

## The Best Yet – 6th place in the National ‘B’ Final

Last Sunday, 22nd April, saw Boldmere SC in the National Arena ‘B’ Final at Ponds Forge surpass all expectations to produce ‘The’ performance of the club’s history and so maintain their status as the best team in the West Midlands.

Qualifying for the Final in 10th place behind the likes of big guns and eventual winners Stockport Metro, (who had the luxury of Olympian James Goddard competing) Ealing, Preston, City of Cardiff and Amersham, the twenty eight strong team recorded a massive 30 more points than last year with 259 to finish in 6th place, three places higher than their previous best, ahead of Windsor, Camden Swiss Cottage, City of Coventry and City of Cambridge.

It was an early morning start for the team - setting off at 6.30am - with seven 9/11 Yr swimmers having competed in the Junior League at Wyndley the night before. However, on entering foyer doors at Ponds Forge at 8.45am, the early start was soon forgotten with a cacophony of air horns and a carnival atmosphere, which accompanied the team to the poolside for the warm up, and parade. With the formalities out of the way, the nerves and butterflies were swept away and adrenaline took over. Out in lane zero, the relatively young team produced 16 super PB’s and 13 new Club records.

Last year’s performance including one individual and one relay win was blown away with 4 individual wins, 2 relay wins, 5 individual 2nd places and 2 relay 2nd place finishes which were then capped by Bradley Lynch who won ‘Boys Most Improved Age Group’ Swimmer Award in the 15Yrs/U category.

The first win of the morning came from the boys 9/11Yrs 4 x 50m Freestyle foursome who were just awesome. Matt Price got the lads off to an electric start in first leg time of 28 seconds dead, to break his PB by over a second and set a new club record. Kai Alexander, Tom Bloor and Archie Langston all followed, each with unofficial PB splits to win by a margin of over 3 seconds in a time of 1.58.51. Their dominance did not stop there as they went on to complete the double by winning the Medley relay, with Kai setting a PB in his first leg Backstroke. Not content with relay wins Matt and Tom excelled by both touching first in the 50m Backstroke and Fly respectively with Tom slicing a second off his PB.

In the boys 15Yrs/u 100m Freestyle Bradley Lynch, who has recently been selected to represent Great Britain at the LEN World Open Water Cup in Eilat, Israel, stormed to victory by nearly two seconds and with a split of 26.02! History maker Josh Winnicott (the winner of the first race in the new Olympic pool at the recent Olympic Trials) showed perfect perpetual

motion in the 15/U 100m Breaststroke with yet another win. Then Steve Wilson and Josh Holsey joined Josh and Bradley in the Freestyle relay and just missed out on the win. Fourteen-year-old Wilson, the youngest of the crew, set a new PB on the first leg to hand over to Holsey. On the third leg Winnicott made up three places to hand over to Bradley on anchor in second place. Brad started the anchor leg some 1.21 seconds behind but closed the gap to just 0.34 seconds with a final split of 24.32!

Jake Dixon (13Yrs/u) gave two brilliant performance finishing second in both 100m Breaststroke and Fly with the latter looking a like a sure win but somehow the clock stopped just 0.25sec behind first place. In the Girls 15Yrs/u 100m Backstroke Emma Smith forgot the pain from her current lower back injury for sixty seven seconds and got on with the job to gain yet another important second for the club.

Kate Davies set a new best time to snatch second place by just 0.03 seconds in the 9/11Yrs 50m Fly while it was another close one for Matt Price in the 50m Freestyle just losing in the touch for second. The final second place finish came in the Girls 15Yrs/u Medley Relay in which the quartet of Emma Smith, Emily Gordon, Givenchy Sneekes and Gina Lockett set a club record.

Third placed finishes came from Kate Davies in the Girls 9/11Yrs 50m Breaststroke and the Boys 15Yrs/U 200m Medley Relay in which the Boldmere boys set yet another club record with another nail-bitingly close touch, rounded off a series of superb top three finishes for the club.

There were more personal best times from Lauren Wall in both 50m Back and Free, Laura Richardson (100m Back), Ben Stanford (100m Back and Free) - dipping under the 60 second marker for the first time in the latter race, and Morgan Harlow in the 100m Free. In the Open Age Group, boys’ captain Phil Hewitt set a new best time and CR in his 100m Fly while Joey Stanger equalled his CR of 53.47 in the 100 Free. Alex Dolan ducked under the 30 second barrier for the first time in her first leg of the girl’s 15Yrs/U Freestyle relay.

Also part of this fantastic team who gained valuable points were Georgina Dolan, Stella O’Hehir, Eden Harlow, Rachel Wilson, Jenny Fowler and Adam Kelly while girls captain Kristie Hackett, who was sidelined due to a perforated ear drum, frustratingly supported from the side. Much credit must go to Head Coach Ash for getting Boldmere to the National Finals for the fourth consecutive year with the backing of Team Manager Nigel Kelly.

