

## Sensational Spa Steal Speedo

What a night... an absolutely thrilling start to Arena League, Leamington were drawn at home against Stratford, Stourbridge, Worcester, Biddulph and Boldmere 'B'. The evening was full of excitement, had plenty of drama and a nail biting finish.

Spectators only had to wait until event four for Leamington's first win from the 11/u boys freestyle relay team of Harrison Astill, Freddie Quelch, James Mackenzie and Adam Gray with a storming leg from Freddie taking the team from fifth to first place.

Racing to success with maximum points in five of the six events were the thirteen year old girls with Teigan Parker, Jade Pickett, Sarah Chapman and Mollie Dibb finishing first in both their relays. Teigan went on to easily secure victories in both the 100m fly and a new time of 1.21.04 in the breaststroke. Shooting ahead of the pack with a two second lead and gaining another 6 points in the 100m backstroke was Jade Pickett slicing her time to 1.14.58.

The 15 and under relay team of Jessica Nash, Ruby O'Brien, Amy Pettigrew and Felicity Dempster had contrasting races, the freestyle was a breeze with the team sailing into first place but the medley required more grit with the squad snatching top place by just a tenth. However, Nick Payne, Finn Linton, Harry Manship and Philip Warren looked relaxed, with a comfortable 4 second lead on Stourbridge their nearest rivals in both medley and freestyle. In the individual events, Jess Nash took second place in the 100m backstroke however it took a National Champion to pass her. Nick Payne's 59.68 was rewarded with second place in the 100m free. Dominating the 100m backstroke races and slashing two seconds from his best time was Finn Linton before going even faster in the Open age group recording 1.03.33 to score maximum points. Harry Manship battled hard in the fly pushing the Stourbridge swimmer into second but an easier race in the breaststroke saw Harry cruising into first with a gap of over 3 seconds.

Leamington extended a four point lead over their nearest rivals Stourbridge after eighteen races. However, after 34 events we had dropped to second place, trailing by six points. The last round of events were crucial, if Leamington was to get back into the gala every point was needed. Fighting hard they began clawing the points back. With just one more race to go, the tension developed into a frenzy, Leamington had secured a three point lead, however, if Stourbridge finished three places higher than us they would win. So the whole gala rested on the last race.

Stourbridge, Worcester and Boldmere 'B' battled for the top places with all three clubs finishing on 2.37. Leamington had taken fifth place so Stourbridge had to hit the board no higher than third....and luckily for us Worcester pinched second by just 2 tenths of a second.

Leamington had successfully drummed up a total of 13 first, 18 seconds and 5 third places. Well done to the whole team. Let's hope the next rounds scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> December are as exciting!