

## CHAMPIONSHIPS: Brum delight as Penny and Jake hit the medals trail



Making a splash: City of Birmingham swimmers Jake Dixon and (below) Penny Whittingham picked up Youth Championships medals.

Pictures: Steve Harlow

# Double gold joy for Whittingham

**SWIMMING**  
By Rob Tanner

**GREAT Barr schoolgirl Penny Whittingham has become a double national champion and could add even more titles in the next few days at the British Youth Swimming Championships in Sheffield.**

The 11-year-old, who swims for Boldmere Swimming Club, is representing City of Birmingham and has so far won gold in the 400m individual medley and the 400m freestyle, and she also picked up a deserved silver in the 200m butterfly.

Whittingham, who won eight titles at the Midlands championships in Coventry to qualify for the national finals, is ranked No.1 for both the 200m and 800m front crawl finals tonight and City of Birmingham coach Carl Grosvenor is confident she can taste more medal success.

"We are absolutely delighted with the way she has performed so far," he said.

"Every time she gets in the pool she seems to get quicker and quicker.

"She is a British champion at her first championships and she works so hard she deserves her success.

"She is still very young so we won't push her but if she keeps doing what she is doing now she will be successful."

There was more delight for Birmingham as 11-year-old Jake Dixon claimed a silver in the 200m individual medley.

"To get two golds and two silvers in the first two days of the championships is superb," Grosvenor added.

"We have another 13 swimmers competing over the next three days and we are confident we can have more success.

"The team is doing a magnificent job so far."



Chance: Bradley Wiggins.

## Podium hope for Wiggins

**CYCLING**  
By Steve Douglas

BRADLEY Wiggins gave himself a fighting chance of a podium finish in the Tour de France by coming home sixth in the individual time trial, but there looks no stopping Alberto Contador on his charge to a second title.

Londoner Wiggins climbed two places to fourth in the general classification after posting a better time than all of his closest rivals in the 40.5 kilometres circuit around Lake Annecy yesterday.

The Garmin Slipstream rider overtook Andreas Kloden and Frank Schleck in the GC and narrowed the gap to Lance

Armstrong, who is now third overall, and Andy Schleck, who remains second.

Making up 85 seconds on Andy Schleck over the last three days may be too much to ask but Wiggins could surpass Armstrong, who is only 11 seconds ahead.

The penultimate stage, which has a mountain-top finish on Le Mont Ventoux tomorrow, appears the best opportunity for Wiggins to climb into the top three.

Britain's David Millar was fifth in the time trial, two seconds quicker than Wiggins, but it was Contador who wore the broadest grin last night.

The Spaniard won the stage by three

seconds from Switzerland's Fabian Cancellara to strengthen his vice-like grip on the maillot jaune. Contador, the 2007 Tour champion, now has a lead of four minutes and 11 seconds on Andy Schleck and will be extremely confident of completing the job over the weekend.

"Winning a time trial in the Tour de France is really special. And I beat all the specialists," he said.

"We are near the end but there are still three days left. I must be careful."

Andy Schleck vowed he would not hand Contador overall victory on a plate.

"There is still a chance," said the Saxo Bank rider.

## County men in unlikely tilt at title

**TENNIS**  
By Sally Jones

NERVES are jangling amid the seaside ambience of Eastbourne as both Warwickshire sides strive to upset the form-books on the final day of the AEGON Summer County Cup, Group 1.

Gary Naughton's newly-promoted young team, tipped for immediate relegation at the start of the week, are, improbably, in with an outside chance of the title if they can beat Dorset and Lancashire manage to defeat unbeaten Hertfordshire.

The women, however, face an uphill struggle as they attempt to pull off an unlikely victory over the powerful Buckinghamshire team whose first pair, Jemima Hayward and Julia Bone, are unbeaten all week.

The men celebrated after pulling off a famous victory on day four, upsetting highly-fancied Lancashire 5-4.

The women, despite a disappointing 4-5 defeat by Essex in their unfinished match, then snatched their first win of the week, thrashing Leicestershire 6-3.

The men's side, whose only loss so far came on day one of the championship, kept their nerve in several crucial rubbers, both their firsts, Maniel Bains and Steven Lee, and their thirds, the consistent Nathan Rooney and James Southwood, winning two out of three.

This leaves the team guaranteed survival and mathematically capable of taking the title if they score a heavy victory today against Dorset, while unbeaten Hertfordshire lose to Lancashire, which would mean a countback on rubbers with three sides all on four wins out of five.

Sadly the women just failed to topple a wavering Essex side when their first pair of Luisa Cowper and Leyla Ogan lost a deciding championship tie-break against their opponents' top pair Sophie Cockell and Jane Rabot 6-10.

In the Leicestershire match, however, second pair Hannah James and Jess Jackson were the heroines of the hour, winning three out of three and combining superbly together, while at third pair 15-year-old Manisha Foster looked sharp and feisty as she and Aimee Jarrett beat their opposite numbers in straight sets.

Captain Katie Shaw is without Luisa Cowper for the final day and will blood 17-year-old Anjali Foster, probably partnering Jarrett at third pair, while sister Manisha will team up with the highly experienced Leyla Ogan.