

## Godalming regain Stoodley Girls Cup

The girls from Godalming Swimming Club started the year well on Saturday night at Godalming Leisure centre regaining the Stoodley Girls Cup from arch-rivals Wey Valley. The all girls gala involved teams from Godalming, Wey Valley, Sutton and Henley and Godalming head coach Jon White knew his team needed to be at their best "Last year we lost the Stoodley cup by a point to Wey Valley so we knew we needed to have a strong team if we were going to have a chance of winning it back".

Katie Pritchard got Godalming off to a great start winning the first event the 11 year old girls 50m freestyle in a personal best time of 46.93 seconds and Molly Lawn carried on the great work winning the 50m freestyle for the under 12 year olds in 39.41. The Godalming team included a number of younger swimmers some of whom were making their first appearance in a swimming gala and despite the nerves they swam strongly and didn't let the side down. Josephine Beagley led all the way to win the under 11 year 50m breaststroke in 54.60, Claudia Dunscombe showing great determination to win the 25m butterfly in 22.31 and Tallulah Smillie blasted through to win the under 12 year olds 50m backstroke in a new personal best time of 46.11.

After the great start made by the youngsters Godalming were able to call on some of their more experienced swimmers to keep the points clock ticking over with Charlotte Turner and Eleanor Wade both setting new personal bests in winning the under 14 year old titles for 50m breaststroke and backstroke. In the under 15 year old age group Gabrielle Morgan powered through to win the 50m breaststroke and Ellie Cooper swooped to take the 50m butterfly.

The points at the halfway stage showed that Godalming had built up a healthy lead in 1<sup>st</sup> place on 69 points, Henley were 2<sup>nd</sup> on 49 points and close behind were Sutton on 44 and Wey Valley on 42. Head coach Jon White knew that his team stood a good chance if they could keep their heads and not get disqualified "We are always strong in the relays and I told our swimmers to swim hard and be careful on the changeovers because we couldn't afford to drop any points".

With the words of coach White ringing in their ears Godalming continued to get the wins with Emily Bagley storming through the field to win the under 12 year old 50m butterfly in 46.17 and young Hattie Owen holding on to win the under 11 year old 50m backstroke in 50.20. As predicted by coach White Godalming were almost unbeatable in the relay races coming first in all but one of the medley relays and winning all but two of the freestyle relays. In the individual races there were more personal bests from Hannah Lawson and Holly Parrish in the 50m freestyle, Alice Needell and Abigail Pritchard in the 50m breaststroke and in the 50m backstroke all of the Godalming swimmers Ella Hargreaves, Rachel Ewing, Lucy Bradbury and Harriet Dunscombe achieved personal bests putting the team in a strong position.

As the crowd roared their approval Godalming rounded the evening off with a win in the traditional end of gala "Squadron" the 12 x 25m freestyle relay race. The Godalming team led from the start with Alice Wright and Antonia Wade setting a hot pace and Marissa Nash bringing it home for Godalming to finish nearly a length ahead.

When the points were added up Godalming were comfortable victors in 1<sup>st</sup> place on 137 points with Wey Valley storming back to take 2<sup>nd</sup> on 103 points, Henley dropping to 3<sup>rd</sup> on 96 points and Sutton in 4<sup>th</sup> on 92 points. It was a first win for the new Godalming club captains Marissa Nash and Jonathan Wade who proudly collected the Stoodley Cup on behalf of their cheering team mates. Team manager Paul Nash was delighted with his team "Everyone was fantastic, we had 17 personal bests out of 24 individual races, bossed the relays and won 22 of the 40 races. If our youngsters keep swimming like this we are going to be a tough outfit to beat".