The Templemore squad was down at the Irish Age groups last weekend and had a fantastic showing. The swimmers were incredibly well behaved and professional in their conduct and preparation, and the results reflected this, there were many very commendable performances that I will attempt to run through.

Thursday- Christina McDowell earned herself a small Personal Best on the 50 Breaststroke to start the weekend. Glen Higgins earned himself a great 3 second Personal Best in the 200 Free, all the more impressive given the fact he has had to train with an injured shoulder for over a month, only able to do kick and some occasional Frontcrawl. In the girls 200 Free Victoria Wylie grabbed herself a very impressive 5 second PB for her first swim of the weekend, getting first reserve for the final and Jane Sofley was only a couple of seconds outside her personal best after what has been a very testing season with injury and illness, but has impressed me greatly with her increased maturity and attitude over the past few months that will serve her greatly next season. In the boys 100 back Glen Higgins almost equalled his PB, very impressive again, bearing in mind that shoulder injury and Mark Doherty set his personal best with a very strong swim in a event he has never competed Long course in before. In the 100 Back for women Victoria Wylie got yet another PB of half a second, Christina McDowell grabbed a 1 second PB (but not under 1.20!), Emma Watson was only half a second outside her PB, very impressive for a heats swim and Jane Sofley had a small Personal Best for her Long Course 100 Back. In the mens 200 Fly Robbie McDowell was 9 seconds faster than his heats time at Irish Age groups last year and set significant PB's at 50 and 100 on the way there. The biggest swim of the day was saved for last, Leigh Higgins competed in the 200 Fly and put in a very strong heats swim to put herself 4th for the final in the evening, in the final Leigh improved her time by 5 seconds and raced with real heart and determination to fight heartily and only just get tipped out for the Bronze medal, an incredibly impressive swim! Very well done Leigh from everyone at Templemore.

Friday- Glen Higgins started the day on a positive note, being only just outside his PB in the 100 Free, and Victoria Wylie then had an unbelievable 8.5 second PB in her 100 Free! In the Girls 100 Breast Christina McDowell was just outside her PB and qualified 3rd going into the final, in the final Christina had a fantastic 1.2 second PB to grab herself the gold medal, her first ever Irish Age groups medal! And a Gold one at that! Very well done Christina. Christina's Brother Robbie then took to the water for the 400 IM and swam another PB in the 100 BF on the first 100! Finishing just outside his PB, another great swim given that Robbie has been committing a lot of time and mental energy to his GCSE study. In the womens 400 IM Leigh Higgins had an almost unprecedented 21 second PB jumping from 11th to 4th, once again, just outside the medals, put don't worry, that will all change later!! Victoria Wylie then continued her amazing run of personal bests with an 8 second PB from her swim. Emma Watson then swam her 400 IM for the first time setting a very strong time for her to develop and improve on in the future.

Saturday- Saturday was a very long morning session and took a bit of juggling just to survive the time and heat, never mind the list of great performances that Templemore swimmers produced. Jenni Beattie started the day for the team and set a mesmerizing 24 second PB, a mammoth improvement! Megan Simpson had a solid swim given the training she has had to miss over the last few weeks and was incredibly mature in her response to not swimming as well as she would have liked, using it for feedback and where she could improve going into next year motivation, but no one can question her work ethic. Emma Watson then had a very strong 7 second PB in her 400 free which is looking stronger and stronger. In the mens 400 Free Robbie McDowell swam just outside his PB but went out very strong and committed hard for the swim. In the womens 100 Fly, Christina McDowell put in a very strong, almost 4 second PB. Leigh Higgins swam fantastically to equal her 100 Fly PB and send her 2nd going into the final, moving her up 2 places from where she was entered, unfortunately nerves and enthusiasm took hold in the final and Leigh fell in for a false start, but

