

Breathtaking British record smashed... now for world glory?

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A BRISTOL swimmer has broken the UK freediving record by swimming almost four lengths of an Olympic-sized swimming pool underwater.

Rebecca Coales, of Ashley Down, held her breath for two and a half minutes to swim 179 metres (587ft) of the Life Leisure Grand Central Pools in Stockport, Greater Manchester.

The 38-year-old, who works for the Environment Agency, broke the previous dynamic with fins (DYN) record by four metres.

The UK record had been held by Ruth Griffin since 2009.

DYN refers to swimming the greatest distance underwater in a swimming pool without assistance from breathing apparatus on a single breath with flippers.

For her attempt Rebecca, who also teaches yoga classes in Bristol, chose to use a monofin.

In the build-up to the attempt Rebecca trained for between 12 and 15

hours a week in pools around Bristol including Hengrove, Kingswood and Thornbury, often sharing use time with scuba diving classes

The keen surfer decided to take on the attempt after becoming UK pool champion freediver in March.

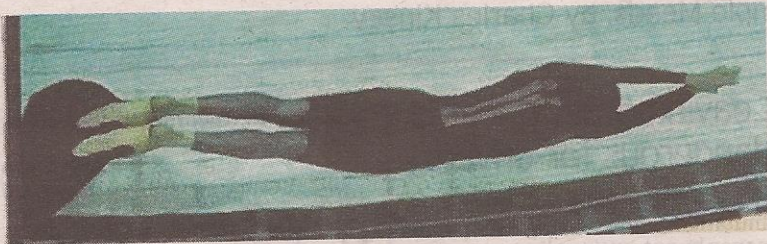
She told the *Bristol Post* how she first became involved in freediving.

“You feel a lot more pressure on the day with friends and family watching but knowing that you have already managed it in training is really beneficial mentally.”

Rebecca Coales

“I started with scuba diving and have always been someone who loves being in the water,” she said

“A chance opportunity on holiday to freedive came up about five years ago and when I got back I did a beginners’ course and have been doing it for fun since.”



● Rebecca Coales has broken a UK freediving record after swimming nearly four lengths of an Olympic-sized pool without coming up for air.

Last year though Rebecca stepped it up a gear and works in Stockport with her coach Steve Millard, the area in which she grew up.

“It had gone well in March and I was considering having a rest but decided to crack on,” she said.

“I had started to reach the distance (underwater) that I needed a couple of times in training so knew I was ready to have a go.

“I didn’t fancy it until the next competition because they don’t come around that often.

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neficial mentally.”

Rebecca’s efforts and preparations paid dividends and her sights are now on the world championships in which she will compete in no fins.

Her record was observed by international judge Gary Lowe and Rebecca’s coach Mr Millard.

Mr Millard said she had made fast progress in a very short period of time, adding: “Rebecca is a relative newcomer to the competition circuit only starting to explore her potential in the last 18 months.”

The world DYN record is 234 metres (767ft), set by 22-time Russian world champion Natalia Molchanova in June 2013.