

SPOTLIGHT ON SPORT

2018 Swimming NSW State Open Championships

Japan's 'Flying Fish' perform strongly

From 19 to 21 January, the 2018 NSW State Open Championship was held at the Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. The Japanese national team, nicknamed Tobiuo Japan (Flying Fish Japan), took part again this year. The standard of this annual championship is high with Australian Olympic medallists among the participants.

On the middle day of competition, Consul-General Keizo Takewaka visited the championships to support the team as well as to award medals.

The young Tobiuo performed strongly. Among the events won by the Japanese contingent was the women's 4x200m freestyle relay and the relay team happily posed with their medals for our camera.



Swimming is strong in both countries and there is no doubting

the rivalry in the pool. But there is also cooperation beyond competition. In 2015, Swimming Australia and the Japan Swimming Federation signed the Project 2020 agreement designed to improve each country's medal haul at Tokyo 2020 and to encourage greater collaboration between Japan and Australia in the lead-up to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

With the 2021 World Aquatic Championships set to be held in Fukuoka located on the island of Kyushu, the Japan-Australia swimming connection is looking strong into the future.

Softball: Japan's national team wins inaugural Asia Pacific Cup

The smiling faces say it all. Competing in the Asia Pacific Cup held at Blacktown International Sportspark from 1 to 4 February, the Japanese national softball team won the inaugural competition against their Australian counterparts. Japanese players also took out three of the four individual player awards. The tournament was the biggest international softball event to take place in Australia since the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Softball has a higher profile in Japan than in Australia, and over the decades Japan has fielded strong national teams.

With the return of softball to the Olympics after being absent in 2012 and 2016, players selected for Tokyo 2020 will surely appreciate all the more keenly the wonderful opportunity to represent their countries at the top level.

For results of the Inaugural Asia Pacific Cup, see Softball Australia's write-up: www.softball.org.au/brilliant-japan-take-home-the-asia-pacific-cup/



Sam Donkin Photography

Why not go and cheer on Japan's national team at next year's Asia Pacific Cup in Blacktown?