

Thirteen West Suffolk Swimming Club swimmers descended on the Inspire 50m Competition Pool in Luton last weekend (9/10 March) for Putteridge Swimming Club's Summer National Qualifier event. This high-level event attracted the very best swimming talent from around the region with their sights aimed at British and English National Championships as well as the forthcoming East Region Regional Championships.

Myles Turner and Jake Thomas-Mansfield were both champion in the 18 years and over category in their preferred events; the 200m backstroke and 50m butterfly respectively. This was a season's best long course time in the 200m backstroke for Myles and was just 0.5 seconds outside of the British Championships qualifying time. Myles has already qualified for the 400m IM at the Championships which will take place at the iconic London Aquatics Centre on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park from 2nd-7th April 2024, with the event playing a key role in Paris '24 Olympic selection.

Jake is continuing to build on his competition performance after taking a six month break from the sport last year and claimed a well-earned bronze medal in the 200m butterfly with a season's best time.

Jason Dalope (13) had a fantastic weekend of racing, securing seven new long course best times, all within the regional qualifying time, with an improvement on his times in the 50m breaststroke and 200 IM events from the previous weekend at Norwich. Jason also secured two new regional qualifying times in the 50m butterfly and 200m breaststroke. He claimed silver medals in the 50m and 100m freestyle, as well as bronze in the 200m breaststroke. He just missed out on a medal, finishing in fourth place, in the 50m and 100m breaststroke and in the 200m individual medley.

Meanwhile India Clement (12) won brilliant bronzes in the 200m and 400m IM and also chalked up a number of close-to-the-podium finishes, with fourth place in the 50m backstroke and 100m breaststroke and fifth in the 50m and 200m breaststroke. She improved on her regional qualifying pbs set the previous week at Norwich in the 50m butterfly and 200m breaststroke and also bettered her previous 200m IM best time.

Winners for each event were declared on the time they achieved in their heat; with no finals, they had just one opportunity to set down their best swims. In a highly competitive field, the WSSC team performed extremely creditably. Edison Lorejo improved on the regional qualifying times he had already bagged in the 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly and also improved on his long course pb in the 50m backstroke. George Everett was also on top form, setting new long course pbs in the 50m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, 200m breaststroke, 100m butterfly and 200m IM. The 50m breaststroke was under the regional qualifying time, which he had already achieved.

Becca Brown achieved long course pbs in the 100m breaststroke, 200m breaststroke, 50m butterfly and 200m backstroke and Elizabeth Wright in the 100m freestyle. Samuel Chamberlain took over a second off his regional-qualifying best time in the 100m freestyle while Thomas Williams set new long course best times in the 50m backstroke and 200m IM and James Everett in the 100m and 200m breaststroke. Edward Merhan also took time out of his university studies, travelling back from Birmingham to compete in his first long course competition of the season, competing in the 50m and 100m breaststroke events.



Edison Lorejo, James Everett, Becca Brown, Jason Dalope, George Everett, Elizabeth Wright, India Clement, Edward Merhan

Meanwhile Newmarket & District Swimming Club were hosting their Spring Meet and WSSC members featured heavily in the medal tables. Poppy Moore (12) took two golds (200m and 400m freestyle) and two silvers (50m freestyle and 200m IM). Jacob Reed (10) won gold in the 200m backstroke event, silver in the 100m backstroke and silver in the 100m IM. Isabel Moore (15) made it a gold and silver in the 400m freestyle and 200m freestyle respectively. Freya Reed (12) won gold in the 100m butterfly and bronze in the 50m backstroke and 400m freestyle.

Charlotte Creasy (15), Beatrice Sepanski and Molly Peacock (both 16 and over) all claimed the gold medal in their single event of the weekend – the 200m butterfly, breaststroke and backstroke respectively – while Erin Stewart (12) bagged the silver in the 200m freestyle and Tom Levell (9) also claimed second place in his age group in the 100m backstroke.

West Suffolk and Newmarket & District crossover swimmers Emiel Korstanje (15) and brothers Samuel (15) and Matthew Blackwell (11) were also in action in Newmarket over the weekend.

Emiel literally shone with his haul of five gold medals (50m backstroke, butterfly and freestyle, 100m IM and 100m freestyle), two silver medals in the 100m backstroke and breaststroke and a bronze in the 50m breaststroke.

Samuel claimed two golds (200m and 400m freestyle) and silver in the 200m breaststroke, while Matthew also took first place in the 400m freestyle and silver in the 200m breaststroke in his age group, with bronzes in the 100m IM and 200m freestyle.

WSSC's two 2022-2024 DiSE participants – Matthew Baker and Luka Page – spent a long weekend representing Team England at the Swedish Grand Prix 2024. This event was organised by the Swedish Swimming Federation together with the local host Kungsbacka Simsällskap, a swimming club based in a town just south of Gothenburg. As well as 72 Swim England athletes, the competition featured top-level swimmers from all over Sweden.

Matthew started the weekend's racing in brilliant style, posting the fastest qualifying time for the 200m freestyle final in Saturday morning's heat and, though a couple of seconds off his best time, he completed the very tight 200m IM heat in the fourth fastest time, with just 0.34 seconds separating him and the second fastest qualifier. Matthew was unlucky to finish out of medal contention in the evening's 200m freestyle final and, though he was still well off his best time, he improved on his placing in the final of the 200IM, claiming the bronze medal.

On Sunday morning Matthew qualified for the final of the 400m freestyle but was over five seconds off his best time and the reason for this relative lack of form became apparent when he was struck down with illness and forced to withdraw from both this final and from the mixed 4 x 100m freestyle relay. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Luka was selected to race for Team England in the 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly and impressed the squad coaches, finishing as the third fastest Team England swimmer in the 50m butterfly and seventh fastest in the 50m freestyle.

The Club's swimmers have much to look forward to, with Regional and National Championships taking place in the coming weeks as well as the first round of the Suffolk County League Competition.