

SPORT

Young sailors deserve more support after GSSE success

What a happy sailing week it was... a week never to be forgotten by all sea sports lovers.

I, for one, shall cherish every single moment of those heart-breaking GSSE races in which our lads made us all proud.

Mario Aquilina, a fine sailor with a great heart, won gold in a most forceful way. He had four wins out of eight races but in the end of it he had to fight tooth and nail to clinch a title that no other sailor deserved.

No wonder we all wept with joy... it was so emotional.

Right after crossing the finishing line, all aboard the accompanying boats, which had offered tremendous support throughout the whole GSSE week, exploded with joy especially when Aquilina gave that loving hug to his Spanish coach Gerome Mainemare. I have never

Teddie Borg

seen a foreign coach so much appreciated.

I, for one, shall never forget that last reach in which Aquilina excelled by making the last formidable effort to position himself third – the winning place. He showed terrific promise with that last killer jibe to round the last mark good enough to grab the winning title. Gold for a golden lad.

Silver for Peter Valentino. He is definitely shaping to be a big star of the future.

Few know, particularly among the non-sailing public, that had that cruel grigale wave not toppled Valentino when he was leading in



Jean Paul Fleri Soler (left) with his young Optimists Class squad during the GSSE earlier this month.

the early races, he would have also been a golden boy.

Valentino is being raised in a keen sailing family and his talents are more than moderate. He has style, is level-headed and, above all, is assiduous in what he has to learn.

Optimists Class... well well well. Here, we have the cream of our future.

Just point to me any coach who can guide all his entire team, all six of them, to top the whole fleet in this class in which six countries fought it out like men even though these

sailors were of tender age – one of them fearless Sean Borg, at 10 the youngest athlete in the whole GSSE 2003.

How proud coach Jean Paul Fleri Soler was when, at the end of it all, he led Benji Borg to gold, Matthew Fleri Soler to bronze, and youngsters Karl Cremona, Sean Borg, Simon Psaila and Christof Podesta to fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh placings respectively out of 15 competitors.

Isn't this an exceptional feat which few, if ever, can claim. Our

two professional coaches, together with our young sailors, possess exceptional qualities and look at only one thing, their one and only goal...the top.

This GSSE experience would make them formidable again, if only our sport authorities would take note to sustain this success and be part of a plan to ensure that these lads deserve to be given full support.

Yes, financially... that's all they need – the rest leave it in the safe hands of our professionals.

LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

YOUTH FOOTBALL – Bobby Charlton School

The Bobby Charlton Soccer School, in Malta based at Luxol St Andrews', has already lured to its fold around 1,000 young footballers in its first six months of operation. The school adopts its world renowned 'Soccer Theme Park' which enhances the learning process, providing more enjoyment and success in terms of player development. All staff are UEFA and FIFA qualified, the majority of whom University graduates in Sports Science. For further information on the summer programme one may phone 7928-3770 or 21-376652.

CYCLING – BMX activities

The BMX Association of Malta has just prepared its summer schedule of activities which get underway on Saturday with a Dirt and Street night competition. The second Extreme Weekend is planned for the following weekend with the Pedal Power King of Track competitions starting on July 18. One may obtain more details by phoning 21-384116.

MARTIAL ARTS – New Bujinkan Master

Alfred Galea and Marvin Zammit recently travelled to Japan for an intensive two-week training camp conducted by Soke Masaaki Hatsumi, Grand Master of nine martial arts schools. During his stay Galea graduated as fifth Dan and earned the title of Master Teacher in Bujinkan. Zammit was graded second Dan. Those interested in Bujinkan Malta may obtain more details by phoning 9942-4809 or visit website www.bujinkanmalta.com.

LOCAL TENNIS – Cisk Export tournament

The Marsa Sports Club Tennis Section will be organising the Cisk Export Victor Pace tournament under floodlights. The competition will be played in August on weekdays, starting at 7 p.m. Closing date for application is July 13.

FOOTBALL COACHES MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Malta Football Coaches Association will be held on Friday at the Junior Lyceum in Hamrun. An election to appoint new officials for the 2003-05 period will be held. The meeting starts at 6 p.m.

BODYBUILDING SEMINAR

The Malta Amateur Bodybuilding Association will be holding a seminar on June 29 with the main speaker being the organisation's president Mario Zammit. The activity will be held at Littleton, Mosta Road, Attard. Among the topics discussed will be the U-21 category, alternative methods to doping, systems used by Europeans and MABA's plans for the future. For seat reservations one may phone 21-432499 or 9989-6449.

ICE HOCKEY

Pirates in second straight play-offs success

PIRATES3
RBSM2

The Pirates won the F. Spiteri Cup for the second straight season but it was not an easy task for them. Alex Attard opened the scoring for Pirates after 20 minutes of play but RBSM veteran, Sergey Trublenkov, drew the teams level with only seconds left in the first half.

With time ticking down captain Chris Gatt gave RBSM the lead. Only three minutes were left but Kenneth Attard came to the Pirates' rescue with a lucky shot from the blue line to tie the game at 2-2.

McDonald's Flyers third

Extra-time was required. Sudden death overtime was underway when Kenneth Attard found a loose puck in front of the net and managed to put it past the RBSM keeper.

The final was tense. RBSM had two disallowed goals, decisions heavily disputed. Pirates' keeper Trevor Catania had a fine outing to keep RBSM at bay.

The best players on the night were Kenneth Attard, of the Pirates, and RBSM goalkeeper Shawn Chircop.

McDONALD'S FLYERS5
V.I.S. KNIGHTS3

The play-off for third place saw a depleted McDonald's Flyers side still strong enough to beat regular season runners-up VIS Knights.

Ryan Yada scored three times and had one assist, as team-mate Marc Sullivan scored the other goals.

The Knights had a few players missing as well. Alexi Danilin scored one goal as did Vladimir Kuklev.



THUMBS UP... Pirates won the national ice-hockey league for the second year running.

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