

## SWIMMING

# Barry's way ahead

SEAGULLS' young chief coach Barry Alldrick has unveiled an ambitious six-year plan which is intended to move the club forward dramatically between now and the 2012 Olympic Games.

Alldrick, speaking for the first time since the Christchurch club's decision to employ him full-time, has already restructured the club since his appointment on a part-time basis almost a year ago.

The changes are intended to offer a "more serious and progressive route for swimmers from the age of six onwards".

"It was a case of 'out with some of the old and in with the new'," said a club spokesman.

"Seagulls are now attracting many new, young, talented swimmers."

Alldrick has already achieved his competitive target for this season by qualifying five swimmers for the South West youth and age group championships.

Four more are hoping to join this group before the current Dorset championships are over.

But the coach believes this is only the beginning.

By the end of this year, he hopes that his squad will be back in the Speedo League West's Division Two.

His next league targets will then be to win promotion to Division One and the Premier Division in successive years.

Alldrick's long-term aim is to spe-

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cialise in age group swimming, developing children from the age of six until they reach a point where they can gain university scholarships.

By 2012, he hopes to have Seagulls swimmers qualifying for the Olympic trials.

Alldrick admits that this is an ambitious set of targets for a club which will this year be back in the lowest Speedo League West division and which has long lived in the shadow of neighbours Ferndown Otters and Bournemouth Dolphins.

But he said: "Given the stability and drive of our current committee, combined with our growing squad of talented swimmers, I believe Seagulls are well positioned to progress.

"Every club coach aims high and fights hard against having to compromise with committees - but this committee have backed me 100 per cent. I could not ask for more than that."

Alldrick described Seagulls as a "very friendly club" whose approach had always been to give its swimmers every opportunity to excel at their sport.

"We take swimmers of all abilities and teach them in a supportive envi-

ronment. We believe this builds both their confidence and their long-term commitment to the club," he said.

Alldrick said the main advantage of being employed full-time was that he would now have the time to focus on the individual needs of the swimmers within the overall development plan.

He aims to ensure that his young Seagulls "master the art of swimming technique at an early age and combine this with a steadily increasing number of metres".

This will provide the aerobic base from which power and speed for racing can be developed during a swimmer's teenage years.

"This is a long-term plan but if parents and swimmers are prepared to invest their time in the early years with the aim of becoming elite in any area of life, the payout will be reward for life," Alldrick added.

His words contrast starkly with those that were emanating from Seagulls about three years ago, when the club came close to extinction.

Seagulls chairman Kevin Roberts, who has steered his club from near-terminal sickness to its present healthy state, said of the decision to appoint Alldrick full-time: "While saving the club has been really great news for everyone involved, we were still 'amateur' in the local town sense of the word and the committee recognised that



**SEAGULLS' SALUTE:** Seagulls' youngsters show their feelings as Barry Alldrick, left, is congratulated by chairman Kevin Roberts

we needed to take that extra step if we were to move from being a middle-of-the-road team to a successful winning club."

The developments come at an interesting time for local swimming. Graham Bassi, Britain's most successful club coach of the last decade, has recently taken the helm at Bournemouth Dolphins while Ferndown Otters show no sign of slipping from the high standards demanded by Tony Watson and his predecessor Bob Baker over the last 25 to 30 years.