

With the qualifying windows for the British Swimming Championships 2023 and the Swim England East Region Long Course Championships 2023 looming, a number of West Suffolk Swimming Club athletes spent the weekend of 11 and 12 March competing at the Putteridge Spring Long Course (50m) Meet at Luton Inspire and at the Nova Centurion National Qualifier 2023 at Harvey Haddon Sports Village, Nottingham.

India Clement, a year 6 pupil at Abbots Green Academy in Bury St Edmunds, opened the WSSC medal bank in Luton with a silver in the 100m butterfly, soon followed with a bronze medal for Willow Ryder in the 10 years girls' 50m backstroke race. Angharad Evans of Abington, who has been studying in the United States and training on a swim programme there, decimated the field in the 200m breaststroke race, taking gold nearly five seconds ahead of the silver medal winner and over six seconds inside the British Championships qualifying time for this event.

Abbeygate Sixth Form College student Matthew Baker brought home the gold medal in the 800m freestyle race, with Jake Thomas-Mansfield from Cheveley swimming just outside his pb and missing the medals with fourth place in the 50m butterfly race. India Clement took fourth in the 400m freestyle and Matthew in the 100m backstroke.

In Nottingham, brothers Tom and Luka Page competed together in the open category. Eighteen year old Tom, who swims at Nova Centurion during term time and West Suffolk in the university holidays, took the bronze medal in the 100m freestyle race. Younger brother Luka, 16, who is studying in the Lower 6th at Culford School, also made the final in this event, achieving a two second long course pb in so doing and finishing in a very creditable 6th place. In Saturday's 50m breaststroke race Tom took the silver medal, with Luka finishing 8th. The second day of racing started with a gold rush, with Tom Page taking gold in the 50m and 100m butterfly events, the latter with a winning margin of over three seconds. Luka was pipped out of bronze medal position in the 50m butterfly by just four one-hundredths of a second, finishing less than a second behind gold medal-placed Tom. More medals followed in the 50m freestyle event, with Tom taking silver with a new pb and Luka claiming bronze.

Back in Luton, India Clement took bronze in the 11 years girls 50m butterfly and the 50m breaststroke and fourth place in the 200m freestyle. With a margin of over two seconds from the second placed swimmer, Matthew Baker took the gold in the 400m freestyle, gold in the 200m Individual Medley (in a British Championships qualifying time), silver in the 100m freestyle (again in a new British Champs qualifying time) and third place on the podium in the 50m freestyle. Myles Turner gained another British Championships qualifying time and a silver medal in the 200m backstroke, also taking silver in the 200m IM. In a fiendishly competitive field, Jake Thomas-Mansfield was edged into fourth place in the 100m butterfly final.



Angharad Evans with her gold medals for the 50m and 100m breaststroke

Angharad Evans continued her day in golden style, taking the top of the podium in the 100m and 50m breaststroke races, with a winning margin of over 4 seconds and more than a second respectively ahead of the silver medal placed swimmer, in both events qualifying for the British Championships.

Congratulations also go to Cerys Williams, Eloise Perry, George Everett, Ben Butcher, Freya Reed, Charlotte Creasy, Kiera Broad, Elizabeth Wright, Bartholomew Tozer and Beatrice Sepanski for their performances in Luton over the weekend and thanks to coach Phil Ward, the Team Managers, officials and parent supporters.