

## Weekend of Success For Spa Swimmers



The weekend of the 11th and 12th of February saw an action packed weekend of success for Leamington Spa Amateur Swimming Club, starting with a fantastic victory on Saturday night in the Harvey Novice Team Gala held in Nuneaton. Young teams from Leamington, Haden Hill, Kingsbury, Stratford, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Oldbury competed for the coveted Silver Plate. This unique gala differs from conventional ones as swimmers can be given speeding tickets for swimming too fast, resulting in the loss of points earned in that event. This is a fab, fun gala and for some of the swimmers their first introduction to competitive swimming.

The gala got off to a great start with two first places for the 10 year olds, with Leila O'Hara and Harry Spalding both winning their freestyle races. A further first place for Emil Macheng-Midtsaeter in the 11 year butterfly helped Leamington to second place after the first points update, but at this stage, only 11 points separated the top three places.

Leamington continued to chip away at the lead gaining first places in the 11 year old girls freestyle relay, 9 year girls medley and in the 11 year backstroke thanks to Edward Jolly. This helped to level the points with Leamington and Stratford joint leaders at the half way stage, but now only three points separated the top three clubs and there was still all to swim for.

However, Leamington's strength was their ability to continually finish in the top three places and restrict the number of speeding tickets they received to just one. This was evident in the next round as Leamington secured top three positions in 10 out of the 12 races, giving them a generous 14 point lead on their nearest rival. The final round saw Leamington extend their lead by a whopping 22 points to take the Silver Plate in decisive style, an excellent result.

The following Sunday morning saw many of the young swimmers back in the pool for the Peri Sprints Open Gala in Rugby. Swimmers competed in all four strokes over 50m together with the 100 IM, split into four age categories 9-10 years, 11-12, 13-14 and, 15 and over.

In the 11-12 category, 11 year old Kieran Curran was on excellent form, outperforming his rival from Stratford Sharks to take a well-deserved hat trick of gold medals in the backstroke with a time of 35.89, fly in 34.93 and breaststroke in 40.79 with a four second improvement in his pb. Curran also gained two silvers, one in the IM and another in the free, just missing the gold by 3 tenths of a second in a time of 30.76. Teigan Parker, 11, secured silver in the 100 IM in a time of 1.19.75 improving her time by over five seconds. In the freestyle and breaststroke events she took bronze in each, adding another pb in the breaststroke, taking her time to 42.34.

Mollie Dibb and Ben Court competing in their last competition as ten year olds took full advantage in the 9-10 age group with Mollie gaining a trio of golds for the IM, in 1.23.98, the breaststroke in 44.22, and a great pb of 36.97 in the butterfly. Dibb also added silver in the backstroke, and bronze in the free in 34.60. Ben Court displayed strong performances, confirmed by a 10 second pb in the IM earning him third place in 1.35.41. Court continued his good form to take gold in the free with a

## Weekend of Success For Spa Swimmers

time of 35.85 and another in the fly, with team mate Connell Parker finishing in third place. Parker later snatched gold in the backstroke with 41.64.

Jack Dennis, 13, had a remarkable backstroke race improving his pb by nearly 4 seconds earning him a third place in the 13-14 years, whilst Hannah Pickett, 14, took bronze in the back and narrowly missed another medal in the fly.

Maddie Spalding, 15, swimming in the 15 and over category gained gold in the freestyle and took a superb unexpected gold in the butterfly in 33.57 just ahead of team mate Emma Hutchinson, 16, who took the silver. Hutchinson then went on to take another in the backstroke with a 2 second pb, whilst Jack Vaabel, 17, secured the bronze medal for his backstroke event in 33.94.

Leamington had a magnificent day, racing with true grit and determination and notching up an incredible 76 personal bests for the 37 swimmers. Significant improvements were made by ten year old Charlotte Hughes, reducing her fly time by an impressive 12 seconds and backstroke by 7 seconds. Daisy O'Brien, 9, enhanced her IM by 9 seconds. LSASC are now looking forward to the County Championships in March.

