# **Titles, Medals And Team Spirit On Return of Beds County Championships**

Eleven Senior and five Junior County titles with 32 Gold, 26 Silver and 20 Bronze Individual Age Group medals. After the Covid-pandemic induced break in 2021, the return of the County championships also saw numerous personal best times. These were achieved over a range of strokes and distances not only by our more experienced swimmers but also those having their first taste of competition in a 50m pool and against youngsters from all the other Bedfordshire clubs.

Competing in the 10/11 years' age group was Lexie Sandiford, winning five and being placed in the top three of all her individual events over 50m and 100m, and Joshua Ward whose best individual finish was 4th in his 200m Breaststroke.

George Rhodes was our sole male representative in the 12-year boys' races with Emily Calvert, Nicole Cashin, Lily Jo Evans, Nikola Morys, Amerie Njawaya, Ella Pruce and Leni Ward all participating in the girls’ events. Amerie (1 Gold, 1 Bronze), Emily (2 Bronze), Nicole (1 Silver 3 Bronze) and Nikola (1 Gold 3 Silver) picked up individual medals whilst everyone had at least one top ten finish.

In the 13 years' age group our representation was reversed, Ava Howard being our solo female and touching 6th in her 200m Breaststroke. For the boys, Emanuel Kolobius picked up 5 silver and 1 bronze medal whilst Owain Roberts claimed a silver for his 1500m Freestyle. Arnold Canares, Oliver Broadbent and Dylan Rodgers and Yahya Saqib all gained invaluable competitive race experience in that same age group as did Lauren Calvert, Archie Baxter and Borislav Dunchev in their respective 14-year age group races.

Spencer Leaning won a bronze medal and finished in 4th place in four of his other 15 years old age group races. Finlay Kiernan was the County's third fastest junior in three of his races by virtue of top spot in that age group's 50m Butterfly, alongside his two 2nd and four 3rd places.

Caitlyn Kean, Catherine Lempriere, Isobel McCulloch, Keira Greene, Lily Hobdell and Lyla Howard vied with each other in the 15-year girls’ events. Lyla's victories saw her win 4 Junior County titles and finish in the top three Senior positions with her times over 800m & 1500m Freestyle and 400m Individual Medley. Caitlyn's age group wins saw her finish as Junior Champion over 200m Breaststroke and third over 100m Breaststroke. Catherine beat her to Gold in the 15 years' 50m Breaststroke to record the third fastest County Junior swim. Lily won two age group Backstroke medals whilst Keira and Isobel's best placings were 4th and 5th.

Daniella Njawaya picked up a bronze in the 16 years' 50m Freestyle whilst Jennifer White was 10th in the 100m Freestyle in a personal best time. In the 17 years' age group, Zara Fallon won three silver and a bronze over freestyle events from 1500m down to 200m.

Ahead of Lewis Ward and Jack Malone in the 16-year boys’ events, Jack Juggins claimed top spot in the 50m Butterfly but missed out over 100m Freestyle by just 0.02 seconds. His butterfly time nevertheless gained him his first Beds County Senior individual title. Ben Theron won the 17 years age group in the same event whilst picking up bronze over 200m Backstroke and 1500m Freestyle.

In the 18 years and over age group, Menna Walmsley won her 1500m Freestyle and both the 100m and 200m Butterfly. She finished as second fastest County Senior over the two longer races and third fastest in the 100m. Matthew Wright's dominance in the male events saw him top his age group to also win no fewer than nine individual Senior County titles in freestyle, butterfly and backstroke.

Due to the pandemic restrictions, it was a shame that parents and family members were prevented over the three weekends from seeing everyone's efforts, not least in the various relay events. Some close finishes saw the Club pick up a total of fourteen further medals. They always provide a great opportunity for the club's team spirit to be in evidence with Paige Kean, Darci Kean, Zach Pinkowski, Michael Zukowski, Kalyn Sampong, Ellie Matthews, Nathan Bentley and Alex Mason, who all did not compete in individual races, participating. It almost seemed fitting therefore that as the final session came to a conclusion, our Men's Open 4 x 100m Freestyle relay retained their County title from 2020..... coming from third place to snatch victory in the final leg!