

Weekend three of the Suffolk County Championships (27/28 January) saw more success and Championship titles for Team WSSC.

Saturday featured the male qualifying event for the 'Skins', with the fastest eight qualifiers in any age group in the 100m IM securing a place for the final Sunday's Championship highlight event. West Suffolk dominated this event, with Matthew Baker taking the gold medal and County title, as well as securing his place as the fastest qualifier for the Skins. Close behind him were Myles Turner, taking silver and Jake Thomas-Mansfield claiming bronze. Luka Page also qualified in sixth place, giving Team WSSC half of the eight lanes for this event. Samuel Chamberlain (15) won silver in this event in his age category but didn't quite make the cut in an extremely strong field.

There was plenty more WSSC action in the pool over the weekend, with India Clement (12), despite feeling under the weather, claiming another seven county medals: gold in the 400m IM, silver in the 50m butterfly, the 100m backstroke, the 100m and 200m freestyle and bronze in the 50m and 200m breaststroke. Poppy Moore (13) claimed bronze in the 400 IM, with Freya Reed, Brooke Copping and Ella Stewart all producing strong swims to finish fourth in their respective age groups.

Keira Broad (16) claimed a magnificent gold in the 200m breaststroke, adding the 50m breaststroke gold the following day, giving her the age group gold medal in all three breaststroke races this year. Elizabeth Wright took the silver medal for the 200m breaststroke in the 17 years/over category, with teammate Becca Brown claiming bronze. Elizabeth also took the bronze medal in the 50m breaststroke final.

As always, competition was fierce in the 50m freestyle event, with Edison Lorejo (15) surging through to take his age group title and gold medal, with Samuel Chamberlain in bronze. In the 17 years/over, West Suffolk took second, third and fourth, with Matthew Baker in silver place, Luka Page bronze and Jake Thomas-Mansfield just pipped out of the medals. Edison Lorejo won a second gold medal over the weekend, taking the win in the 50m backstroke.

Jake Thomas-Mansfield was in the pool again, this time in his favoured butterfly events. Saturday saw him beaten by a fingertip finish into silver place in the 200m event but there was no questioning his intent in Sunday's 100m butterfly final; he dominated this event to claim the gold medal and championship title in compelling style. Luka Page also produced an impressive second 50m to surge through the field and claim the bronze medal.

The 200m IM saw another masterclass from Myles Turner, winning the Championship title and gold medal. In the 15 years age class, Samuel Chamberlain took bronze, with George Everett close behind in fourth. On Sunday, Myles, who now only trains three times a week due to work commitments, dominated the 200m backstroke to take the County title and gold medal by three seconds over the second placed swimmer and by over eleven seconds over the bronze medal-winner. Zach Broad (15) claimed a brilliant bronze in his age group.



Myles Turner, Jake Thomas-Mansfield and Matthew Baker with a selection of their County Championship trophies.

The final day of the Suffolk County Swimming Championships 2024 saw the 400m freestyle event, the team relays and the Skins event.

In the morning, India Clement cut her entry time by over nine seconds to take the silver medal in the girls' 12 years 400m freestyle event. She was beaten by the eventual winner of the county title for her age class, Violet Freezer from Team Ipswich but did exceptionally well to take the title for the county's second best-place girl in the 12 years age category, especially after a week of illness.

Matthew Baker owned the County open 400m freestyle title, winning by over seventeen seconds, the only swimmer to beat the four-minute marker.

Sunday afternoon brought the popular Skins event, composed of an exciting series of back-to-back, 50m knockout races at three-minute intervals, with strokes picked at random (in the first round by the fastest qualifier and thereafter by the eliminated swimmer). To complicate matters, after round

one the swimmers don't enjoy a conventional 'take your marks' start, but instead get a ten second warning whistle and then the buzzer for the start of the race. In an eight-lane pool, there are seven rounds.

There were no WSSC female qualifiers for the 2024 Skins event, but the four WSSC qualifiers in the open category lasted to the fourth round, when Jake Thomas-Mansfield bowed out. The butterfly specialist was unlucky that the draw produced backstroke, freestyle, freestyle and breaststroke to that point. The last three swimmers standing after the fifth round were Matthew Baker, Myles Turner and Luka Page. After a strong showing from Luka in the earlier heats, the penultimate breaststroke heat saw him drop after an unfortunate start that left him behind the leaders and unable to catch up. The final round featured a West Suffolk head-to-head between Matthew Baker and Myles Turner in a 50m backstroke race. The day and the title belonged to Matthew, with a dominant performance.

The final events for 2024 were the relays, with West Suffolk fielding teams in the female and open categories for 10/11 year, 12/13 year, 14/15 year and the open age group.



2024 WSSC relay swimmers

The 14/15 year team of Edison Lorejo, (backstroke), George Everett (breaststroke), Samuel Chamberlain (butterfly) and Zach Broad (freestyle) dominated the medley relay for their age group, leading from the start after an impressive backstroke leg from Edison and winning by nearly four and a half seconds. The quartet repeated their medal success with a gold in the 4 x 50m freestyle relay. Their younger teammates in the 12/13 year category (Isaac Vella (backstroke), James Everett (breaststroke), Jason Dalope (butterfly) and Hugo Deeming (freestyle)) claimed a brilliant bronze in the medley relay too, again repeating bronze in the 4 x 50m freestyle event, with David Buburuzan replacing James in this event. The 10/11 years open relay team of Felix Brown (back), Jude Brown (breaststroke), Jacob Reed (butterfly) and Freddie Jordan (freestyle) won a fabulous silver medal in their medley relay, beating the bronze-winning Stowmarket team by over fifteen seconds. In the open age category, Myles Turner (backstroke), Luka Page (breaststroke), Jake Thomas-Mansfield

(butterfly) and Matthew Baker (freestyle) claimed an impressive medley relay gold medal, dominating the field even more convincingly in the 4 x 50m freestyle (featuring Archie Chamberlain in the line-up in the place of Myles Turner) and winning by over three and a half seconds.



Double gold relay medal winners Zach Broad, George Everett, Edison Lorejo and Samuel Chamberlain

The girls' 12/13 years team comprised of India Clement (backstroke), Rosie Perry (breaststroke), Freya Reed (butterfly) and Poppy Morrie (freestyle) won a super silver medal in one of the rare relay events that had no disqualifications for flying takeover changes. Their younger teammates in the 10/11 year race (Tilly Taylor (backstroke), Ethel Norton (breaststroke), Thea Rees (butterfly) and Abbie Dockerill (freestyle)) claimed bronze in their medley event, with the open female team of

Molly Peacock (backstroke), Elizabeth Wright (breaststroke), Becca Brown (butterfly) and Kiera Broad (freestyle) taking silver.

The WSSC coaching staff would like to congratulate the Team for their excellent performance. In addition to India's silver medal in the individual rankings (based on FINA points scored for each event swum), Samuel Chamberlain took the bronze place for his age group, with Myles Turner taking bronze in the 17 years/over and Jake Thomas-Mansfield just behind in fourth place.