

Twelve West Suffolk Swimming Club athletes represented the Club at the Swim England East Region Long Course (50m) Championships, held over three recent weekends (Luton on 20/21 April and Norwich on 4/5/6 May and 11/12 May). Jason Dalope, Poppy Moore and India Clement all swam in the 14 years and under competition, with Archie Chamberlain, Elizabeth Wright, Jake Thomas-Mansfield, Kiera Broad, Luka Page, Matthew Baker, Myles Turner, Samuel Chamberlain and Samuel Everett in the 15 years and over competition.

George Everett and Becca Brown also qualified but had to withdraw due to illness.

The first weekend of swimming, held at Inspire Luton Sports Village, saw the busiest days of competition for the Club's athletes. First up were Kiera Broad and Elizabeth Wright racing in the 200m breaststroke with Kiera off her best time but Elizabeth posting a pb in the heat; both were unfortunately out of final contention in their respective age categories. Next was the 100m butterfly, with Samuel Chamberlain taking a sensational two-second-long course pb in his heat and Jake Thomas-Mansfield qualifying in fifth place for the open final, with teammate Matthew Baker one rank behind. Luka Page and Archie Chamberlain, both short on training hours due to injury and other commitments, were slightly off their best but pleased with their performance.



Kiera Broad, Luka Page, Elizabeth Wright, Matthew Baker, Jake Thomas-Mansfield and Archie Chamberlain

The first session of the Saturday afternoon started with the open 100m freestyle and another new long course pb for in-form Samuel Chamberlain. Older brother Archie, recently back in the pool after a break, was only one second off his long course pb, with Luka Page also posting a time close to his best. Matthew Baker qualified for the evening's final in fourth place, taking WSSC's first medal of the Regional campaign – a brilliant bronze medal in a time close to his pb.

Jake Thomas-Mansfield maintained his fifth position in the evening's 100m butterfly final, slightly slower than his heat time, with Matthew choosing to withdraw to focus his energies on the 100m freestyle final.

Sunday morning saw Jake Thomas-Mansfield produce a solid swim in the 200m butterfly, placing fourth fastest for the evening's final but, with his time seconds off his best and with many hours to while away before the final, he withdrew. The session also featured the 50m freestyle, with Samuel Chamberlain taking a season's best time and finishing just out of the finals for his age group. Older brother Archie was encouraged with his time, only 0.11 seconds off his pb, with Luka Page unlucky to finish just outside the qualifying for the evening's final. Jake Thomas-Mansfield posted a pleasing time in this event and, though he was still recovering from his 200m butterfly race swum shortly before, he managed to swim the 50m freestyle without taking a breath.

Kiera Broad produced a great 100m breaststroke on her pb to qualify for the final in fifth place and was unfortunate to be pipped into fourth place by a fingernail in the final in a new pb. Myles Turner brought home the second medal of the weekend; he produced a fabulous 200m backstroke in the final, taking two and a half seconds off his heat swim, to claim a super silver medal. Elizabeth Wright produced impressive swims in the 100m breaststroke and 100m freestyle (both in new pb times) whilst Samuel Everett swam a strong 200m breaststroke in the highly competitive (very fast!) 17 years and over age group.

The competition moved to Sportspark Norwich for the bank holiday weekend and more final-worthy performances from the senior swimmers. In a relatively untried event for him, Matthew Baker finished fourth in the 100m backstroke heats but withdrew from the evening's final. Jake Thomas-Mansfield produced his second-fastest time ever in the 50m butterfly, qualifying in an exceptionally strong field in sixth place for the evening's final, a position he held, whilst Matthew Baker made the final of the 200m freestyle look like a walk in the park, taking the gold nearly five seconds (and many metres) ahead of the fastest qualifier from local rival City of Cambridge Swimming Club.



Matthew Baker with his gold medal and team mate Jake Thomas-Mansfield

With the competition over for the older age groups, the 14 years and under swimmers took to the pool from Sunday 5 May. India Clement (12) had qualifying times for every event and posted new pbs in the 50m, 200m and 400m freestyle as well as the 200m butterfly, an event in which she took two seconds off her pb in the heat and an addition second off in the final. She just missed out on the final in the 400m freestyle, finishing in 9th place in the heats and her best place came in the 1500m, an event in which she finished in sixth place. Triathlete Poppy Moore (13) produced an impressive performance in the 400m freestyle, setting a new pb by nearly a second. Jason Dalope (13) also had a full swim schedule with nine events to race. He performed particularly strongly his preferred breaststroke events, finishing the heats of the 50m and 200m breaststroke events just outside the times needed for the finals but managing seventh place in the 200m breaststroke heat to go one better in the evening's final and take sixth place overall in his age group.



Jason Dalope



India Clement and Poppy Moore