

# Boldmere Juniors reach ARENA National Inter-League Final

With last Sunday's Ryder Cup a washout, Boldmere's current crop of Junior swimmers (age group 9 -12) created their own little storm in Bristol. They finished in a fantastic 2nd place in the ARENA sponsored Southern Area Inter-League Final to secure their place in the National Inter-League Final, for the second time in the club's history – and so qualify for the impressive status as one of the top 8 Junior clubs in the country – for the second time in the last three years!

Boldmere took an early six point lead ahead of London-based Hillingdon SC after 12 events, a margin they still maintained by the half way mark, with City of Derby 9 points adrift in third spot, followed by City of Norwich, Camden Swiss Cottage and Ferndown Otters from Bournemouth. By event 37 the tide had turned as the Londoners eased into a 5 point lead ahead of Boldmere - who eventually slipped a further 15 points behind in the home strait following two top three disqualifications. However, to finish second and to qualify for the National Final was far more than most expected.

Boldmere's young swimming stars will now be travelling to Corby on November 28th with the three other clubs from the Southern Final to face the top 4 northern giants of City of Leeds, City of Liverpool, Southport and City of Newcastle - to battle it out for the coveted National title.

The Southern Final was littered with some exceptional performances, which broke 5 individual and 2 relay Club Records, with a further 12 individual Personal Best times set. With a team of 28 swimmers in the 4 age groups, Boldmere won 12 of the 49 races with 28 top three place finishes.

The individual event winners were: Kate Davies (10Yrs 50m Fly & Breaststroke), Matt Price (10Yrs 50m Breaststroke & Freestyle), Tom Bloor (10Yrs 50m Fly) - slashing 2 seconds off his PB, Beth Grant setting a new Club Record of 37.02 (12Yrs 50m Breaststroke) and finally boys' captain Jake Dixon and Charlie Hackett - who respectively broke the 30 second barrier in the 12 Yr 50 Fly and Freestyle events for the first time. Jake's performance was just outstanding with his time of 29.91 setting a new CR, while Charlie who turned in second showed he still 'has it' to touch first in 29.61 with only 0.26 seconds separating the first three.

More valuable points from top 3 finishes came from Aristeia Knight (2nd 25m Free – PB), Madeline Van-Loan (2nd 25m Breast - PB), Roan Griffiths (2nd 25m Breast - PB), Taleb Givans (25m Breast – PB), Kai Alexander (50m Back – 2 second PB), Eden Harlow (50m Fly – PB) and Ben Stanford (50m Back).

The strength and depth of the team clearly showed through in the Relay events with the 11 top 3 finishes. The 12 year old

girls' foursome of captain Charlotte Smith, Beth Grant, Margaret Gately and Morgan Harlow scored well with two solid 3rds. In the first event of the day Morgan, on anchor, fought a blanket finish to slam the pads in the same time as 4th place Hillingdon and only 0.12 behind second place in the Medley. In the Freestyle Relay only 0.65secs separated the top three.

The 9 year old 'super trooper' boys of Mitchell Oakley, Taleb Givans, Sam Dineen and Roan Griffiths were close to pulling off two 3rd places with some excellent anchor legs from Roan.

Laurie Wilson, Kate Davies, Stella-Anne O'Hehir and Lauren Wall made up the 10 year girls quartet securing a 3rd in the Medley and super maximum 6 pointer in the Freestyle with a storming last leg from Lauren zooming from third to first to touch just 0.12 in front.

With only one event rest time for both Kate and Lauren they then joined the older 11 year girls of Laura Richardson and Eden Harlow in the Medley. After Eden had moved the team into second on the Breaststroke leg and Kate maintained it on fly, Lauren once again did another solid job on the final leg to keep the second place.

In the same age group the boys' foursome of Matt Price, Ben Campbell, Joel Cunningham and Ben Stanford came third in the Medley while in the Freestyle, after Matt's Club Record time of 15.04 on first leg, Stanford held their leading position on the anchor to touch just 0.15 ahead of Derby.

The two relay performances of the day came from the 10yr boys (Kai Alexander, Tom Bloor, Matt Price and Archie Langston) who not only won both Freestyle and Medley in new club records - but they destroyed the competition winning by massive margins of five and six seconds – a joy to witness!

Another mention must go to Matt Price who ended up swimming in 8 events competing in the 11 and 12 year relay teams as well as his own 10 year old age group. Finally, with the unfortunate change in the birthday cut-off date, which resulted in some swimmers from the earlier rounds now 'out of age', a special mention must go to 9 year olds Zara Chatfield and Sydney Jackson who joined the team putting in excellent relay performances on such a big occasion.

It was a great day with the whole team being a credit to the club. The red and black flag waving army of parent support was greatly appreciated (and a sight to be seen). Special thanks must go to the poolside help from chaperones Ali Hackett and Pam Campbell, Team Manager Nigel Kelly and.....oh yes and a little help from Coach Ash Cox!!

