

# Best finish as FAB team show quality

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**A JOINT** Bournemouth Dolphins-Ferndown Otters squad achieved the best-ever result by a Dorset team in the National Arena Swimming League final in Sheffield – but whether they will get the chance to repeat it remains in doubt.

The “FAB” team – swimming as Bournemouth Dolphins – matched the eighth place achieved by Dolphins alone last year but scored nine more points than the 2009 team.

But a question mark hangs over the full merger plans which led to the joint entries for three Bournemouth-Ferndown teams last autumn.

Dolphins head coach Sam Woodward said: “It has been an enjoyable experience and a tough learning curve but hopefully it has strengthened the relationship between the two clubs.

“The merger talks have taken longer than we expected but that remains the end goal.

“It’s still active but on hold so we can focus on the swimmers during a busy time of the year.”

He added: “Any merger would need to be coach-driven and not caught up in the politics.”

Otters’ head coach Emma Hirst said: “I am 100 per cent behind the merger – it’s an opportunity not to be missed.”

At Sheffield, the joint team’s opponents included Olympic swimmers Fran Halsall (Liverpool) and James Goddard, Michael Rock and David Carry, who all turned out for Stockport Metro.

A Plymouth Leander team captained by yet another current GB swimmer, Antony James,



**FAB OUTFIT:** The Bournemouth-Ferndown team get into the carnival spirit

won the title for the third year running.

Tom Mules provided Dolphins’ only win in the 50-event programme, finishing more than a second ahead in the 13/u 100m butterfly in 1:02.56.

Jay Olencicz came second in the 15/u 100m backstroke in 1:02.41 and there was another second place from the 13/u boys’ freestyle team of Mules (28.3), Dan Speers (27.0), Todd Price (28.6) and Mikey Kingsley (27.6).

Courtney Rowan added to her national qualifying times as she came third in the 13/u 100m butterfly in 1:08.05.

Naomi Vides was third in the

15/u 100m breaststroke in 1:15.61.

The boys’ 13/u medley team of Price, Noah Vides, Mules and Kingsley were also third while the 15/u freestyle team of Jack Thorpe, Harry Thorpe, Olencicz and Mules tied for third place with Millfield.

Beth Folland, who swam in the Southern Junior League at Swindon less than 20 hours earlier, summoned enough energy to come fourth in the 10-11yrs 50m backstroke in 35.92.

Hirst said: “It was a fantastic team effort against extremely tough opposition, including Olympic swimmers and clubs

with double our combined membership.”

**Result:** 1 Plymouth Leander 422, 2 Stockport Metro 336, 3 Millfield 328, 4 Camden Swiss Cottage 288, 5 Guildford City 271, 6 Hatfield 270, 7 City of Liverpool 267, 8 Bournemouth Dolphins 219, 9 City of Peterborough 177, 10 Boldmere 174.

**Dolphins team:** 11/u Elisabeth Hood, Beth Folland, Jasmine Holmes, Rebecca Cummings, Tom Kingham, Alex Price, Ross Webb, Bradley Currie. 13/u Clodagh Dear, Lucy Kirkham, Sam Bush, Courtney Rowan, Tom Mules, Noah Vides, Todd Price, Mikey Kingsley, Dan Speers. 15/u Fiona Hardie, Naomi Vides, Lottie McRae, Jack Thorpe, Jay Olencicz, Harry Thorpe. Open Fran Hughes, Jas McCormack, Danielle Francis, Craig Freeman, Martin Littlefair, Chris Campbell, Will Harrison.