

## **Cardiff Long Course Training weekend**

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February, Wolverhampton Swimming Club descended upon the Welsh capital of Cardiff to experience training in the brand new 50m international pool. 28 swimmers aging from 9 to 16 had volunteered to complete 7 hours of training spread over 2 days, along with 3 coaches (Jane, Kate and Sarah) lots of parents, and quite a few brothers and sisters.

The first training session started at 1pm on the first day and it was only an hour long, just enough time to let the swimmers get a feel for the pool. As we walked on poolside the heat was stifling. The pool was set in a modern building made of glass which was a bit like training in a greenhouse! The pool itself looked enormous in comparison to Central Baths and some of the swimmers said they felt like they were swimming hard but not seeming to get anywhere!

After the first training session, everyone piled in their cars for the 10 minute journey to the hotel, where nearly everyone was staying. After what felt like ages, everyone was finally checked in and there was just enough time for a cup of tea before returning to the pool for the second session of the day which lasted 2 hours. Everyone was very focused and listened well to instructions and the coaches felt the session was successful with all the swimmers working hard.

After the second session, we returned to the hotel once more to prepare ourselves for dinner. The restaurant gave us the top floor all to ourselves and valiantly attempted to serve over 70 dinners as quickly as they could. The children all chose to sit with their friends so the waiting staff had their work cut out for them but with the able assistance of Ade, everyone got the right food! Laura Hawkins celebrated her birthday so we all sang happy birthday and she had a huge cake which she shared with everyone! Everyone was fairly tired after an exhausting start to the weekend and with the prospect of an early start the next day most people were tucked up by 11pm.

The third session started at 9am, which meant we had to be up at 7am in order to have breakfast; then it was a mad rush to pack and checkout before leaving for the pool at 8.30am. The coaches were fully expecting the swimmers to be tired, but everyone again was focussed and they all worked very hard. The promise of time in the fun pool between training sessions may have helped with the focus of course! The fun pool had several slides amongst other things and it was a tough job to get everyone out so they could eat lunch before the next session!

The final session started at 1.30 and lasted for 2 hours. The coaches decided to hold a mini team gala in the second half of the session to give the swimmers a chance to practise their competitive starts and to get a feel for racing in a 50m pool. There were three teams and everyone had to swim 50m of fly, back and breaststroke as well as a front crawl cannon. Everyone was split into three teams, lane nine, lane eight and lane seven. Lane nine won! Points were awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and the points were added up and the team with the most points won. This was a fun way to end a hard weekend of training.

