

DASHING DASC RACE HARD FOR COUNTY SUCCESS

After a tremendous build up to the 2015 Essex County Championships, Dunmow Atlantis swimmers took their rightful place amongst the top clubs in the area last weekend. The Club competed in the first of three 'blocks' of races at the Basildon Sporting Village, coming away with an impressive 55 PB's, 21 Top 8 positions, 8 medals, 2 new East Region qualifying times, 11 improved East Region times and 8 revised Club Records. Having entered this year's competition with an unprecedented 35 swimmers qualifying for this year's Championships, the Club finished their highly successful first leg in 10th place, with 34 more Club Points than at the same stage last year.

Due to the DASC's continued success, Head Coach Steve Turner and the Club committee decided to also enter relay teams for the first time. The Girl's 10-14 years 200m Freestyle team consisted of Chloe Moloney, Lauren Barker, Grace Mellor and Rebecca Watt – and what a fearsome foursome they proved to be, coming in 5th place in the final, with a superb time of 2.01.20. The boys then got down to business, starting with John Boyle, followed by Jamie Spong, Sammy Dack and Josh Smith. The boys finished with a solid time of 1.59.23, but were unlucky to be disqualified for a technical infringement.

There was little time to recover as the boys then had to swim their hearts out in the following hard-fought events. Competing in the Boys 15yrs/over 50m freestyle were George Simmons, Senior Club Boys Captain Louis Spong and Matt McLaughlin. All three turned in creditable performances and were unlucky to miss out on medals. Two of the youngest boys in the Club, Aiden Clarkson and Jack Richardson, raced in the next event, the Boys 10-14yrs 50m backstroke. Both were competing at their first County Championships, and did themselves proud, with Clarkson taking 2 seconds off his PB and earning a new Club Record; followed by Richardson finishing with an improved PB of 39.29 seconds. Sammy Dack, John Boyle and Josh Smith grabbed well-earned places in the finals of the event. Dack improved his PB by over a second, Boyle improved his East Regional time and finished 4th, with Smith taking bronze and also refining his Regional time to 30.67 seconds.

Girls Captains' Rosie Musgrove and Meghan Maybanks rose to the occasion in fine style for Event 4, the 15yrs/over 200m freestyle, with Maybanks earning a new East Region time of 2.14.88 and a place in the event finals. Three girls competed in Event 6, the 200m backstroke – Amy-Rose Ansell, Rebecca Watt and Chloe Moloney. All improved their PB's and showed their mettle against some stiff competition. Musgrove and Maybanks were joined by Abbie Hart in the Girls 15yrs/over 50m butterfly, with Hart and Maybanks placed 7th and 2nd respectively in the Finals. The last event of the day, the Boys 10-14yrs 200m breaststroke, saw newcomer Damon Elliot compete, along with Junior Boys Captain Sammy Dack. Dack substantially improved his East Region time by over seven seconds, then delighted the team with a silver medal in the Finals.

An early start the following day for swimmers, coaches and supporters did nothing to dampen spirits, as the younger 200m freestyle teams took to the

blocks. If 9 year olds Katie Harris, Millie Westcott, Eloise Ansell and Rebecca Johnson were nervous, they certainly did not show it, steaming home in 3.01.51 and taking a new Club Record. Spurred on by this, the 11/12yr old boys' team of Damon Elliot, Harry Montgomery, Toby Rayner and Jack Richardson wowed with a new Club Record of 2.36.11.

Event 23, the Girls 15yrs/over 100m backstroke saw notable performances from Rebecca Moloney and Abbie Hart, with Meghan Maybanks continuing her success from the previous day, taking bronze and improved Regional time of 1.07.73. Competing in the Boys 15yrs/over 50m backstroke were George Simmons, Louis Spong and Matt McLaughlin, where Spong earned a place in the finals. The trio of Dack, Boyle and Smith once again confirmed why they should be at the competition, each improving their PB's, with Smith adding to yesterday's medal haul with another bronze in the Finals. Event 27, the Girl's 10-14yrs 50m breaststroke had 7 Dunmow swimmers – Daisy Herrington, Sophie Taylor, Amelie Jones, Rebecca Watt, Katie Musgrove, Chloe Moloney and Grace Mellor. All the girls turned in creditable performances, culminating in a bronze medal and improved East Region time for Mellor.

Dunmow Masters member and National medal winner Gemma Bennett was next up, improving her PB by nearly 2 seconds in the Girls 15yrs/over breaststroke; along with 14 year old Meghan Maybanks, who took a Club Record of 2.58.64, plus 5th place in the Finals. Fifteen year old Louis Spong came up against familiar adversaries from clubs such as Harlow Penguins and Chelmsford, many of whom were several years older, but made a determined effort in the final event of the morning, the Boys 15yrs/over 200m I/M.

The first event of the afternoon, the Girls 10-14 yrs 50m freestyle, had 249 competitors – but the nine DASC swimmers were not deterred. There were new PB's for Maddie Lees, Amy-Rose Ansell, Sophie Taylor, Rebecca Dack and Grace Mellor; along with respectable performances from Katie Musgrove, Lauren Barker and Chloe Moloney. An outstanding swim from Rebecca Watt meant that the 12 year old went home with an improved Regional time and the County Champion title for her age group.

The positive poolside support from coaches and team members ensured that DASC's success continued through the afternoon session. The Dunmow supporters were shouting themselves hoarse by now, with Abbie Hart, Gemma Bennett, plus sisters Becca and Meghan Maybanks swimming hard in the Girls 15yrs/over 50m breaststroke. Fourteen year old Meghan smashed her PB and Regional time and earned herself a bronze medal. Competing in the Boys 10-14 yrs 50m butterfly were Jamie Spong, John Boyle, Sammy Dack and Josh Smith; with Spong, Boyle and Dack snatching new PB's; Dack was joined in the finals (taking 5th place) by Smith, who was once again on the podium for a bronze medal.

Ten year old Amy-Rose Ansell made her 200m I/M performance look effortless, taking a whopping 6 seconds off her PB. Following on from this Louis Spong and Matt McLaughlin also improved their PB's in the Boys 15yrs/over 100m I/M.

The penultimate individual event of the day, the Girls 15yrs/over 200m backstroke produced two superb swims from Rebecca Moloney, who PB'd, and once again Meghan Maybanks, easily taking a further second off her Regional Time and earning 5th place in the Finals. The Boys 10-14yrs 200m freestyle saw an improved PB for Dack, a new Regional time for Boyle and 5th place in the Finals for Smith.

There was just enough left in the reserves for the last event of the day, the Boys 15yrs/over 200m Medley relay. The team, consisting of George Simmons, Matt McLaughlin, Louis Spong and Dunmow Masters swimmer Ed Horrocks, put in a commendable performance in a closely fought race, finishing with a time of 2.01.56. A long but very productive weekend sees DASC entering the second block of events on 31st January and 1st February with high hopes for what else this 'little' Club can achieve, against some very tough competition. For further information on DASC please visit www.dunmowatlantis.co.uk