

The first County Championship event for 2 years following the Covid pandemic got off to a terrific start for Berkhamsted SC with the Girls' 100m Butterfly. Caitie Walters was seeded in the outside lane of the very first heat and showed how much she has improved by chopping over 3 seconds from her personal best set at the 2020 champs. Leading her heat from the off she stormed through all 4 lengths consistently ending with a massive 4 second lead over the second placed swimmer. Josie Reid was next up in the 3rd heat and again flew out to an early lead that she did not relinquish, coming home 2 seconds ahead of the field and taking a further 1 second from her own pb. Final swimmer up was Amy Pemberton in her first meet since returning to the club full time and she did not disappoint posting her fastest time since her return to come in second in her heat with 1:08.51 to qualify in 6th for the Open final. In the 15 years category, Josie placed 4th and Caitie 10th.

Fergus Reid was back in the water after Covid and attacked his 100m backstroke race, leading at halfway in a time faster than his pb split but paid for his early efforts in the latter stages, finishing 7th just 1.5 seconds outside his best, a time which promises much for when he returns to full fitness. Amy followed up her heat by improving to 1:08.23 and move up to 5th place by really working the third 25m hard and complete a great start to the meet.

In the 200 Individual medley, Josie and Kate went head-to-head in the 4th heat and swam the race completely differently. Josie, making the most of her best 2 strokes, the fly and back and led away from the start. Kate bided her time, climbing from 7th after 50m to be just 0.1 seconds behind Josie at the end of the breaststroke leg as they both moved away from the other swimmers at a rate of knots. In the event, Kate just outlasted her team mate to come home first with a 7 second improvement, Josie touching 2nd in a 4 second pb. They ended 8th and 11th respectively in the 15 years age group.

In the final heat Tamsin Moren was just outside her entry time after an aggressive race in which she was, again, ahead of her pb at the 100m split.

The second session on the Saturday was just the 50m Freestyle events which got off to a cracking start as Mia Maslen-Wollington strode to victory in the first heat to set a new pb of 31.50. Seren Diehl, Caitie Walters, Josie Reid and Kate Hopper all swam fractionally outside the best times as the session dragged on and then Amy Pemberton made her second final of the day as 7th qualifier in 28.25.

For the boys, Fergus Reid overcame his nerves to effortlessly improve his best time as, like Mia Maslen-Wollington he was well clear in his heat, posting 27.01, Eric Batt overcame a tardy reaction to the start to finish 6th in his heat, just a quarter of a second off his best and then Euan Donald also went pb with 26.92 for 2nd in his heat. In the women's final, Amy was very happy in improving to 6th to cap off a superb first day of the 3 weekends meet for the club.

Sunday dawned frostily with the first races being the Ladies' 100 Back. After Seren Diehl set the tone close to her best with 1:21.63, followed by Josie Reid's 1:16.82 both Kate Hopper and Tamsin Moren shaved the pbs down to finish with Tamsin Moren in 4th 17-year-old and Hopper, slightly the quicker of the 2 in 9th 15-year-old. Euan Donald placed 7th in the 100m fly with a decent 1:04.70 and then it was onto the 200 Free started by Mia Maslen-Wollington in 2:38.08 just 0.8 seconds outside her best. Kate Hopper and Tamsin Moren went head-to-head again in adjacent lanes with Tamsin Moren fractionally ahead at half way but Kate Hopper has learned how to pace her races and came back to pip her club mate by 0.04 seconds as both set new pbs again. Kate Hopper was 7th in age and Tamsin Moren 2nd.

Again, it was left to Amy Pemberton to finish the event by making her third final out of 3 events, this time as fastest qualifier with 2:11.42. In the final she attacked the race to lead at halfway and was just unable to hold on, finishing 4th in a final time of 2:11.55. A shortened afternoon session allowed Pearce Clare to swim his first County event, improving to 1:18.06 for 8th 12-year-old in the 100m Free. Eric Batt also showed his huge improvements to be knocking on the sub 60 time he targets for 100m free with 1:01.95, just ahead of Fergus Reid with 1:01.99. The final event was the 100m Breast where Mia Maslen-Wollington again went well with 1:38.36 before Kate Hopper posted yet another pb in 1:24.83 for 6th and Tamsin Moren claimed another 2nd 17-year-old placing in 1:21.08.

The swimmers look forward to the coming weeks of competition.

Geoff Wood – Coach - Berkhamsted SC - 10th January 2022