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HUNDREDS OF YOUNG ATHLETES ENJOY COMPETING AT LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC PARK



Hundreds of young athletes had the opportunity to compete at one of the iconic sporting venues of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games over the weekend.

Some 1600 athletes aged nine to 18 took part in the British Schools' Modern Biathlon Championships at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The event was organised by Pentathlon GB, the national governing body for the Olympic sport of modern pentathlon.

The young athletes swam in the inspirational setting of the Olympic Pool at the London Aquatics Centre and ran around a course on Olympic Park.

Among the winners from the weekend was Hampshire's Emily Jenkinson (Peter Symonds College, Winchester), who won the girls' under-19 title – her eighth title in as many years.

Sisters Sabrina (Bromley High School, Kent) and Natasha Sinha (James Allen's Girls' School, London) both won their respective competitions, with Natasha taking a fourth successive victory.

In the boys' competitions Millfield School in Street, Somerset entered three team events and came away with three team golds.

Other winners came from around the country, including Abingdon, Bath, Blackpool, Dorset, Leeds, Newcastle and Shropshire.

And they said they were thrilled to swim in the same pool in which their idols competed at London 2012.

As Esme Hughes, winner of the girls' under-11 title, from Ellesmere College in Shropshire, put it: "I really enjoyed it. I came to the Olympics to watch Michael Phelps and Rebecca Adlington, so to swim in the same pool is so cool."

Some of Britain's finest pentathletes were on hand to meet and inspire the young athletes, including 2012 world champion Mhairi Spence and 2013 World Championships silver medallist Nick Woodbridge, both London 2012 Olympians, as well as Beijing 2008 Olympian Katy Livingston.

Spence said: "The magnitude of the event this weekend was impressive and it's been great to be part of it. It was lovely that kids have had the opportunity to experience the Olympic Park and swim in the same pool as some of their idols."

Anthony Temple QC, Chairman of Pentathlon GB, said: "This was a fantastically successful event. Pentathlon GB should be proud of its presentation of the event in such an iconic venue.

"It has offered enormous pleasure to hundreds of competitors, their teachers, families and other supporters," he added. "This could only have been achieved with the energy of our staff, our volunteers and the vision of the London Legacy Development Corporation."

Jon Austin, Chief Executive Officer of Pentathlon GB, added: "It was a brilliant and truly inspirational event. I'm very proud of the staff and volunteers who made sure the championships ran like clockwork.

"As far as we're concerned this is the absolute legacy purpose of the Olympic facilities and we're proud to have been one of the first sports to have the opportunity to use such an iconic venue."

Some 1600 young athletes took part in the championships at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, with the girls competing on Saturday (5 April) and the boys on Sunday (6 April).

The younger athletes tackled a 50m swim and an 800m run, while the older age groups swam 200m and ran 1600m.

Full results are available from the Pentathlon GB website at <https://www.pentathlongb.org/schools/results.php>

Some of the current crop of Britain's modern pentathlon team have competed at the championships in the past before progressing to tackle all five disciplines of the modern pentathlon.

They include Jamie Cooke, Britain's 2011 world junior champion, and Joe Evans, who won a bronze medal on his World Cup debut in the USA a year ago.

Pentathlon GB is the National Governing Body for the Olympic Sport of Modern Pentathlon, which

sees athletes compete in fencing, swimming, riding, and a run/shoot, all in one day.

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