National Youth Championships 2013

It was always going to be difficult to match last year National success, when Winsford had two female youth swimmers competing, an individual swimmer who came 5th overall in the 14years Age Group category and a relay team who’s placing after three events, had moved them up from their lowly ranking position to within two or three places of making a National final.

This year’s Championship had a slightly different feel to it, as we had no female swimmers, a swimmer who was combining his pool swimming with Open Water Swimming (first ever for the club) a swimmer competing in his first ever National Championship and relay team who just squeezed in on a time that was achieved at the Regional Championships back in June.

Monday - Open Water

Day one of the National Championship saw Ashley Hogg swim in his first ever Open Water National event. The venue was at the Rother Valley Country Park Sheffield and the course was a 2k swim.

The swimmers were briefed about the rules, conditions and safety controls for open water swimming and after having got marked up with his ranking number, it was time Ashley to start focusing on his swim.

The age band for this event was: -

12/13 & 14 years 1.5k

15/16 years 2k

17/18 years 3k

The weather was favourable for open water swimming and after the younger age group had completed their 1.5k swim, it was the turn of the girls 15/16 years to start their 2k swim with the boys following in 15 minutes later. The course was an oblong shape, which had to be completed twice before the swimmers headed for the finish.

It was difficult to see the swimmers has they swam out towards the first, second and third markers, but we were constantly being informed of their progress by Cassandra Patten who herself was a former Olympic 10k open water swimmer.

As the boy’s race neared its completion, it looked as if Ashley was in a good position to take a medal but as they entered the funnel, it was noticeable that Ashley was about a body length behind the third swimmer and therefore, would end up taking a 4th spot had the race finished properly, however, this wasn’t the case, as there was some confusion over the finishing, the leading swimmers had swam outside the funnel, only to be told to go back under the lane-line to finish off their race rather than having to swim back to funnel entrance, which I thought were the rules, this did cause some delay to outcome for the medal placing, but after an official complaint, the placing stood and Ashley came 4th overall.

Tuesday - day one in the pool

Ashley had to adjust from competing in a 2k Open Water swim one day, to competing in the pool the next day. Having never experienced anything like this before, it was noticeable that Ashley had lost some feel for the water, but despite not feeling 100%, he did manage to do a slight personal best time of 58.58sec in the 15/16 years 100m Butterfly.

Wednesday – day 2

This was to be Oliver Rose first ever National Championship and having qualified for the 15/16 years 100m Breaststroke at the Regional Championships; this was his first opportunity to test himself against some of the best Breaststroke swimmers in the country.

Having trained for the past seven week in preparation for this event, it was time for Ollie to deliver. With a very strong start and a great second 50m, Ollie finished in a personal best time of 69.43sec

Thursday – day 3

Still recovering from his Open Water Swim, Ashley had to endure another tough event, when he competed in the 200m Individual Medley. This event requires having a good technique in all four competitive strokes and if there is any soreness from pervious swims, then this event can be extremely difficult to do.

With an entry of 2min 14.83sec which he achieved at this year’s Regional’s, it was Ashley’s aim to swim faster and hopefully progress into the semi-finals, but as the race unfolded, you see Ashley beginning fight the water , his finishing time of 2min 14.86sec was just off his personal best time, but still inside the National Qualifying Time.

Friday – day 4 (day off)

Saturday – 5

This was going to be a tough day for Ashley, as he had the 200m Breaststroke in the morning and in the afternoon, the 1500m Freestyle.

With the 1500m Free being Ashley’s best event, it was likely that in the 200m Breaststroke he would race it, but not at the expense of making himself tired for the 1500m. His time of 2min 33.44sec was just outside of his personal best time, but he was happy with that.

Out of all the pool events, the 1500m Freestyle was the one race that Ashley was looking forward to.

Entering on a time of 16mins 49.48sec, this had placed him in heat 3 out of 8.

Ashley had full control over his pacing during this race; his ability to swim cautiously at the beginning and then progressively get faster as the race develops, is one of his strength and one that has allowed him to improve every time he swims.

Not panicking by others who decided to go out faster, Ashley steadily moved through the field to end up leading the race after 1200m, holding onto his 1st place position for the last 300m, Ashley touched in a time of 16min 28.21sec which was a staggering 21sec faster than his entry time.

After the result of the 1500m had been published, we noticed that Ashley had finished in 6th place in the 15year old age group.

Sunday – day 6

This was the last day of the these championships and all that was left for the Winsford swimmers was Ashley’s 400m Individual Medley and the boys 15/16 years 4 x 100m Medley relay

Ashley had good swim and achieved yet a another personal best time of 4min 45.27sec in the 400m Individual Medley.

The very last race of these Championships was the boys 15/16years 400m Medley team relay. The team of; Alex Law, Olive Rose, Ashley Hogg and Callum Chapple were all looking forward to this one particular race, as their challenge was to beat their entry time of 4min 07.31sec set at the Regional’s.

The first leg of this race was swam by Alex Law (Backstroke) followed Oliver Rose (Breaststroke) then Ashley Hogg (Butterfly) with Callum Chapple on the final leg (Freestyle)

Each swimmer knew exactly what they had to do and that was to swim faster than ever before, so when Alex swam is Backstroke in a personal best time, things were looking good, Oliver kept his nerves and completed a solid Breaststroke leg, which allowed Ashley to pursue other swimmers that were ahead of him, taking over from Ashley was Callum, getting his head down on the 1st 50m and holding a good 2nd 50m, the boys ended up beating the their entry time by almost 2.5sec

Backstroke Alex 62.18sec

Breaststroke Oliver 68.94sec

Butterfly Ashley 58.38sec

Freestyle Callum 55.26sec

Total time: 4min 04.76sec

I would like to take this opportunity and thank **Tata Chemicals Europe Ltd** who so kindly sponsored the swimmers national polo shirts for this event, the team wore their shirts with pride, I would also like to thank the club for allowing me the time and space to train our swimmers for what was the most important event of their careers.

Well done guys, you did a great job.

Dave