12/10/95

Brigitte's a master of gold

By YVETTE McGUIRE

WHEN Brigitte Potter went to the Australian Masters Games in Melbourne last week the last thing she expected to come home with was a swag of medals.

The 51-year-old from Geilston Bay not only swam like a fish in the pool to grab three gold and two bronze but then crossed over to the indoor rowing events "for a bit of fun" and picked up another pair of gold medals.

With swimming the first event on the masters' program, Potter — who competed in the 50-54 age group — said she was struggling in her first event, the 200-metres breaststroke.

"I just kept thinking to myself I have got to keep going and at the end the times flashed on the board and I had done my personal best time," the Hobart Masters swim club member said yesterday.

Because of the number of swimmers involved in the program the fastest heat times determined the medal winners without going into a final.

"Later it was announced I had broken the national record and I thought to myself if that was the only thing to happen to me I would be happy," she said.

However, more glory was to come Potter's way, she swam another personal best to win gold in the 100-metres breaststroke and then again in the 4x50-metre medley relay.

Potter then added bronze to her collection with a third in the 200-metres breaststroke and 4x50-metre freestyle relay.

It was then time for the indoor rowing events, using machines similar to those in gymnasiums.

A screen on top of the rowing machines lets the competitor know where she stands in comparision to her rivals.

"All the others that were competing had competed in the outdoor rowing and were all in their rowing gear and there was me turning up in my shorts," Potter said.

"I usually use it for training."

The first race was over 2500-metres and Potter said she swapped the lead with her nearest rival several times before winning by three seconds.

She then defeated the same competitor in the 500-metre race winning in a time of one minute 58.6 seconds.

Master of medals: Brigitte Potter in Hobart yesterday and thrilled with her medal haul from the Masters Games.