

Intrepid Snow Travellers



Coaches, swimmers and parents were looking forward to a weekend of racing in Aylesbury at the Maxwell Open. The exclusive hotel was booked, two days swimming events paid for and anticipation was high.

However, the weather had other ideas, schools closed early and training sessions were cancelled as the snow kept falling. Some nervous families chose to travel in convoy whilst others braved the conditions alone, filling the car with extreme

weather survival gear. Fighting their way through arctic conditions, abandoned cars, jack-knifed lorries, and Sat Navs detouring through country lane routes, couldn't stop either coaches or parents. However, officials are made of softer things and just as the intrepid snow travellers' bags were unloaded, notification came Saturday was cancelled. So only one thing to do Go to the pub.

Joking aside this is an important gala in the calendar, a time for swimmers to gain important Midland Qualifying times. So it was a relief when Sunday's racing was confirmed.

A sensational performance from thirteen year old Finn Linton, secured a fantastic triple of golds in the 100m IM, 200m backstroke and a storming 2.26.15 in the 200m IM also gaining a Midland Qualifying Time (MQT). The early morning start in the 400m free saw Finn take second place, just missing a fourth gold, by a touch.

The 16 year olds dominated the backstroke events, with an all Leamington finish in the 100m event, Sarah Brades took the top spot, followed closely by Maddie Spalding in second and Sarah Smith securing third place. Another close race in the 50m saw Spalding gaining silver with Smith on her toes for bronze again. Smith achieved bronze number three in the 50m fly before easily taking gold in the 100m race. Brades chased into bronze place later adding silver in the 200m free.

Three silvers in the 100m IM, 50m free and 50m breaststroke and bronze in the 400m free confirmed another outstanding performance from 11 year old Aran Shuttlewood. Derry Linton, 11, produced pb's in all her races earning third place in the 50m back. Teigan Parker, 12, secured first place in the 200m breast and bronze in the 200m free with a MQT of 2.24.47.

In the fourteen year category Ruby O'Brien took first place in the 200m free and racing to a new pb in the 50m fly gained silver, while Jack Dennis slashed a chunk off his best time to 1.11.47 earning silver 100m IM. Harry Manship, 13, netted a medal in each colour, gold in the 100m breast, silver in the 200m IM and bronze in the 100m free.

Abby Jolley, 10, tucked under 40 seconds for the 50m fly in 39.95 rewarding her with silver and adding an unexpected bronze in her debut 100m backstroke race. Picking up bronze in the 200m backstroke and sneaking his way into third place in the 50m free was 10 year old Callum McWhirter.