continued her race despite being aware of her breach and raced her heart out to prove to everyone what she is capable of and won everyone respect. In the womens 200 BC Jennie Beattie started the event again and a great swim earned her a 2 second PB, then Gemma Clawson swam her 200 Back and swam well but unfortunately got disqualified for finishing on her front (not the only one who occasionally does this in training, others take heed!), but took it with great maturity and humour and accepted it as the lesson for the future that a disqualification should be and she should be very proud of this mature attitude. Victoria Wylie swam close to her PB in her event and finished agonisingly close to the final as first reserve again! Megan Simpson swam slightly outside her personal best in her 200 Back but showed quite a few signs that with a bit of stroke development she should be able to make big improvements in this event. Christina McDowell grabbed herself a nice 8 second PB in an event that is not her strongest but also showed signs that there is more to come. Jane Sofley swam a second and a half quicker than her heat swim from Irish Age Groups last year and Emma Watson swam very close to her PB and grabbed herself a B final place which she used to convert into a 2 second PB and left her as 3rd fastest 15 year old girl, and without the conversion into 2 year age bands that is new for this year would have earned herself a Bronze medal! In the mens 200 Back, Mark Doherty swam very close to his personal best with much more pace control and a much more mature swim that will stand him in good stead going forward. Glen Higgins turned everyones head after not swimming Back in training for over a month due to his injury then pulling out a 3 second PB and comfortably earning a final place, then improved again by a whole second and grabbed himself a hard earned and well deserved Bronze medal! Great job Glen!

Sunday- The final day of a long meet and the swimmers were still performing fantastically. In the girls 200 IM Leigh Higgins was amazing putting in a 9 second PB and jumping from 27th to 9th in the programme and then in inspirational form dropped another 7 seconds to grab herself a Bronze medal in the final, well done Leigh! Olivia Nelson put in a strong swim, especially considering she had only arrived in from a 2 weeks holiday very late the night before, a true demonstration of commitment! Gemma Clawson made a huge jump of 20 seconds in her swim, another fantastic and well-earned improvement. Megan Simpson also conducted herself professionally and put in a strong 200 IM. In the mens version of the event Mark Doherty was the sole representative of Templemore and put in a very commendable performance considering how new he is to Long Course swimming. In the womens 200 Breast Templemore were on form, Olivia Nelson put in a strong second swim of the day and grabbed herself a final place, Leigh Higgins had another inspirational swim, a massive 17 second PB to earn her another final place, her second of the day, Gemma Clawson pulled out a great swim to grab herself her second PB of the day. Christina McDowell swam in the older age group and swam a very impressive and mature swim to be just outside her PB in the heats and qualify first going into the final. That's 3 Templemore swimmers in the Breaststroke finals, and in the 12 and under final both swimmers competed really well, Olivia matching her heats time and holding her place and Leigh Higgins doing a huge PB of another 9 seconds, 17 seconds in one day on a 200 event, superb swimming and jumped from 9th to 4th on the final, narrowly missing out on a medal and also making her back to back finals all the more impressive that both were massive personal bests. In the 13/14 final, Christina was sublime, swimming superbly from start to finish, to take her second Gold medal of the weekend with a final 50 where no of her rivals were able to cope with her strength, she swam a 3 and a half second PB and achieved her Irish Squad time for next season. Well done Christina. In the 800 girls Free Victoria Wylie swam a great 11 second PB looking good the whole way through the race and Megan Simpson looked fantastic through the first 150 metres that with a bit more work should carry her through further and see her take her 800 FC to the next level, but started to drop off a little but still came home with a strong time.

Amazing weekend from all, first ever 4 day meet and very long sessions but the swims made it all worthwhile. Many thanks to all the parents who were very supportive through the whole weekend. Huge thanks to Suzanne McDowell as team manager who kept us all in check and co-ordinated the

whole weekend with military precision and gave the whole weekend much more of a team feel. Also a special mention to Templemore's Swim Ireland official, Alison Honan who along with her counterparts made the whole weekend run smoothly and had to endure long long days on poolside when the rest of us could pop outside, Alison has been fantastic and has helped lighten the load for all the Templemore parents through the season and at the weekend, her work is greatly appreciated!

Sorry about the length, but nothing deserved to be left out, and says something I ran out of superlatives! In summary, great weekend and the medals were as follows. Apologies if I missed anything.

Leigh Higgins- Bronze 200 IM
Glen Higgins- Bronze 200 BC
Christina McDowell- Gold 100 and 200 BRS

Congratulations all and have a great summer!