

West Suffolk Swimming Club's Mark Holmes was on fine form as he competed for Team GB at the 11<sup>th</sup> World Down Syndrome Swimming Championships last week. The five-day Championships were held in the 50m pool at the impressive, newly completed aquatics complex in Antalya on Turkey's Turquoise Coast.

Backstroke specialist Mark, 40, the oldest GB athlete in the competition proved that age is no match for commitment and effort as he brought home medals in every event he entered – a stunning collection of five golds and one silver.

The first day of racing saw Mark post a blistering season's best in the 50m backstroke heat, moving from the 19<sup>th</sup> seed to fourth fastest qualifier for the final. Mark bettered his heat time by half a second in the final and finished in a tantalising fourth place overall, top of the podium in his age group.

Seeded 14<sup>th</sup> in the 100m backstroke, Mark posted another season's best to qualify for the final in seventh place. A remarkable feat considering the average age of the other finalists was 24 years. Mark cut a whopping three and a half seconds from his heat time in the final, taking a fantastic fifth place and another gold medal for his age group.

Cutting eight seconds off his entry time in the 200m backstroke, Mark moved from fourteenth to tenth fastest-ranked swimmer overall; he just missed out on the final but still posted the fastest time in his age group, claiming another coveted gold medal.

Mark also swam the 50m and 200m freestyle and 50m breaststroke, finishing just outside his entry times in all three but claiming silver in the 50m freestyle and gold in the 50m breaststroke and 200m freestyle.

Mark's continued ability to make world finals at the age of 40 is nothing short of phenomenal and a source of pride and inspiration for both WSSC and Team GB.



Mark in his GB shirt with his five golds and one silver medal from the World Down Syndrome Swimming Championships