



## SKIPPER INSPIRES WALSALL FIGHTBACK

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# Advertiser Sport

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**SIMKIN** Martial Arts students started the competitive year in style, taking a handful of medals at a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu event. The club's youngsters and adults took medals in every category with Anthony Jennings winning double gold in the adult middleweight category and absolute category. Aaron Singh travelled to Scotland to compete in the Scottish Open Championships and came home with a well-deserved bronze medal. Instructor Neil Simkin, meanwhile, is currently training for the New York Open in April. He added: "It's going to be exciting to get back on the mats after my knee surgery last September." Anyone interested in joining the academy can call Neil on 01922 623974 or 07766 880544. Pictured right are the happy warriors.



### Gethin and Wood both outpointed

**BOXING:** There was double disappointment for a pair of Walsall pro boxers at a show in Swindon last Saturday. Steve Gethin's hopes of claiming the British Masters super featherweight title were ended by a 97-95 points defeat to Liam Richards. It was Gethin's third loss against Richards. And Bobby Wood was also beaten by another Swindon fighter, Kelvin Young, in their four-round middleweight contest. Wood lost 40-36 on points.

### England delight for amateur champions

**BOXING:** Two Walsall Wood amateur boxers will proudly wear England vests next month after glory at the National ABA Schoolboy Championships. Daniel Breeze, 16, and Matthew Parsons, 13, both claimed glory in their respective age groups. The duo will now represent their country in an international match against Wales in April.

### Silver sends Ella on to the national stage



**GYMNASTICS:** Young Pelsall gymnast Ella Chapman (above) has won a place in the national finals next month. The 10-year-old Ryders Hayes Primary School pupil shone at the West Midlands National Club Grade 8 Gymnastic competition held at the GYMAC Sports Centre in Birmingham last weekend. Chapman, a member of Tamworth Olympic Gymnastic club, claimed a silver medal, which earned her a place at the nationals.

# Smith insists the goals will come as six-pointer looms

## SADDLERS

By **MICHAEL BEARDMORE**  
Sports Editor

SADDLERS boss Dean Smith admits he is concerned with Walsall's recent goal drought – but insists they will be firing on all cylinders in Saturday's huge six-pointer at Yeovil.

Having dragged themselves out of the drop zone with a fine run of form since the turn of the year, the Saddlers have drawn two successive blanks to fall back into the bottom four.

They ground out a point at relegation rivals Swindon on

Saturday but followed that up with a 2-0 home defeat to play-off-chasing Leyton Orient on Tuesday night.

Walsall have now scored just twice in seven games and that has turned into Smith's chief worry after successfully plugging the gaps at the back for the most part.

Smith said: "We created chances against Orient on Tuesday – more so than we did against Rochdale and Swindon.

"Of course it's a concern – we should be taking our chances. We have to be more clinical.

"But I stressed when we beat Bristol Rovers and scored six



Dean Smith has brought in Marc Antoine Gbarssin (left) on loan from Carlisle

that it wasn't going to happen every week.

"What we have done is become more dogged and resolute.

"We are creating chances and if people aren't taking them then it's a problem – but if we were not creating chances, that would be a bigger problem.

"Over the last few games we haven't scored as many as we

would like. It makes the task even harder but the lads know where we are at and what we have to do.

"Whether we won or lost to Orient wasn't going to decide where we are going to be at the end of the season – there are still 10 games to go.

"If we win at home, we'll take draws away from home, but we have to do is keep working hard.

"If we put in performances, we'll get wins.

"Every game we play I set out a team to go and win and Yeovil will be no different."

Smith will be without Aaron Lescott for the next two weeks after the full-back damaged

medial ligaments in his knee in the stalemate at Swindon.

But he has a fully fit squad to call on otherwise for the trip to Huish Park, including new midfielder Marc-Antoine Gbarssin, who signed on loan from Carlisle at the end of last week.

Darren Byfield will be hoping to make his first start since returning from injury after a handful of substitute appearances.

Byfield continued to build up his fitness in a 2-0 behind-closed-doors friendly defeat to Crewe on Wednesday.

Turn to pages 86-87 for reports and pictures from the Swindon and Orient games.



## Golden girl Kearney is in seventh heaven

### SWIMMING

ALDRIDGE swimming star Tully Kearney picked up an amazing seven gold medals at the DSE Championships in Sheffield recently.

On day one of the event, she started the gold rush by

Left: Tully Kearney (right) with her seven gold medals, alongside Boldmere team-mates Sam Perry and Hasna Hakim.

winning the SB9 50m and 100m breaststroke, S10 100m and 400m freestyle, and the SM10 200m individual medley.

Kearney continued her fine form on the second day, claiming gold in the S10 100m butterfly and 50m freestyle.

In four of the events, Kearney – who swims for Boldmere Swimming Club in Sutton – recorded personal bests. She also finished just outside the medals in fourth

place in the 400m freestyle at the British Gas British Championships in Manchester.

Elsewhere, Walsall Swimming Club Masters duo Paul Bates and Jennifer Powell shone at the Staffordshire County Open Masters in Wolverhampton.

Powell won four titles – 25m, 50m and 100m backstroke and 4x1 medley, while Bates won the 200m freestyle, 100m backstroke and 50m butterfly.

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