

Newsflash: The 2013 National Arena League finals on April 28 will be at Leeds instead of Sheffield after Ponds Forge could not accept the booking.



included Lara Bate in the 10-11yrs 50m breaststroke (38.31), Harry Lewis-Mitchell in the 13/u 100m fly (1:02.30), Emily Knowles-Jones in the 15/u 100m freestyle (58.44) and Lewis Robinson in the 15/u 100m backstroke (1:02.62).

Ekaterina Avramova, who will be making her Olympic debut for Bulgaria in London this summer, led Ealing's points charge with wins in the women's 100m backstroke and 100m freestyle in 1:03.42 and 57.17. Her backstroke time won her the 'best swim' award while younger team-mate Lucy Thornton was named top girl in the 13/u age group for her winning time of 1:05.42 in the 100m butterfly. Gina Heyn added 10 points in the women's 100m breaststroke (1:11.62). Ealing - coached by Dave Heathcock, whose son, Matt, coaches fellow B finalists Windsor - also won the relay challenge trophy.

Unlike in the A final, no team

Far left: An over-the-top start in the B final; **below:** City of Cambridge won the best supporters prize; **bottom:** Josh Winnicott wins the 15/u 100m breaststroke for Boldmere; **opposite page (top):** James Goddard (Stockport Metro) and Ealing's Ekaterina Avramova receive their top swim awards; **opposite (bottom):** Record-breaker Dylan Arzoni (Stockport) and Yasmin Boff (City of Coventry) with their 11/u under best swim prizes



Steve Harlow

'It's a shame we didn't make the A final but I'm a Stockport lad and I wanted to help the club and the kids'

day. That's why we do it. It's also a chance to develop team spirit and look at racing skills, starts and turns.'

James Goddard - a big fan of this competition - was the only one of Stockport's Olympic contingent to make the trip. 'It was entirely down to them whether they wanted to take part and whether it was appropriate to their Olympic preparations,' Blackshaw added.

In fact Goddard was the only Olympian in the B final but he didn't have it all his own way. He needed to break his own finals record to win the men's 200m IM in 2:01.36, a 0.32sec improvement on the mark he set in the cup final in 2007. He was pushed hard by City of Cardiff's Xavier Mohammed, who was only just outside the old record with 2:01.81. The

swim won Goddard the award for the top male swim of the B final.

Another Cardiff swimmer, Ieuan Lloyd, who will be joining Goddard in the Olympic team this summer, also gave him a race in the 100m breaststroke, the Stockport man winning in 1:03.67.

'It's a shame we didn't make it to the A final but I'm a Stockport lad and I wanted to help the club and the kids,' said Goddard. 'It's great for the youngsters to see the seniors swim and great for the seniors to mingle with the young ones.'

The only other record-breaker in the B final was another Stockport swimmer, Dylan Arzoni, whose winning 27.66 in the 10-11yrs 50m freestyle not only won him the 'top swim' prize for the age group but toppled a record that had stood since 1996. Other Stockport winners

dominated, with less than 90 points covering the first eight clubs and no club winning more than nine races. Nine was Preston's tally as they claimed third place overall, their victors including age group award winners Rebecca Swales for her 1:12.32 in the 15/u 100m breaststroke and Dominic Walker for his 13/u 100m backstroke swim in 1:03.29. Kathryn Greenslade made it a Preston double in the 13/u 100m backstroke with her winning time of 1:08.01 while 13/u boys Lee Reader and Andrew Davison added 10 points in the 13/u 100m free (59.00) and breaststroke (1:11.20) respectively.

City of Cardiff - B final champions in 2008, 2009 and 2010 - prospered in the men's events, though that appeared to require the merger of two swimmers. According to both scoreboard and results sheet, Ieuan Mohammed was the victor in the men's 100m backstroke in 56.90 although, to the informed observer, the swimmer appeared to be 100 per cent Xavier Mohammed. The Welsh half of Ieuan Mohammed (correctly identified as Ieuan Lloyd) took his chance to gain maximum points as he won the men's 100m butterfly in 54.92. Thomas Greenfield won the 100m freestyle in 51.66 and, almost inevitably with this trio on board, Cardiff also won both men's relays to secure fourth place just five points ahead of Amersham.

