

Sussex County Championships 2011

In February; the best swimmers in Sussex competed at the opening events of the prestigious Annual Sussex County Championships at K2 Crawley.

Every swimmer who competed must have qualified to do so by having previously swum inside very challenging target times; whilst also demonstrating exemplary technique.

As a testimony to the improvement and development of their skills and attitude; more swimmers from the Club qualified for this year's Championships than have done for many years.

Each qualifying swimmer looked forward to being measured against their peers in each event which they qualified to compete in.

The fastest eight in each event, all become County Finalists for 2011 and the fastest three are awarded their County Gold, Silver and Bronze medals for 2011.

At the end of these opening two weekends of this year's Championships; a number of County Medals were won by Seagull swimmers; no less than 18 Seagull swimmers finished as County Finalists in at least one event and two of the four Seagull Relay Teams were also medal winners.

In the Long Distance events, all four of the competing Seagull swimmers achieved personal best times and in doing so; all four finished as County Finalists for their age group.

Jodie Shoemith bagged a bronze medal by finishing 3rd; **Jessica Fitzwarren** finished 6th and **Hannah Kefford** 7th all in the 800m freestyle whilst **Andy Paige** powered to 5th place in the utterly gruelling 1500m freestyle event.

Seagull success continued in the regular events; from the youngest competitors to the oldest.

Of the girls; two 9 year olds; both swimming at their first County Championships; **Lauren Alf** and **Daisy Earl** both swam personal best times and both finished as County Finalists in two events. They both show great potential for the future.

There were also impressive performances from 12 year old **Liliana Winn**; 13 year old **Kathryn Clarke** and three 15 year olds; **Charlotte Roundcivell**, **Chloe Benton** and **Jessica Fitzwarren** who all finished as County Finalists in one age group event each.

In addition to her gutsy performance over the longer distances, 14 year old **Hannah Kefford** also finished as a County Finalist in two of her four shorter distance age group events to cap an excellent Championships for Hannah thus far.

Powerful 16 year old, **Victoria Turner** finished as a finalist in two age group events and achieved four South East Regional Qualifying Times in the process. Victoria featured in one of the most exciting races of the weekend when she bagged a County

Silver Medal in the 100m backstroke. She finished less than half a second from the Gold!

The stylish 14 year old, **Joanna Fitzpatrick** finished as a finalist in three of her age group events and the outstanding 11 year old, **Emily Williams**; finished as a finalist in four out of the five age group events in which she competed.

Overall, the most consistent and the most rewarding performances at the Championships came from 13 year old **Jodie Shoemith**.

She finished as a finalist in all six of her events. A clean sweep!

This included one Gold, one Bronze and three Silver medals.

Once again; Jodie demonstrated her excellent technique and fearsome competitive edge as she achieved awe inspiring results; including three South East Regional Qualifying times.

12 year old **Chloe Baker** and 14 year old **Nadia Winn** both swam personal best times on the day which is always a measure of personal performance to be proud of.

17 year old **Amy Masters** and 18 year old **Grayling Clayton** also both put in good performances.

The youngest qualifying Seagull boys were the trio of highly impressive 10 year olds; **Thomas Conte** and **Henry Curties** who both swam personal best times in their events; and **Oliver Ward** who was a County Finalist in two out of his three events.

11 year old **Ben Horner** had an outstanding 2011 Championships. He was a County Finalist in three of his five events and was a Bronze medallist in the 50m Freestyle; a recognition of his speed and technique.

Further success was achieved by the ever consistent 15 year old; **Tom Creed**, who was a County Finalist in all three of his individual events; swimming inside South East Regional Qualifying Times in all of them. He too bagged a Bronze medal on the day.

17 year old **Adam Roundcivell** achieved County Finalist status in two of the four individual events in which he competed and went one better in the medal stakes by earning a Silver Medal with a South East Regional Qualifying time in the 50m Freestyle. Adam also swam two other South East Regional Qualifying times on the day.

In the Open Championship Events; 23 year old **Kevin Pickard** swam with awesome speed and achieved spectacular results.

He was a County Silver Medallist in the Open 200m Backstroke.

Kevin then went on to swim inside South East Regional Qualifying Times in both the Open 100m Individual Medley and 50m Backstroke Heats and in doing so, he qualified for both event Finals.

Kevin raised his performance levels even further and in doing so, he swam inside South East Regional Qualifying Times and won both Finals.

These performances earned Kevin two County Gold medals and the crown of Sussex Open Champion 2011 for both the 100m Individual Medley and 50m Backstroke.

There were other good performances from other qualifying Seagull boys; 12 year old **Luke Cooper**, 13 year old **Dan Williams** who swam a personal best time in the 100m Individual Medley, 14 year old **Darius Khalesi**, 16 year olds; **Tom Penney** and **Angus Siberry** and 17 year old **Sam Small**; who although not County Finalists or County Medal winners, should all feel proud to have qualified for such a prestigious event.

Two of the four Hastings Seagull Relay Squads were also successful; in the Open Men's Medley Relay, what some spectators referred to as the 'Dream Team'; **Kevin Pickard, Thomas Creed, Tom Parris, and Adam Rouncivell** swam majestically to beat fierce competition and bring home the Gold medal. The Open Ladies Freestyle Relay team were also mightily impressive with **Hannah Keen, Szintia Szanto, Victoria Turner and Charlotte Rouncivell** bringing home Silver.

Finally and perhaps on a slightly negative tone; one area in which this year's Championships did not live up to expectations was the inclusion of 'Finals' organised over two or more age groups; *after* the award of County Medals and County Final Rosettes in each age group based on the results in the Heats.

Such a structure, although quite satisfactory in the Open Championship Events; was a disappointment to many of the younger swimmers as they were very often prevented from competing against their peers in a Final race and indeed many of the qualifiers for these combined Finals from around the County did not swim as they already had their age group awards and were saving themselves for other events.

This perplexed many coaches, swimmers and spectators at the event and perhaps after feedback; the Sussex ASA will rethink this format and revert back to the excitement of same age finals for 2012.