

Nuneaton & District Junior League Division 1 Final 10.9.2011 – Wolverhampton

Last Saturday saw the top six clubs in the Nuneaton & District Division 1 Junior Swimming League table compete in the Final showdown for the League title. In what is in effect the West Midlands "Premiership" of Junior League swimming, Boldmere's junior 'A' Team successfully retained their Division 1 Champions title in a dramatic and closely fought gala.

Going into the final Boldmere were seeded second - but equal on points behind arch rivals Leicester Penguins – followed by Nuneaton & Bedworth, Northampton 'A', Halesowen and Lutterworth.

It was an epic final that had everyone on the edge of their seats throughout all the 51 events, with few points separating the top three throughout. After 12 events Boldmere led the Penguins by 1 point, with Nuneaton & Bedworth a further 5 behind. At the half way point, Boldmere had edged to a 6 point lead - which they increased to 11 at the 42 event mark. However, with four events remaining, Leicester had whittled this down to just 1 point. In a dramatic finish, Boldmere turned up the heat to secure three firsts and a third in the last four events to seal victory by seven points.

The final was littered with some fantastic performances that produced 16 first places, 30 Personal Bests and 8 individual Club Records - two of which set were Championship Final records. Girls captain Beth Grant recorded 36.12 in the 12/u 50m Breaststroke to break the previous Championship Record by 0.76. The second came from Matt Price in the 11/u 50m Backstroke in a time of 33.09, which broke the longest record standing, 15-year-old Championship record by a massive 1.47 seconds, which consequently earned him the "Division 1 Record Breaker" Trophy.

There were so many big performance swims from the whole team, but it was the 9-year-old girls that stole the show with some massively improved performances to win both of their relays. In the Medley, Harriet Gordon set a new Club Record on the first backstroke leg followed by Stephanie Deathridge on Breaststroke leg. Francesca Goode then produced a corker of a performance on the third Butterfly leg with a massive unofficial 3 second PB which took the team from 4th to 1st - leaving Alex Bartley to finish the job in style and touch the timing pads first.

In the Freestyle Relay, it was Harriet's turn to have the storming third leg, with Stephanie on anchor bringing the team home in first place by just 0.03 of a second. In the individual Fly Francesca impressed yet again when she recorded an official PB of 18.21 to take first place.

The first win of the night came from Stella O'Hehir in the very first event, the 10/u 50m Freestyle. Kate Davies won both the 11/u 50m

Breaststroke and Fly events with the latter in a dead heat in a new 2 second PB. Matt Price produced a second outstanding performance in winning the 11/u 50m Free in a new CR time of 28.82.

The team's in-depth strength was illustrated by the fact that 9 of the wins came from relays with another girls relay double by the 12/u quartet of Laura Richardson, Rachel Wilson, Beth Grant and Eden Harlow to secure the maximum 12 gala points. The boys 12/u Freestyle foursome of Price, Joel Cunningham, Captain Ben Campbell and Ben Stanford went to the wire - with Stanford touching first by 0.13 seconds after Campbell had battled from 3rd to 1st.

The boys 11/u team of Tom Bloor, Kai Alexander, Cunningham and Price were dominant in both relays - winning by a massive 2 and 3 seconds. Price's underwater work on the second Breaststroke leg Medley relay was superb - taking the team from 4th to 1st in no time.

Others with stand-out relay legs were 9 year olds Jamiroquai Sneekes, Jack Bateman (who battled on despite his goggles coming off), and Leo Karski who produced a super slick changeover in the 10/u Freestyle that earned a valuable position ahead of Leicester Penguins.

Teleb Givans and Leighton Palmer-Whyte contributed with two solid legs in the 8x1 boys relay that Boldmere won by two seconds.

Other individual Personal Best times on the night came from Alex Bartley (25m Back) Jamiroquai Sneekes (25m Fly), Tim Beesley (25m Free), Jack Bateman (25m Back), Aristeia Knight (50m Breast & Back), Toby Chiles (25m Breast), Roan Griffiths (50m Breast & Back), Tom Bloor (50m Fly), Rachel Wilson (50m Fly), Ben Stanford (50m Breast) and Lauren Wall (50m Free) – who also broke the Club Record in the 50m Back.

25m PB's were set on relay first legs by Tim Beesley, Madeline Van Loan, Leighton Palmer-Whyte (2), Alex Bartley and Jamiroquai Sneekes, and a special mention must go to Lois West for her teamwork in the girls 11/u relays - and the enthusiastic and committed Rebecca Illot and Laurie Wilson who were on standby as reserves.

The team have now earned themselves a place with 5 other teams from the south of England in the Southern ARENA Junior Inter-League Area Final (to be held at Stechford on 3rd October). The top four teams from this Southern Final will progress to the National Junior Inter-League Final at Corby's new 8-lane pool on November 27th when they will compete against the top four from the Northern Final for the overall title of "National Junior Champions".

