

Staffordshire Invitational County Gala - 25.3.12 - Stoke

Boldmere Swimmers follow the Bear

Warwickshire County Junior Squad headed to Stoke on Trent at the Fenton Leisure Centre for the Staffordshire Invitation County Gala. With an impressive Boldmere contingent making up over a third of the Warwickshire team there was plenty of action for the Boldmere supporters who made the trip north. 11 Boldmere swimmers swapped the black and red for Yellow shirts and caps of Warwickshire with Kate Davies, Tom Bloor, Archie Langston and Matt Price in the 11yr Category, Eden Harlow, Laura Richardson and Ben Stanford in the 12's with Jake Dixon in the 13's and Alex Dolan, Charlotte Smith and Steven Wilson in the 14's.

Fenton Leisure Centre in Stoke was as one would expect on a sunny day hot and clammy and combined with an outside lane 1 draw we were not off to the best of starts as technical difficulties delayed the start by 30 minutes raising temperatures by further delay, but when it started the Bears hit the water running so to say, with victories in the very first two races with Boldmere's Kate Davies and the rest of the 11 yr girls squad taking the honours in the 4x 50 Medley in 2.17.15 with her 38.24 Breast leg in the first race.

The boys 11yr Medley squad followed repeating the feat in the very next race with Stratford's William Foster (Breast 38.35) joining the Boldmere trio of Bloor (Fly 31.68), Langston (Free 29.66) and Price with a PB and Club Record one of two clocked by Boldmere swimmers on the day with his backstroke lead off leg of 32.07 in creating a very strong team indeed winning by 5 seconds in 2.12.02. In fact with Archie Langston getting 2nd in the 50 free with a PB of 30.39 and Tom Bloor taking 1st in the 50 Fly (32.10) and William Foster taking 1st in the 50 Breast (38.69) coupled with Matt's 2nd in 50 Back (32.23) and his 6 second victory in the individual 100IM in 1.10.93 the Warwickshire 11 yr boys squad were truly dominant in the pool.

Kate Davies also brought home victory in the 11yr 50 Breast (38.89) giving her a perfect 2 race two win ratio combined with her medley swim! In the boys 12yr Category Ben Stanford was equally dominant in not only winning the 100 Free but in doing so breaking the magical 1 minute barrier for the first time in 59.95 an impressive feat for a 12 year old, this combined with a 2nd in the boys 12yr Medley Relay (Free 26.60) and a third in the 200IM with a PB of 2.32.21 and the victorious 8 cannon relay split of 27.65 was an excellent return for his efforts.

Laura Richardson with a PB in the 100 Back of 1.15.66 and Eden Harlow (100 Free 1.08.25) swam well against very tough competition and then combined in the 12yr Medley squad to take 3rd place in 2.16.03 (Laura Bk 35.09 Eden Free 31.22) then

Eden finished her day with another 3rd as part of the Girls 8 X 50 cannon team with a 31.31 leg combining with Alex Dolan's 30.25 to stop the clock at 4.01.80. Alex tasted individual success in the 100 Breast with 2nd place with a PB of 1.18.51 but found the going tougher in the individual 200 IM in 2.37.93 and a team 4th in the 14 yr Girls Medley (Breast 36.20)

Charlotte Smith stepped up to the mark at short notice yet remained cool in the pool clocking 1.05.24 in the 100 Free and 33.33 in the backstroke leg of the 14yr girls medley relay and 4th place earning valuable points for the county.

Jake Dixon was yet again a class act winning the Boys 13 200IM by 4 seconds in a PB of 2.17.21 and then taking 2nd in the 100 Fly in 1.02.07 another PB and the second Boldmere Club Record, yet still not enough on the day for victory, this coupled with a 2nd in the Boys 13yr medley (Fly 28.06) and his winning 26.28 birth in the 8's squad it was still a great all round performance.

Ironically both Jake Dixon and Matt Price despite both clocking PB and club records in their signature events of 100 Fly and 50m Back respectively for which they are both respected nationally came 2nd best against strong swimmers from Stockport Metro, home to many GB superstars, competing for Cheshire. More excitingly these are both highly personal battles that will be repeated in Sheffield's Ponds Forge Arena next month as Boldmere and Stockport go head to head in the prestigious national finals of the Arena League.

Steve Wilson in the 14 boys squad again found very tough competition, despite an excellent PB with 56.70 in the 100m freestyle, Steve still found himself in 3rd place in a race won in an amazing time for 14 year olds of 56.52 and then his 26.47 freestyle leg in the 14yr Medley only returned 5th place for his squad in 2.04.88 however Steve returned to winning ways in the 8 Cannon with an impressive 26.00 final leg. This very last race of the Boys 8 x 50 Cannon was a celebration of Warwickshire or should I say Boldmere sprinting with half the team coming from the Boldmere club - Matt Price (11) 28.13 Ben Stanford (12) 27.65 Jake Dixon (13) 26.28 and Steve Wilson (14) 26.00 on anchor leg, this spine of Boldmere swimmers helped bring home the Warwickshire squad by a margin of 5 seconds in what is traditionally a race won by hundredths of seconds as the top sprinters churn the pool into a frenzy, a most impressive race with the Warwickshire boys leading from the start and building on that lead throughout.

Warwickshire efforts earned them 3rd place on the day behind Cheshire in 1st place and Leicestershire in 2nd with Worcestershire 4th Staffordshire 5th and Shropshire in 6th.

