

Arena League – Second Round – “A Good Result”



It was a tough draw for the second round of the Arena League so we knew that things were not going to be easy. Without a full team compliment Leamington had to bite the bullet and pull rank to make sure that every race mattered.

A very long bus journey for most of the squad established high spirits as we arrived at the back of beyond, Market Drayton. We were drawn in lane 6 and the competition began. It seemed at first that nothing could penetrate Boldmere's dominance but gradually the points accrued and we pulled out some fantastic swims to spur us on.

Teigan Parker had a great night with two second places in the back and the free, the latter swam with real guts to achieve a fantastic p.b in 31.96. Team mate Kieran Curran impressed with his second place in the 50 fly in 36.57. The boys' 11 year old free relay team also pulled out a well needed second place raising spirits across the team.

Harry Manship in the u13 boys took a second in the 100 breast in a fine time of 1.18.78 and then again in the 100 free in 1.03.33. Max Clarke swam strongly also achieving second place in the 100 fly but then going one better to win the 100 back in 1.09.95. With such high quality swimming from these boys it was no surprise to see them taking second in both free and medley relays earning Leamington some well needed points to bring us up the ladder.

It was neck and neck for third place between Worcester and Leamington Spa in the closing stages of the gala. Fresh in our minds from the first round of the League was our victory over Worcester. Clearly they had some motivation to pull past us as we crept into the latter half of the event.

Sarah Brades took second in the 100 back in both her age group and open races with both swims nailing the 1.08 mark. Maddie Spalding also swam in both her age group and open events in the 100 breast. Again consistently high quality racing ensured two brilliant wins from the fifteen year old with both her swims hitting 1.16.

Over to swimmer and coach James Wardle. Real determination and carefully paced racing paid dividends as he smashed the field in the 100 open fly event to take first place and then again in the 100 metre open free clocking a stunning 52.81.

Points were still to play for with everything up for grabs. The final event of the night, the 6 x 2L open free relay had the crowd on their feet. There was a lot of splash as they made a bid for the wall. Some fine swimming from the Leamington team gave us second place. Unfortunately this was not quite enough to win third place overall so on this occasion we had to concede that Worcester were the better side on the night.

Final points' scores were: Boldmere 281, Stourbridge 183, Worcester 166, Leamington Spa 146, Wolverhampton 146 and Braunceton 134.

A long, dark bus journey home did nothing to dampen the spirits of the proud Leamington team.

Well done to everyone who took part and supported the event.