

Close finish at Mercian

The weather was reaching boiling point outside and Leamington swimmers displayed a blistering performance at the Mercian League final at the Pingles on Saturday 14th July.

Competing for this year's shield were Worcester, Coventry, Stratford, Halesowen and Solihull with Leamington hoping to retain the title from 2013.

The gala always starts off with the open 100m IM and the safe hands of Sophie Vale, once again scoring maximum points and a pb of 1.12.06. Sophie's excellent winning streak continued in the 100m butterfly with another best time of 1.11.06 and making a hat-trick in the 100m breaststroke.

The girls continued applying the pressure on their opponents, with the 10 year freestyle relay of Evie Nicholas, Constance Hodge, Abbie Blick and Abby Jolley taking gold. The girl's battle in the medley race looked more like a training session finishing ahead of the pack by three seconds. A few events later Abby nipped a smidge from her 50m backstroke time gaining first place for the team, another gold from Mollie Dibb, 12, in the 100 breaststroke secured top marks and a new personal best of 1.26.68.

The boy's 12 year olds scored full marks from both their relays but a storming freestyle saw Aran Shuttlewood, Finn Nicholas, Edward Jolly and Connell Parker leaving the rest of the field two seconds behind. Aran's strong performance continued in his individual events with two golds in the 100m breaststroke in 1.26.62 and a further one, later in the gala for the 50m fly.

After the first points call Leamington had accumulated 46 points and was in second place just behind Coventry.

Fourteen year old Jack Dennis worked hard in the 100m backstroke, turning in third place at the fifty mark, however a fantastic second fifty saw Jack slicing through the group, breezing to victory with a couple of seconds to spare, helping the team to stay in second place after 20 events. The same event for the ladies open saw Siena Linton chip away at her best time defeating the rivals with 1.11.50.

New pbs were set in the 100m freestyle events from Sophie Hodgson in 1.05.31 for the 14 year olds and Finn Nicholas with 1.09.49 for the 12 year olds both winning the events.

The gala was really only a two horse race between us and Coventry and Leamington was always in second place, we gave Coventry a run for their money but at the end of the gala they had extended their lead to 28 points. A big well done to the whole team performing to their best but a special mention to fifteen year old Joshua James having to swim three open 100 events as well as relays producing a pb in the 100m free of 59.06 and 100m breaststroke in a time of 1.15.53 and this was all after the 100m fly. Also to Philip Warren in the 100m free for nearly tucking under the minute mark and nearly a four second pb in the 100m fly whilst Sophie Hutchinson produced a three seconds pb in the 100 fly with 1.15.84.

You can all enjoy a well-deserved rest from competition now and look forward to hard summer training ready for the new season in September!

Final Points

Coventry	249
Leamington	221
Worcester	173
Stratford	167
Solihull	122
Halesowen	113