

**Berkhamsted Swimming Club**  
**Herts County Championships – weekend 2**

The second weekend of Herts County Swimming Championships, held at The Venue, Borehamwood saw more success for the Berkhamsted athletes.

23 swimmers took part from the club and there were some significant firsts:

Alex Kalverboer showed his talent and endurance and won his first medal on the Saturday when he took silver in the 200m Breast when he took 10 seconds off his pb with 3:15.59 but improved that on Sunday with a magnificent gold in the 200m Back, improving by an even bigger margin to post 2:44.76. This was a gun to pad win in his heat from 6<sup>th</sup> seed in his heat and proved too much for the 2 swimmers who were ahead of him in the rankings as they chased his time in the following 2 heats. His pb was also a Regional Qualifying time to go alongside his 100 Breast from the previous week.

Zac Patel made his first County Open final in the 50 fly when he set a pb and club record in the heat. His heat saw him go clear off the halfway turn to win in a club best of 26.90 and he went into the final as 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked swimmer and he stepped up to the task by powering back up the second 25m climbing from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> and then by nailing his last 5m into the finish moved into the silver medal position, missing gold by just 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second in another pb and club best of 26.68 moving him into the top 20 in Britain for his age.

There was a second first in the 50 fly final with Ish Rahim making it two BSC swimmers in an Open final for the first time. The 15 year old was in the same heat as Zac Patel and he set his own best of 27.41 was 4<sup>th</sup> fastest in the heat and qualified him 8<sup>th</sup> for the final which he consolidated in the final with another pb of 27.27, another top 20 placing nationally.

Euan Donald made his first County final in the first weekend and was again on form, making more finals and in the 200m Fly he stormed away from the start in his heat to come home a clear winner and claim his first medal with the Bronze in 2:27.85.

James Chennells became the first BSC swimmer to duck inside 2 minutes for the 200m free when he went 6<sup>th</sup> in his heat, 7<sup>th</sup> overall in 1:59.31, an improvement of a second on his pb and a new club record. The weekend began with the 50 breast events and, after Alex Kalverboer placed 9<sup>th</sup> in a pb of 43.28, George Thorne swam faster than ever before, only to be disqualified for a technical infringement. Euan Donald set his own pb with 35.56 to make the 15 years final, Ish Rahim posted 35.70, Zac Patel 33.88 (pb) and then Jack Filer, back from University clocked 31.19 when winning his heat to make the Open final, the first of 17 over the 2 days for the club. The finals for the boys saw Euan Donald retain his 7<sup>th</sup> place just 0.02 seconds slower than his heat pb and then Filer began the series of firsts for the club at this level by taking the Bronze medal in the Open final, his first County Championship Open medal. Always in the mix, just 0.6 seconds covered the first 4 swimmers with Jack in 3<sup>rd</sup> at the exciting climax to the race.

For the girls 50 Breast Mia Hickman went pb for 10<sup>th</sup>, 47.33, Christina Soulsby set 47.12 and Tamsin Moren was 10<sup>th</sup> in 40.49.

In the 200 Free Alex Kalverboer improved 10 seconds for 2<sup>nd</sup> in his heat and 10<sup>th</sup> place with 3:36.95, a tired George Thorne put his breast disappointment behind him clocking 2:18.01, Dan Chennells went pb 2:13.86 in the same heat as Euan Donald also set a pb, 2:12.05 before James Chennells went sub 2 minutes.

For the girls Abbie Briers has stepped up massively this year and absolutely stormed off the block to lead her heat from the slowest seeded lane and dropped almost 9 seconds to hit the pads in a heat win and 2:33.82 for 5<sup>th</sup> in age. Ella Nijkamp showed new found aggression to lead her heat for 175m before finally finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> overall) in a new pb of 2:26.90 to end session 1 of the weekend.

The second session began with the 50m Back and another final for Alex Kalverboer making it in as 6<sup>th</sup> seed in 36.62, pb. Thorne went 3<sup>rd</sup> in his heat with his own pb of 32.66. Luke Nijkamp ended 11<sup>th</sup> with 32.21 and then, in successive heats Ish Rahim and James Chennells both went sub 30 seconds with the same 29.53 finishing time. Abi Hewson was superb off the start with her underwater to qualify for her 50 Back final with 33.24 (pb) followed by Ella Nijkamp (33.57) setting a new club best for 12

year olds and into the final in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Both girls' times were RQTs. Issy Soulsby made it 3 finalists with her 32.97 before Charlotte Watson got back in the competition pool for the first time after illness and was delighted with her 32.79. In the finals Alex Kalverboer just drifted off his heat best to end 8<sup>th</sup> in 36.91, as did Hewson with 33.27 for 5<sup>th</sup> but both were still faster than their entry times. Issy Soulsby finished 6<sup>th</sup> in 33.05 and Ella Nijkamp improved both her pb and club best yet again with 32.92 to claim the silver medal.

