



# TOWN SIDES READY FOR START OF NEW CRICKET SEASON

Page 152

# Observer Sport

Telephone: 01827 848495 | fax: 01827 848640 | email: sports.editorial@cintamworth.co.uk | www.thisissuttoncoldfield.co.uk



Boldmere Swimming Club claimed their best-ever national final finish of sixth last weekend, reinforcing their tag as best team in the Midlands. See page 152. Pic: Steve Harlow

## Dan aims to hone skills for top event

### Athletics

DAN Greaves admits he's been counting down the days until London 2012 ever since his Beijing 2008 disappointment, revealing the BT Paralympic World Cup is the perfect opportunity to hone his skills before arriving in the capital.

The 29-year-old from Sutton will take to the circle at the London Games as the favourite for gold in the F44 discus after topping the podium at the IPC Athletics World Championships in New Zealand in January.

In Christchurch, Greaves, who won Paralympic discus gold in 2004, was back to his very best, having had to settle for bronze in Beijing in 2008 – a medal he had little time for.

Since then Greaves has gone from strength to strength, furthering his world record to 59.85m, and he's looking to prove he's still the one to beat in Manchester in May.

"Everything is starting to feel good. The Paralympic World Cup is a great way to start the season, especially with it coming in May," said Greaves.

"The Paralympic World Cup



Dan Greaves will be going for gold in London later in the year

# History boys are geared up to face World Cup winner

### Rugby Union

By MATT PANTER  
Sports reporter

SUTTON RFC coach Matt Nevitt pits his wits against former World Cup winner Neil Back on Sunday and said: "We're ready for the challenge."

Nevitt's record-breaking side ended their Midlands One West campaign with a 100 per cent record on Saturday, with a crushing win over Camp Hill.

Now they aim to retain the Warwickshire Cup when they



Sutton RFC coach Matt Nevitt faces his biggest test of the season

step up a level to face Rugby Lions at Broadstreet RFC's ground in Coventry on Sunday (kick-off 3pm).

Back, the former Leicester Tigers star, is head coach at Rugby, who won the National League Three this season.

Nevitt said: "I think this is the rugby final that the whole of Warwickshire wanted.

Rugby Lions are also unbeaten this season so it's an excellent opportunity to measure our progress.

"From our point of view, we have had three or four great years, but this has been a terrific campaign so far.

"It's certainly the best year I have ever had in rugby. To go the whole league season unbeaten is something that no one can take away from us.

"We have made a little bit of history and I think future Sutton teams will have to go some way to matching this.

"I think it's testament to everyone involved with the

rugby club that we have achieved this level of success."

Sutton will look to end with one more famous win this weekend and Nevitt said: "We just need one final effort this weekend to see whether we can land the cup as well.

"Everyone knows the situation with Rugby Lions.

"They have a five-year plan in place to get to the Premiership and we wish them all the best with that.

"But on Sunday, we'll be out to cause an upset.

"We know how to maintain good standards at the end of

the season and we'll prepare professionally as we always do for the clash this weekend.

"It's a tough game and we have a few injuries, but we'll put a team out that will give Rugby a very good game."

■ The First XV were not the only winners last weekend.

Sutton Second XV produced an outstanding performance to beat Shrewsbury 64-0 under the captaincy of Dave Roberts, moving them up to fourth in the league with a game in hand.

Sutton Third XV beat Aldridge A team 31-17 to complete a clean sweep.

## Pennant leaps to a brilliant gold medal to emulate GB Olympic stars

### Athletics

By NATE SAUNDERS  
Athletics correspondent

SUTTON Coldfield's Matthew Pennant emulated the likes of Olympic medallists Kelly Sotherton and Mark Lewis-Francis by scooping gold at the Aviva Athletics Academy Sportshall Finals in Birmingham.

The 13-year-old jumped 71 centimetres to win the under-13 boys vertical jump at the flagship junior athletics

development event of the year.

Pennant – who attends John Willmott School – also took part in the four-lap race, but failed to add to his medal haul as he finished eighth.

And after writing his name into the Sportshall history books alongside the likes of Sotherton and Lewis-Francis – who tasted success in 1992 and 1998 respectively – Pennant was left grinning from ear to ear after his day's work.

"It was obviously a really good day, but quite challenging

as well, especially because the arena is quite big," said Pennant, who was in his first year at the event.

"I was drawing with another lad on 68cm for ages and it could have gone either way, but I beat him on the last jump so it was quite tense, but really nice to win.

"It's great fun to be part of a team and one day I hope to be part of the Aviva GB and NI Team as a pro athlete."

The national Sportshall final in Birmingham is part of the Aviva Athletics Academy,

which encourages and enables children to get involved in athletics.

And Pennant's efforts at the LG Arena were not the only Sutton success story, as Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls pupil Georgina Rogers also claimed gold in the under-15s girls' eight-lap parlauf.

And the Birchfield Harriers member struggled to contain her delight after producing her best form on the biggest stage.

"I was really nervous before the parlauf, but my partner

Phoebe White helped me and I thought we raced really well," said 15-year-old Rogers.

"I was so happy to go up and collect my medal and it should help me going forward with my training."

And, finally, Mere Green's Tom Canning was also awarded the silver medal for the under-13 boys' standing long jump.

■ Aviva has been backing the GB & NI Team since 1999. Now it's your turn. #BackTheTeam or search for 'Aviva Athletics' on Facebook

has always been at an ideal time for us because we have to see roughly where we're at at the start of May, so we can then train and prepare for the World Cup as we would do the Paralympics or a major international.

"It gives us some breathing space as well, so we can do a little bit more backroom work on the drills, and then go away at the World Cup and work on a few bits and bobs that we can then put right for the Paralympics.

"My technique has changed a little bit, but for the better, and I'm getting some personal bests in the gym more than I did last year as well.

"So everything's going A-OK at the minute."

■ The BT Paralympic World Cup is taking place in Manchester from May 22-26. It will see elite international athletes competing in a host of sports such as athletics, 7-a-side football, and wheelchair basketball.

Go to [www.btparalympic-worldcup.com](http://www.btparalympic-worldcup.com) for tickets and more information.

Published by Central Independent News and Media, Tamworth. Printed by Northcliffe Press Midlands.

ISSN 1369-0809



9 771369 080026 17