

BIRMINGHAM MASTERS SWIMMING CLUB

November newsletter 2007

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ASA Masters Championships summary

We are as usual indebted to Keith Ingram for his detailed summary of Birmingham Masters' performances at Sheffield in the ASA Masters Championships.

This year 28 individual swimmers won 17 gold medals, 7 silver medals and 6 bronze medals. This compares favourably with 10 gold, 8 silver and 11 bronze last year.

The star swim of the weekend was the British and European Record of 23:02.23 in the 1500-metre freestyle by Judy Wilson (60-64) beating the old record of 23:29.00 by some distance.

Hayley Bettinson (40-44) was sufficiently down the comeback trail following back surgery earlier in the year to annex 4 titles. These were 50 metres butterfly, breaststroke and freestyle and the 100 metres I.M. Just watch this space next year when she moves up an age group.

Pauline Brand (70-74) is also in the last year of her age group in a year where she suffered the loss of her husband. Despite this she won the 200 metres freestyle, took 2nd places in the 100 metres I.M. and 200 metres backstroke and 3rd places in the 400 and 800 metres freestyle.

Rachael Hares (18-24) won the 50 metre (34.28) and 200 metre 2:45.07) breaststroke events and would have won the 100 metre event if she could have swum on the Friday. These are outstanding swims and auger well for transition from the pre-masters age group to masters.

Keith Ingram (65-69) won the 100 metres and 200-metre breaststroke and 200 metres I.M. with 2nd and 3rd places in the 50-metre breaststroke and 100 metres I.M. respectively. The 100-metre breaststroke time of 1:26.49 was only .36 slower than a PB achieved 5 years ago.

Arthur Lowe (70-74) decided to have a change this year from freestyle and entered the three backstroke distances winning at 50 and 100 metres and placing 3rd at 200 metres.

Carl Mellor (30-34) is one of our newer members and this was his first National Masters so a gold in the 200 metre backstroke was a nice result and just reward for a program that included 1500 metres freestyle, 100 metres and 400 metres I.M. and 100 metres backstroke.

Alison Peakman (25-29) won the 100-metre backstroke and was 2nd at the 200-metre distance.

David Roberts (25-29) won the 100 metres freestyle in 52.86 seconds and was 2nd in the 100 metres butterfly and 200 metres I.M.

Kim Winwood (30-34) fits training in around her new responsibilities of motherhood but nevertheless decided to compete in the 1500 metre freestyle winning her age group in 20:51.90 seconds which is excellent bearing in mind the reduced training opportunities this year and augers well for the future in this event.

Frank Stoney (55-59) took bronze medals in the 100 metre I.M. and 50 metre breaststroke. In a year when work and house moving issues have curtailed training these results are encouraging.

David Cooke (50-54) has also suffered from reduced water time due to coaching duties with Solihull Swimming Club but nevertheless consistently shaded his entry times and nipped in for a bronze in the 50 metres freestyle with a time of 27.93.

Robert Cramb (50-54) was delighted with his 50 metre butterfly time of 31.79 and it was a pity that he was just outside of the medals in 4th place. A 1:05.93 for the 100 metre freestyle was also very pleasing.

Jim Hunt (45-49) is still very much on the competition learning curve and beat realistic entry times very significantly in all his events. Further experience, ageing up next year and a new body suit will surely ensure progress towards medals at this level.

Colin Leiper was not at his best and was comparing his performances with excellent times achieved earlier in the year at Leamington. The swims were in the main inside the entry times and in all probability endurance will return. Relay splits of 28.52 and 28.65 suggest that strength and speed are still in place.

Paul Wolstenholme (45-49) was unfortunate to miss his Friday evening swims due to M1 traffic congestion. The 400 freestyle and 100 butterfly were a bit down on entry times and it may be that it would have been wiser to have concentrated on one event in this session.

Mark McGarry (30-34) proved that he could still go sub 60 for 100 metres freestyle with a 59.88 swim.

Andrew Downing (25-29) was doing his first masters meet and 30.13 and 1:06.59 for 50 and 100 metres freestyle respectively were encouraging results. There is little doubt that he will go faster next time.

Pauline Cooke (55-59) is at the top of her age group and was making a return to individual events. The 400 and 800 metre freestyle swims were both comfortably inside her entry times.

Susan Cramb (50-54) swam the three breaststroke events beating her entry times quite significantly and would probably have gone even faster in the 50 metres breaststroke if her goggles had stayed put at the start.

Elaine Fenton (50-54) targeted the 800 and 1500 metre freestyle events and produced two good swims for 5th and 6th places respectively. The process of finding out which are the best events to swim seems to indicate the longer freestyle distances.

Allison Stoney (45-49) did her swims with the usual grit and determination and this is required in spades when swimming a 400 metres I.M. particularly when recent health issues and family bereavement get in the way of preparation. When the difficulties are removed the swims will get better.

Esme Watkinson (45-49) swam well under her entry time in the 50 metres backstroke with a time of 40.18 and a sub 40 second swim beckons.

