

UNSTOPPABLE SUTTON EASE HOME AGAIN

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Observer Sport

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SWIMMING: Josh Winnicott, Bradley Lynch, Emma Smith and Givenchy Sneekes were making waves in Corby last weekend. Turn inside for the full story. Picture: Steve Harlow

Rock signs off for year in top eight

Golf

THE New Year is set to bring a new challenge for Belfry golf professional Rob Rock.

The 34-year-old European Tour star signed off his 2011 in style, taking a top-eight place in the Dubai World Championships.

Even though the result did not enable him automatic qualification into next year's British Open – and also left him short of the top 30 in the European Order of Merit – Rock is taking positives from it.

And he hopes to take them and a whole lot more into what promises to be a busy 2012.

"It was a good tournament, and one which I think I played well in," Rock said.

"Obviously I wanted to win it, but after that you just want to finish as high as you can.

"To come where I did then was good, but also a shame as I wanted to get enough points to automatically qualify for the Open next year.

"I have to qualify for that now, but what has happened has happened, I will take heart from how I played out there."

Despite missing out on his long-term aims in Dubai, Rock remains upbeat for what the future holds for him come 2012.

He said: "I have had a good 12 months or so, I managed to build on the consistency I was showing before that.

"I would say the highlights of the year would be winning a tournament [Italian], and also playing in the Seve Trophy.

"Both were great for me and things I am very proud of.

"I hope to carry on like that in the new year, but I have also got some other things going on at the same time.

"I want to get more kids in schools playing the game.

"I also want to start looking into more golf course design.

"I think I have another four or five good years left playing the game, but I want to start looking into things to do then.

"Golf course design is one of those things that does interest me, so it seems a good time to start looking more into that."

Before any of that, though, Rock is going to enjoy a well-earned rest for the remainder of 2011.

"I am not even going to pick up my clubs for a while," Rock said. "This is my time to sit back and relax a little, enjoy Christmas and get ready for a good year ahead."

Feaunati hails leaders but warns against complacency

Rugby Union

By **BOBBY BRIDGE**
Sports Reporter

TABLE-topping Veseyans approach the halfway stage of their league term tomorrow knowing the tantalising prospect of promotion lies firmly in their hands.

Regardless of the result at strugglers Cleobury Mortimer, the Streetly side will approach the 'business end of the season' on top of the pile in Midland Three West North.

"Obviously if I'd have been offered the position we are in now at the start of the season, I

would have taken it," said head coach Zak Feaunati.

"It is too soon to be talking about promotion, but we can say the pre-season part of our campaign is now over and that we're heading into the main part – come the middle of February we should now what our chances are."

The signs are looking good for Feaunati's charges, having lost just once in ten games and holding a six-point lead over chasers Wolverhampton and Newcastle (Staffs).

Intriguingly, Veseyans have shipped just 62 points on the pitch all season, registering two clean sheets and on three occasions limiting their

opponents to just three points scored. "The defensive effort has been massive," added the former Samoan international and professional player with Bath.

"You can talk about defensive systems and tactics but at the end of the day it boils down to how much do you want to tackle? And put your body on the line.

"The lads are doing that, their conditioning is good too which always helps."

Feaunati has played his part in the team's success featuring at number eight, but it's his team-mates in the front row who have impressed him.

He said: "Nick Murch,

Nathan Merrit, Elliott Goodwin and James Hateley have been superb, they have laid the foundations for the rest of the team and have worked hard on their fitness too.

"But it's hard to single out players when we're playing so well as a team and right through the club, with the seconds doing well and putting pressure on places.

"When we've called lads up to the first team they have answered that call and done a good job."

A consistent second half of the season to mirror form to date would see Veseyans move into Midlands Two West North, where potentially they

would encounter a bevy of local derbies against Spartans, Burntwood, Tamworth, Old Salts and Aston Old Eds.

But Feaunati knows plenty of work is left to be done, as he said: "Against Wednesbury (Veseyans' last game, which they won 32-0) the scoreline doesn't really say much about the match as it was a tough match we had to fight hard to win.

"Every team wants to beat the team at the top and it's like a cup final every week with high-intensity matches.

"We just have to guard against complacency, keep on improving and see where it takes us."



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