

West Suffolk Swimming Club was delighted to host the Masters and Senior Age Group Valentines Meet (which doubled as the Dave Robinson Suffolk County Masters Championships 2024) on behalf of Sudbury & District Swimming Club at Bury Leisure Centre on Sunday 18 February. This event was open to swimmers over the age of sixteen, with categories for 16-24 years, and the official five-year age tranches for Masters swimmers starting from 25-29. The event saw a pleasing number of competitors from across Suffolk and the wider East Region, with swimmers travelling from as far afield as Louth, Derby and Havant & Waterlooville.

There was strong representation across all age groups, with the oldest female entrant aged 73 and two gentlemen swimmers in the 80-84 years age category. Both octogenarians completed the 200m butterfly race before moving straight on to the following event, the 1500m freestyle. 80-year-old Derek Parr (Broomfield Park Swimming Club, London) set new British age group records for both events (as well as for the 100m butterfly and 200m IM), with 83 year old swimming legend (33 time cross-channel swimmer) Michael Read from Hadleigh Swimming Club claiming the county gold medal in six of his nine events, beaten into silver position in the other three races by his 75 year old (junior) teammate Stuart McLellan.

West Suffolk swimmers claimed a haul of medals in an exciting day of racing to claim the inaugural Dave Robinson Memorial Trophy for the top Suffolk club at the event. It was particularly touching to have Dave's widow Jane at the event to present the prizes.

In the 16-24 years category, Molly Peacock, Masters Rep at WSSC, claimed five county gold medals in the three backstroke events, the 50m and 100 butterfly and a bronze in the 100m IM. Elizabeth Wright took gold in the 50m freestyle and 200m breaststroke, just pipped into silver place in the 100m IM by teammate Alice Clark, who also won a bronze medal in the 50, freestyle. Phoebe Mousley made it a hatrick of silver medals (200m IM, 50m and 100m backstroke) and Shannon Dalligan won gold in her favoured 100m and 200m freestyle events, coming a close second in the 50m edition. Maya Harris represented WSSC in the 25-29 age group and won three magnificent gold medals – in the 100m IM, the 100m breaststroke and the 50m breaststroke and Megan Cassidy (30-34 years) claimed a silver and gold in the 100m IM and 50m butterfly respectively.

Molly Peacock missed out on winning the Dave Robinson trophy for the top Suffolk female swimmer by just one point, but teammate Jake Thomas-Mansfield, who won an extraordinary seven gold and two silver medals beat the second-placed Suffolk swimmer by an impressive 13 points to take the top prize in the open category.

Myles Turner was also on golden form, making it five gold medals from his five races, with Alistair Peagram (45-49 years) winning an imposing four golds (50m backstroke, freestyle and butterfly and 100m freestyle). Ben Wilkinson (25-29) took the gold medal in the three backstroke distances, with a silver in the 200m freestyle and Thomas Allen (16-24) won an impressive haul of one gold medal (1500m freestyle), two silvers and two bronzes.

Andrew Kimpton (30-34 years) claimed gold in the 100m and 200m IM, as well as the 100m butterfly but had to settle for second place to teammate Tom Sarah in the 200m freestyle. Adam Young (35-39 years) made it a clean sweep of county golds across his three races (50m freestyle, 100m IM and 100m butterfly) whilst teammates Glen Turnbull and Peter Edmunds (45-49) took home a gold and a bronze and two silver medals respectively, all in sprint events. Congratulations also go to Martin Hawley (60-64 years) won the gold medal in the gruelling 1500m freestyle. WSSC Alumnus Samuel Wortley (swimming for City of Derby Swimming Club in the 16-24 years group) took a silver and bronze medal back to the East Midlands.



Alistair Peagram with his four county medals



Jake Thomas-Mansfield receiving the Top Male trophy from Jane Robinson



WSSC – Top Club! Jake Thomas-Mansfield, Molly Peacock, Maya Harris, Elizabeth Wright, Ben Wilkinson, Shannon Dalligan, Alistair Peagram, Myles Turner, Jane Robinson (presenting), head coach Dan Pilbrow and Glen Turnbull