Fred Rennie (30-34) was competing in her second masters meet and produced good swims in 100, 200 and 400 metres freestyle and 100 and 200 metre I.M. events.

Antonia Edge (25-29) produced swims that were consistent with her entry times.

Diana Steele (25-29) was slightly down on her entry times and was unlucky to finish just outside of the medals in 4th place in the 100 metres I.M.

Caroline Williams (25-29) swam close to her entry times in the two shorter backstroke events.

Laura Johnson (18-24) also swam close to her entry times and did both the 200 metre backstroke and the 200 metre I.M. in the last session!

Allen Miles, Mick Marshall, Andy Wilson, Adam Woods and Suzanne Hurst all came and supported our relay teams. 16 teams swam and we won 3 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze medals in the face of stiff opposition. Of particular note were Adam's 27.69 butterfly split and the winning ladies 120+ medley relay team of Alison Peakman, Hayley Bettinson, Diana Steele and Caroline Williams. Pauline Cooke's energetic chasing up ensured that everyone was in place at the right time to complete all 16 swims entered. Our relays were generally less successful than last year's, though they still performed with distinction.

In the mixed relays on the Saturday our star team was the 240-279 quartet of David Cooke, Keith Ingram, Pauline Cooke, and Judy Wilson. They placed second in both freestyle and medley teams. They were our only medallists although the 200-239 team of Hailey Bettino, Frank Stony, Bob Cramb and Esme Watkinson hit fourth place in the medley team, and in a very tough 100-119 age group we gained a fifth in the freestyle (Mark McGarry, Diana Steele, Alison Peakman, and David Roberts) and sixth in the medley (Caroline Williams, Rachel Hares, Adam Woods, and Mark McGarry). We fared a little better in the single sex relays on the Sunday. Our four ladies teams all medalled: the Suzanne Hurst, Allison Stoney, Judy Wilson, Pauline Cooke team was second in the freestyle and third in the medley, and our 120-159 team, already listed, swam to a good third place in the freestyle and that wonderful first place in the medley. Meanwhile our 280-319 men won both their events by swimming over: Arthur Lowe, Mick Marshall, Allen Miles, and Andy Wilson won the freestyle, and with Ingram coming in for Wilson took the medley. Our other relay was the 200-239, who were fifth in the freestyle and third in the medley. Well swum David Cooke, Frank Stoney, Bob Cramb, and Colin Leiper. Indeed, well swum everyone.

To summarise

We won more individual gold medals than last year despite unfortunate circumstances depriving us of swimmers who produced wins last year and were more successful in the relays despite narrowly losing out here and there to tough opposition.

The newer competitors performed well as can be deduced from this report and with perseverance will be more successful in future years. Many of the winners in 2007 filled the minor places in their first few national championships and gradually as their times came down progression into the medals occurred. There is no substitute for racing practice and each event is unique in this respect. Following the race you can interrogate the splits, receive input from those that volunteer it to you, perceive the need for better starts/ turns and then work on these things in training and move forward. The process also extends to exploring which your best events are and this can take years to discover.

Underpinning the good achievement of all who swam is the excellent coaching delivered by Andy Wilson. It is very difficult to prepare swimmers of diverse age, performance and events whose attendance at sessions is varied but it is evident that advantage has been gained for everyone. This has been quite a juggling act especially when we remember that the pool conditions have been rather trying at times and we all owe Andy a big thank you for his efforts on our behalf.

Whilst the main focus is the competition, the social interaction is very important and was highly enjoyable and sincere thanks are due to Pauline for organising the accommodation and the Saturday evening meal that helped to make the meet a success.

K.R.I. 02/11/2007

Upcoming events

Two events early in 2008 should attract a large field of Birmingham Masters. First, a new meet, the City of Coventry Masters on 2-3 February. Entries close 31 December. This meet is inspired by our own Allison Stoney and deserves the support of all our members. Long course swimming should hold no perils for our swimmers, and as there is a full range of events there is something there to suit us all. The second meet is the now traditional Rotherham Metro meet at Ponds Forge on Sunday 10 February. This is a one-day meet, but with a wide range of events up to 400 metres free and medley.

Before that I will as usual be organising the ASA Half Hour swim, now made even sexier with its new title, 'the T-30 Challenge', on Sundays 9 and 16 December. Watch the poolside for news. This is probably the national event we should do best in as a club.

Safety first

Some while ago the committee agreed that we should not have swimmers wearing wristwatches in our training sessions. As the receiver and giver of some awkward hits with watches in the past I do not want to be responsible for even a glancing blow. Please respect this safety measure.

Swimming aids

One last thing: I am trying to introduce a little more work with pullbuoys, paddles and so on. It would help if everyone came with the same set of stuff, ideally (a) a kick board, (b) finger paddles, (c) larger training paddles, (d) a pull buoy (not too big), and had it to hand during the session.

Compiled by Andy Wilson
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