

Berkhamsted SC
Herts league Round 2

The two squads from Berkhamsted put together a series of excellent swims on Saturday night but met with mixed fortunes. After a resounding third place in round 1 the Hemel team had to settle for 6th at the Hemel Hempstead gala whilst the Hitchin team led for much of the Gala before finally having to settle for 2nd overall.

For the Hitchin team, Amy Stoker and Peter Lever began proceedings in the Open 100m Free events. Amy Stoker improved her round 1 performance with 1:09.82 and Peter Lever continues to strive to go sub 60 for the first time, again falling agonisingly short in 1:00.48 as both claimed second places. After pbs for Jemima Cadge (10-11 Back), Elliss MacNab & Callum Bullock (Both 3rd 14-15 Fly 3rd 40.54 & 2nd 29.86 – first time sub 30 seconds), Yazeed Swarray-Deen also improved his 50 Breast to 44.71 for another second.

The first wins of the night came in the Open 100 Back from Mason Brand getting right back to his pb times with 1:08.51 and Lara Connell who chopped best part of a second from her breast pb with 23.48.

These were quickly followed by Harrison Bullock in the 14-15 Free; 29.20 pb and Alex Farnham in the girls' 12-13 50m Fly 37.43 pb. William Barnes had improved his breast pb to 28.24 & Caitlin Kelley her free to 34.86.

Molly Baker had claimed a merited 3rd place in the Open 100m back and brother Sam Baker took 2nd in his Fly with 38.87.

The first set of relays saw wins for the Open Boys medley relay squad (Mason Brand, Daniel Lever, Owen Strakosch & Peter Lever) followed immediately by the 10-11 Girls free squad of Eva Lawson, Lara Connell, Jemima Cadge & Evie Light.

The Boys 14-15 Medley team took their win (Owen Strakosch, Harrison & Callum Bullock and Ben Holmes-Higgin) as did the 12-13 boys free squad (Jack Eyles, Yazeed Swarray-Deen, Harry Lines & Baker). Meanwhile the 12-13 girls free team claimed second (Izzy MacDonald, Elliss MacNab, Lara Coster & Daisy Laing).

Amy Stoker claimed a pb in her first 100m breast for a while with 1:34.88 and there were two more seconds for Daniel Lever (Open Boys 100m Breast) and Eva Lawson (10-11 Fly). Owen Strakosch continued his good form with a win and pb in the 14-15 backstroke, dropping to 33.26 and Evie Light smashed her pb in the 10-11 free to claim a clear victory, followed by wins for Lines (returning to competition after injury) and Lara Coster in the 12-13 Backstroke.

Mason Brand had continued to swim well in the Open Fly with second after Tracy Van De Venter had finished just 0.01 shy of her best with 3rd in the Female Open Fly.

In between, Laura Geere had shaved nearly 4 seconds from her 50m back best, Riley Milne set a pb in his 10-11 fly and Ben Holmes-Higgin in his first individual race for some time lowered his 50m breast time by over 3 seconds to 39.76. Jack Rutherford also set a pb in his 25m free.

In the second set of relays the Open Girls picked up 3rd in the Free relay with Amy Stoker, Tracy Van De Venter & Molly Baker being joined by Alex Farnham swimming up 2 age groups.

The 10-11 girls claimed a second relay best in the Free team event, a feat equalled by the 14-15 Boys in their Free event whilst the 12-13 girls improved their 2nd in the Free relay to pinch the Medley Relay in 1:15.20, to place the team 2nd at the end of an exciting night.

The Hemel team were at Hemel Hempstead and, against tough opposition, the best placings were 2nd for Alex Kalverboer, fresh from his success at County Champs in the 10-11 50m fly when he improved 0.69 seconds to 37.90, Zac Patel in the Open Fly, 1:01.92 and Louis Armitage with a pb of 1:13.23 in the 14-15 100m Breast.

The 6th place did not however preclude some super swims.

Sam Newman smashed his best in the open Free dropping to 58.53. Euan Donald lowered his 100m fly best to 1:06.29 and Tamsin Moren improved her 100m breast to 1:25.76. These were followed by

best times for Michael Joyce (12-13 100m breast 1:31.97) and Mia Hickman (10-11 50m Breast 46.82) along with big drops for George Thorne (100m Free) & Tom Holmes-Higgin (100m Fly). George Thorne closed on the 60 second barrier with 1:01.67 and Holmes-Higgin improved by over 5 seconds to clock 1:29.95.

Abbie Briers lowered her 100m free pb to 1:11.84 and Rafael Armstrong set a new 100 free best in the same age group. The final pb came from Dylan Kiddle in the 10-11 50m free with 38.48, slicing under 40 seconds for the first time.

14 year old Issy Soulsby took 3rd place in the Open Back, Luke and Ella Nijkamp both claimed 3rd places in their respective age group backstrokes.

The 2 squads were completed by Hugh Burnell-Smith, Maddie Kiernan, Ellen Northwood, Amelia Dewar, Eric Batt, Victoria Ayles, Cam MacDonald, Ronan Philbin, Abi Hewson, Jess Potts, Harry Thorne, Christina Soulsby, Izzy Sansom, Lydia Wisely, & David Graham.

The final round takes place on the 24th March with next weekend having the Watford open & Tape trophy novice team gala.