence a lot because synchro has now had a lot more media time and it has increased the awareness of people about what we do.

"A lot of people didn't have a clue about what we did so having people understand our sport more is really great for us and we have proved we are all athletes and we have proved we are good at what we do."

London 2012 has already had a huge impact on synchronised swimming in Great Britain, with the extra funding enabling the squad to be centralised in Aldershot and helping them climb the world rankings.

And Baker is eager for this to continue on beyond a home

Games, believing that with the same hard work they could turn themselves from also-rans into genuine medal contenders in Rio in four years time.

"It has been really great, the whole journey. If we hadn't have had these London 2012 Games then we wouldn't have got the UK Lottery Sport funding and we wouldn't have been able to improve," she added.

"London 2012 has just allowed us to start the journey. We want to use this as a stepping stone so we are ready to go to Rio and challenge for medals.

"We have the World Trophy Cup in November which is the start of our season again so we will work towards that and be ready to do it all over again."

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Boldmere coach Ali is thrilled to have had judging role

Water Sports

By **MICHAEL BEARDMORE**
Sports Editor



WHILE most of the focus at the London Olympics was on those running, swimming, fighting and cycling for gold, one Sutton woman was enjoying life on the other side of the competitive fence.

Ali Pratt – a Boldmere Swimming Club coach and City of Birmingham synchronised swimming coach – had the distinction of being the only British judge chosen to arbitrate the synchro event.

The 49-year-old (pictured above) has judged for years at top competitions like the World, Commonwealth and European Championships – but admitted the honour of

being involved in the home Olympics topped them all.

She said: "It was wonderful and even though you are judging you can still take in the atmosphere.

"It was an absolutely great experience, meeting new people, making new friends and getting to see high quality sport.

"We were only allowed into the Aquatics Centre but away

from the judging we saw Tom Daley in the diving and Michael Phelps swimming."

And when Team GB competed, Pratt had to be professional – not just putting patriotic feelings aside to judge fairly but also personal ones as a former protege, Yvette Baker, was among the British squad.

Pratt added: "That's one of the hardest things, judging your own nation, and it was doubly hard because Yvette was in the team.

"It was quite a thrill watching her walk out to perform but you have to be unbiased as that's what makes a good judge.

"I've coached Yvette since she was nine or ten so it was quite strange being in that situation but you have to be really subjective and you can't

judge them on knowing them!

"And you have to be really focused because you are supposed to be judging just one specific element of a routine.

"You still enjoy it when it's happening but it's nice to then go back and watch it on TV, rather than having to concentrate so much."

And much like many of the competitors on show in London over the summer, Pratt is already allowing herself to dream of a return to the Olympic stage in Rio in 2016.

She added: "I was very proud to be selected and it's nice to think you are doing a good job.

"I'm not sure how often how often they have the same judge for two Games but I'll keep judging, hopefully keep getting good evaluations, and Rio would be lovely!"



Andrew Jordan is thrilled to win. Picture: Keith Hubbleday.

Snetterton success ignites title dreams

Motorsport

By **MICHAEL BEARDMORE**
Sports Editor

A WIN, a third place and a fifth place made it the best 2012 Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship weekend of the season so far for Andrew Jordan.

Sutton ace Jordan shone at Snetterton in Norfolk on Sunday – with his win in race two of the day the highlight – and his performances have reignited his dream of taking a maiden BTCC title.

With four meetings left in the season – 12 races in total – Jordan lies in fourth place in the overall standings, just 37 points off championship leader Matt Neal.

Jordan's pace in his Pirtek Racing Honda Civic was superb right from the start of the weekend and he felt he should have been on pole position.

He said: "We went quickest in the first and second sectors and I had a small off in the third sector. We could have been fastest by a couple of tenths of a second."

Jordan ended up fourth on the grid and turned that into third place and a podium spot by the end of the race after an enthralling tussle with Dave Newsham.

Race two was an incredible affair as Neal and Jason Plato battled furiously and both ran off the track after contact on the penultimate lap.

That left Jordan perfectly placed to sweep ahead and take a magnificent victory, his first of the 2012 season.

Jordan said: "The win is long overdue and the perfect way for us to start the second half of the season. I'm delighted.

"I was in second early on until Matt got past me. I thought that was it but as it turns out I ended up in exactly the right place at the right time.

"I didn't defend too hard from Matt because his car was lighter and I let him go after Plato and tried to go with him, which worked a treat.

"They sorted each other out and I got past them both. It was a huge relief to win and that last lap felt like it went on for a long time. It was a great result for the Pirtek team."

For the third race, Jordan had 45kg of success ballast and started ninth on the grid but got up to fifth with another confident drive.

A delighted Jordan said: "We're certainly not out of it and a couple more days like that could really get us into the title battle."

Jordan has also extended his lead in the Independent Drivers' standings and his Pirtek Racing outfit has taken command of the Independent Teams' Trophy.

The BTCC now heads to Knockhill, Fife in a fortnight on the weekend of August 25-26.