

PRESS RELEASE DATED 12TH DECEMBER 2008

INVERCARGILL'S Phoenix Synchronised Swimming Club is crediting ongoing support from the ILT and the ILT Foundation for the unprecedented selection of six swimmers in the New Zealand senior squad.

Sisters Kirstin and Caitlin Anderson are joined in the 11-strong New Zealand Synchro A squad by Annaleigh Hamilton, Georgia Timpany and Chantelle Padget, with the Phoenix's Audra Arbas being named head coach.

It's the club's biggest national senior selection hit and it confirms its standing as the best in the country. The good news has also continued with the Phoenix's Phillipa Dean named in the New Zealand B squad.

Phoenix Syncro Southland chairperson, Michelle Anderson, said the players' development had been made possible because ILT and ILT Foundation funding had allowed the club to develop a solid, professional administration base and coaching set-up for the athletes to shine.

That ILT and ILT Foundation joint support has continued with another \$50,000 funding approved for the champion synchronised swimming club.

"We certainly wouldn't have enjoyed the success and national representation we have without that support and financial assistance," Mrs Anderson said.

"We are a strong club but we have to thank the ILT for helping us bring in international coaching expertise. We've got Audra based here, obviously, but we've also been able to bring to Invercargill other top coaches to pass on their skills and knowledge to our athletes. That's really been invaluable and we're seeing the benefits of that now with this New Zealand squad selection."

ILT president, Alan Dennis, said it was great to see his organisation's support turn to synchronized swimming gold.

"To have six Southland athletes, plus the coach, make a New Zealand senior squad from any sport is just fantastic," he said.

The Southlanders will link up with the New Zealand A squad in Wellington at the end of January. Two will be dropped from that squad for the Japan Open in May.

Qualifying for the world championships in Italy in July will be the next major aim, although the main focus for the Anderson sisters is the Commonwealth Games in India in 2010.

They want to qualify as a duet and solo performers to show there is international synchronised swimming life in New Zealand after the well-performed Daniels sisters, Nina and Lisa, retired after the Beijing Olympics this year.

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