The 200 Breast provided Alex Kalverboer with his silver and also, in the same heat, showcased a heat win for Adi Cooper in his first County Champs, with 3:08.62 for 12<sup>th</sup> and then Euan Donald went faster than before by a couple of seconds for 3<sup>rd</sup> in heat and another 4<sup>th</sup> overall in 2:43.75 (RQT). Mia Hickman suffered an unfortunate D/Q but would have been 9 seconds faster than before and Chrissie Soulsby posted 3:38.71 and Tamsin Moren just missed a medal, ending 4<sup>th</sup> in the 13 years age group in 3:02.73 as she battles long term injury.

The last session of Day 1 was the frantic 50 Free. In a manic 90 minutes of racing there were pbs for Adi Cooper (28.76), Zac Patel (26.17 – 2<sup>nd</sup> in heat) and James Chennells 25.32. Both Adi Cooper and James Chennells made the finals for their age. Adi Cooper improved again both position and time clocking 28.54 for 6<sup>th</sup>. James Chennells improved his time to 25.30 in the Open final.

The girls joined the finals party with Amelia Dewar in her first County Champs qualifying 7<sup>th</sup> after a heat pb of 35.40; Briers going into the 32 second bracket for the first time with 32.43, qualifying 7<sup>th</sup> and Ella Nijkamp going under the iconic 30 second barrier in 29.81, winning her heat and qualifying 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest. There was also a pb for first timer Evie Light (36.26) and another good swim from Abi Hewson in 30.50. In the finals Amelia Dewar improved again to clock 34.77 and move up to 5<sup>th</sup> overall, she also got with this time a Club Best. Abigail Briers went inside 33 again with 32.74 for 7<sup>th</sup> and Ella Nijkamp crowned a superb first day with yet another silver, pb and club record in 29.39.

Day 2 began with the 50 Fly for girls. Lydia Wisely posted 36.56, Abi Hewson was close to her best but disappointed with her 34.44 and fly specialist, Ellen Northwood, clocked 32.04, Ella Nijkamp, having an excellent series dropped in for another RQT, pb and club best in an exciting heat. She was second all the way until the final stroke when with a perfect finish she finished equal first in her heat in 32.39, making another final in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. In the final itself her confidence showed as she attacked off the blocks and took the race to her opposition, eventually succumbing to the eventual winner in the last 10m to claim another silver, but lowering her heat club best and pb to 31.73.

For the boys, Tom Holmes-Higgin looked smooth with his long stroke to post 37.48, Luke Nijkamp just missed his best with a fast 31.97 before Euan Donald ended 9<sup>th</sup> fastest in 30.48 (pb) and James Chennells lowered the 16 year olds club best, going inside 28 with 27.99 for 6<sup>th</sup> in heat (pb) and Jack Filer was another in the 27 second bracket with 27.92 as both Ish Rahim and Zac Patel made the Open final as above.

The 200 Back saw Mia Hickman annoyed with herself having been disqualified after putting up a time some 12 seconds quicker than her pb but, again, showing what she is capable of. Ella Nijkamp and Issy Soulsby picked up a brace of silver medals in RQTs. Ella Nijkamp was also second in her heat as she lowered her best by 3 seconds and Soulsby swam a season's best of 2:30.00 for 3<sup>rd</sup> in her heat and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall, coming nicely back to form.

After Alex Kalverboer struck gold, Tom Holmes-Higgin just about matched his pb with 2:55.64 and James Chennells set a new club 16 years best in an RQT of 2:15.11 for 5<sup>th</sup> overall.

Final session of day 2 began with the 100 IM and 10<sup>th</sup> for Mia Hickman in 1:31.07 (pb) completing her rapid weekend. Tamsin Moren went 11<sup>th</sup> in 1:20.07 and Issy Soulsby made another final in 1:12.41, some 4 seconds inside her qualifying time. In the final she repeated the time with 1:12.69 for 5<sup>th</sup> place. The boys started with Alex Kalverboer collecting another 4<sup>th</sup> place as he dropped his pb by 5 seconds to 1:20.73 in the heat and went even quicker in the final for 1:20.24 and consolidating his 4<sup>th</sup> place. Euan Donald ranked 9<sup>th</sup> after the heat with a 2 second pb of 1:08.16. Zac Patel went 1:05.82 for 12<sup>th</sup> overall.

The 200 Fly was the last event of the weekend before the final finals. Ellen Northwood put out a 2:44.27 before Euan Donald claimed his bronze medal with 2:27.85 and Patel posted 2:29.98. There was one surprise left for Euan Donald who was preparing to leave for the evening when he found he had been called into the 100 IM final following a withdrawal and made the most of the opportunity to improve his ranking to 7<sup>th</sup> overall, repeating his time with 1:08.20 completing an excellent weekend for the athletes.