The Buckinghamshire club finished a commendable sixth on their league finals debut last year and went one better this time as they increased their points tally from 258 to 282. Mia Poplowska provided the first of their two wins in the 13/u 100m freestyle in 1:01.27

and contributed to their second win as they also took the girls' 13/u freestyle relay. Five second places and eight thirds helped to keep the points flowing.

Boldmere have become regulars in the finals in recent years and the West Midlands club won a three-way tussle for sixth place. Bradley Lynch took the prize for the best swim by a 15/u boy thanks to his winning time of 53.77 in the 100m freestyle. In the same age group Josh Winnicott celebrated his newfound fame as the first person to win a race in the Olympic pool by also winning the 100m breaststroke at Sheffield in 1:09.50. Boldmere also scored freely in the youngest boys age group with wins from Matthew Price in the 10-11yrs 50m back (32.88), Thomas Bloor in the 50m fly (32.30) and the 9-11yrs relays.

Windsor, the day's only final debutants following their second place to Guildford in the South, must have thought this Arena League stuff was easy-peasy as Katie Ambridge stormed to victory by almost two seconds in the very first event - the women's 200m IM (2:20.92). For three minutes, the Berkshire club led the B final. It couldn't last, of course, but further wins from Ambridge in the women's 100m butterfly (1:01.61), Lucinda Campbell in the 15/u 100m backstroke (1:06.64) and Lily Glover in the 15/u butterfly (1:03.94) helped them to a respectable seventh place just three points behind Boldmere.

Just three points further back were the third of the London league's three qualifiers, Camden Swiss Cottage, whose best placings were seconds from Isobel Moffatt in the 13/u 100m fly (1:08.75), Will Rittenhouse in the 15/u 100m back (1:02.63) and the 13/u boys' free team.

Almost 30 per cent of City of Coventry's 225 points came from their six race wins, five of them coming in the youngest age group. Yasmin Boff took the prize for the top 11/u girl after winning the 50m fly and freestyle in 31.90 and 29.97. Other winners were Isabel Jones in the 10-11yrs 50m back (34.52), Bailey Connell in the boys' 10-11yrs free team and Earl Radtschenko in the boys' 15/u 100m fly (58.71).

City of Cambridge, resurgent under coach James Freezer, returned to the finals after a nine-year absence thanks to their second place in the East Midlands. Kate Little gave them a token win in the 13/u 100m breast in 1:19.09. A trio of third places from Alex Harrison in the women's 200m IM, 100m breast and 100m fly, and another from Harry Robinson in the 13/u 100m free helped to 196 points - precisely the same as that achieved by East Midlands rivals City of Peterborough in B final 12 months ago.



B Final Results

Top Club

- 1 Stockport Metro 340
- 2 Ealing 338
- 3 Preston 307
- 4 City of Cardiff 287
- 5 Amersham 282
- 6 Boldmere 259
- 7 Windsor 256
- 8 Camden Swiss Cottage 253
- 9 City of Coventry 225
- 10 City of Cambridge 196

Relay Challenge

- 1 Ealing 33:48.70
- 2 Stockport Metro (+9.61) 33:58.31
- 3 Amersham (+25.47) 34:14.17
- 4 Preston (+26.43) 34:15.13
- 5 City of Cardiff (+33.73) 34:22.43
- 6 Boldmere (+34.09) 34:22.79
- 7 Camden Swiss Cottage (+41.46) 34:30.16
- 8 Windsor (+44.36) 34:33.06
- 9 City of Coventry (+46.43) 34:35.13
- 10 City of Cambridge (+86.03) 34:54.73

Top Swimmers (FINA points)

James Goddard (Stockport Metro) 828
Ekaterina Avramova (Ealing) 769

AGE GROUP AWARDS

15 & under

Bradley Lynch (Boldmere)
Rebecca Swales (Preston)

13 & under

Dominic Walker (Preston)
Lucy Thornton (Ealing)

11 & under

Dylan Arzoni (Stockport Metro)
Yasmin Boff (City of Coventry)

Best supporters

City of Cambridge

League Finals Records

Men's 200m individual medley

James Goddard (Stockport Metro) 2:01.36

Boys' 11 & under 50m freestyle

Dylan Arzoni (Stockport Metro) 27.66

