

North West Micro League Match 4 Report – Chorley 09/07/2022

Bobcats were away at Chorley for the final match of this year's Micro League competition, it was our third weekend of racing in a row and massive thanks to all swimmers, parents and volunteers who have attended.

I'll come to the report from the Chorley match soon, but now that we have completed the season, I wanted to summarise how team has performed and where I think we can get to in the future.

The Micro League competition hasn't run since 2019 due to the pandemic, when it was announced in January that this year's competition would go ahead – I wasn't sure if we would have enough swimmers to put a team together. It has been the smallest team of swimmers we have ever had for Micro League and to have completed all our matches is an achievement on its own. This has meant that swimmers have been racing in more events than usual and often swimming in higher age groups to make up numbers. I've been very proud of our team; they have all pulled together and done everything we've asked from them.

I hope all swimmers have enjoyed the experience and all those competing in the 9-, 10- and 11-year-old categories are keen to be part of the team for next year. Most of this year's Bobcats team have been very inexperienced and it's been a steep learning curve, given time and more experience I'm sure we will a much stronger team in 2023. Although we have struggled in some age groups / races, this is nothing to do with the ability of our swimmers, it's simply that the swimmers from other clubs already have more training and competition practice.

We have shown that our 9/10-year old's training in Micro League Squad can be very competitive and our 11/12-year old's in County / Development Squad can also be very competitive. If we can add to our team over the next 6-12 months, get swimmers progressing to higher training groups and provide more opportunity to experience individual and team competitions, then I think we can perform much, much better next year.

The final positions / points for Division B were as follows:

1. Leyland Barracudas (597)
2. Halton (556.5)
3. Chorley Marlins (470)
4. Blackburn Centurions (444.5)
5. BOBCATS (385)
6. Garston (275)
7. Liverpool Penguins (196)

There were some outstanding individual and team performances across the four matches with the following swimmers/teams all finishing in the top 10 overall point scorers (All Ages).

Charlotte Cook (6th)

Bobby Watkiss (9th)

Owen Wilson (10th)

Congratulations to our 12-Year-Old Boy's Relay Team who were the best performing Boys team in the division, winning 6 out of their 8 races.

There is no promotion and relegation for this year's competition, so we will be competing against the same teams next year plus Clitheroe Dolphins.

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In this match we were competing against Chorley Marlins (Home Team), Blackburn and Halton. Again, it was a very different venue to our previous match. I thought our swimmers had learnt from the experience at Leyland and were much better with their diving from the blocks, however it's fair to say that our swimmers (and other clubs) struggled in the backstroke races. It's common for young swimmers to try and keep straight by looking at the roof, however this is a problem when the roof has a zig-zag pattern. Swimmers should not need to use their eyes to correct mistakes, ideally, they need to build up an understanding of what swimming straight feels like – this is something that we need to work on.

Again, I was super impressed with the attitude of our swimmers, especially those who stepped up to swimming the 50 Butterfly events. Well Done to Ruby Cleaver, Eleanor Halstead and Sam Wilson who all completed their swim without being disqualified and contributed 4 points to our overall total.

We did have more disqualifications than in the previous two matches, this was because of the difficulties swimming backstroke, and I think some of the younger swimmers were starting to lose concentration towards the end of the match. This is understandable as it was the third match in three weeks and was starting to get late.

Once again, thank you to Danielle Cook, Sacha Mikita, and Leanne Nutter for doing an excellent job of organising the team. Also, thank you to Oliver Nutter for stepping in for Kira and helping to prepare swimmers during warm up and before races, and to our officials, Amelia Moss, Paul Moss, and Philip Shuttleworth who ensured that there were enough judges for the match to go ahead.

The final scores were:

Halton: 137.5

Blackburn Centurions: 119.5

Chorley Marlins: 111

BOBCATS: 82

Congratulations to the following swimmers / teams who achieved first place finishes:

Charlotte Cook, 9 Years 25 Backstroke and 25 Freestyle.

Bobby Watkiss, 9 Years 25 Backstroke and 25 Freestyle (On his Birthday!)

Owen Wilson, 12 Years 50 Butterfly and 50 Freestyle.

Boys 12 Years Medley Relay, Robert Barrett, Sam Wilson, Owen Wilson, Michael Zwardon.

Boys 12 Years Freestyle Relay, Robert Barrett, Sam Wilson, Owen Wilson, Michael Zwardon.

I've enjoyed seeing everyone race over the past couple of months and hope you have all enjoyed it.

Thank you, Ian.