

Poole almost provide shock

POOLE could be the surprise package of this year's Southern Junior League after coming within three points of 2009 champions Ferndown Otters in their first-round gala.

Poole surprised themselves by taking the lead several times at Littledown before Ferndown finally secured the victory.

None of the other six teams came within 68 points of the East Dorset neighbours.

Bournemouth Dolphins, champions in 2007 and 2008, also made a winning start at Swindon.

But Christchurch and New Milton Seagulls' hopes of repeating last year's trip to the final suffered a setback when they finished fourth at Weston-super-Mare.

At Littledown, Otters were missing six key swimmers – some at the Arena League final in Sheffield, one injured and one stranded abroad after the volcano flying ban.

They also suffered an unusual disqualification in the final relay when a swimmer was penalised for impeding another while trying to leave the pool.

Ferndown's 26 winners included nine-year-olds Morgan Long (two), Ben Samuel and Ethan Bell, 10-year-olds Lucy Brain (two) and Matthew Collins (two), 11-year-olds Spencer Wilks and Luke Stuart (two) and 12-year-olds Christy Cole (two), Jaz Hepburn and Myles Horlock (two).

Poole's 16 wins included two from Jacob Peters in the 9yrs 25m backstroke and butterfly.

Other individual winners were 10yrs breaststrokes Jessica Richens and Harry Kemp, 11/u butterflyers Madison Kemp and Harri Moore and backstrokes Kiran Olenicz (11/u), Georgian Harrison (10yrs) and Emily Olive (9yrs).

Bournemouth Dolphins' 23 winners at Swindon included: 9yrs Jack Olden, Rafael McReath (two); 10yrs Grace Kingsley (two), Chris Parsons-Lowey (two), Matt Folland; 11/u Matt Lumley, Matthew Allen (two), Olivia Stubbington; 12/u Beth Folland, Jamie Holmes (two), Kiana Hooshmand.

Christian Tai provided two of Seagulls' three wins at Weston in the 9yrs 25m breaststroke and butterfly.

Andrew Botros was their other winner in the 11/u 50m freestyle.