

SWIMMING NEWS

Best-ever national final finish for club's superb swimmers

By **STEVE HARLOW**
Swimming correspondent

BOLDMERE Swimming Club produced one of the best performances in the club's history at the National Arena 'B' Final at Ponds Forge to maintain their status as the best team in the West Midlands.

They qualified for the final in 10th place behind the likes of big guns and eventual win-

ners Stockport Metro, (who had the luxury of Olympian James Goddard competing) Ealing, Preston, City of Cardiff and Amersham.

But the 28-strong team recorded a massive 30 more points than last year with 259 to finish sixth, three places higher than their previous best, ahead of Windsor, Camden, City of Coventry and City of Cambridge.

Last year's performance, including one individual and one relay win, was blown away with four individual wins, two relay wins, five solo silvers and two relay silvers.

Boldmere's fine efforts were capped by Bradley Lynch, who won 'Boys Most Improved Age Group' Swimmer Award in the 15-yr/u category.

The first Boldmere win

came from the boys' 9-11yr 4x50m freestyle foursome of Matt Price, Kai Alexander, Tom Bloor and Archie Langston, who won by more than three seconds in 1.58.51mins.

Their dominance did not stop there as they went on to complete the double by winning the medley relay, while Price and Bloor also won the 50m backstroke and fly respectively, with Bloor slicing a second off his personal best in the latter.

In the boys' 15yrs/u 100m freestyle, Lynch, who has been selected to represent Great Britain at the LEN World Open Water Cup in Eilat, Israel, stormed to victory by nearly two seconds.

History maker Josh Winnicott – the winner of the first race in the new Olympic pool at the recent Olympic Trials – claimed victory in the 15/u 100m breaststroke.

Steve Wilson and Josh Halsey joined Winnicott and Lynch to take silver in the freestyle relay, missing out on gold by just 0.34secs.

Jake Dixon (13yrs/u) gave two brilliant displays for second in both 100m breaststroke and fly, while Emma Smith also took silver in the



girls' 15/u 100m backstroke.

Kate Davies set a new personal best to snatch second in the 9/11yrs 50m fly, while it was another close one for Price in the 50m freestyle, just losing the touch for second.

The final second place came in the girls' 15yrs/u medley relay in which the quartet of Smith, Emily Gordon, Givenchy Sneekes and Gina Lockett set a club record.

Third placed finishes came from Kate Davies in the girls' 9/11yrs 50m breaststroke and the boys' 15yrs/u 200m medley relay, in which the Boldmere boys set yet another club record.

There were personal best

times from Lauren Wall (both 50m back and free), Laura Richardson (100m back), Ben Stanford (100m back and free) and Morgan Harlow (100m free).

In the open age group, boys' captain Phil Hewitt set a new best time and club record in his 100m Fly, while Joey Stanger equalled his club record of 53.47 in the 100m free.

Also gaining valuable points were Georgina Dolan, Stella O'Hehir, Eden Harlow, Rachel Wilson, Jenny Fowler and Adam Kelly.



Josh Winnicott shone for Boldmere at Ponds Forge, as did Tom Bloor (top right) and Bradley Lynch (bottom right).
Pictures by Steve Harlow.



CRICKET ROUND-UP

Walmley and Streetly positive

Birmingham League

By **MICHAEL BEARDMORE**
Sports reporter

THE Royal Town's two Birmingham League sides begin their season this weekend hoping to build on the successes of last year.

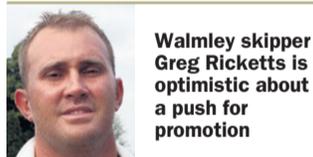
Walmley CC will hope to take their fantastic cup form from last season into their Birmingham Division One campaign as they look for promotion to the Premiership.

And Streetly CC – who achieved promotion from the feeder Warwickshire League as champions last season – hope to shine in their first-ever campaign in the Birmingham League.

Greg Ricketts has taken over the captaincy at Walmley and believes a push for promotion is within their capabilities.

The Eldon Drive side were relegated from the Premier two seasons ago and finished mid-table in Division One last year, but have regularly reached the latter stages of national knockouts.

Ricketts said: "With the few signings we've made and a few



Walmley skipper **Greg Ricketts** is optimistic about a push for promotion

more players coming back, hopefully we can get promoted, that's what we're hoping for. Last year we had a young squad, but we have a few more experienced chaps on board now.

"We've signed Mo Sheikh, while Bhav Patel is also available for us this season. Mo Usman is back too."

Walmley begin with a home game against Wombourne tomorrow (Saturday) and Ricketts is confident of a good start, weather permitting.

He added: "If we are able to get onto the pitch, we would hope to get off to winning ways, especially as we have contract player Andy Miller and Shozair Ali available.

"I think Kenilworth Wardens will be there or thereabouts in the division, plus the teams coming down from the Premier, like Moseley."

Streetly, meanwhile, are gearing up for their first-ever season in the Midlands' top league and skipper Russell Guy believes they can do more than just survive in Division Three.

They host Penn at Briar Avenue tomorrow (Saturday) and Guy said: "I think it will be a good year – the aim is not just to stay up but to do well.

"We don't know too much about the other sides so we can't predict where we might

finish but I'm confident we can get in the top half.

"I thought we would need to bring two or three more experienced players and we've done that."

Streetly have managed to keep influential Aussie Andy Lloyd and have also signed South African pace bowler Richard Slatem.

New signing John Baig has joined from Old Hill and Streetly have welcomed back Sam Bates after a season at local rivals Walmley.

STREETLY CC FIRST XI (166-4) beat OLD ELIZABETHANS (165-9) by six wickets
Friendly

STREETLY warmed up for their debut Birmingham League campaign with a six-wicket pre-season friendly win against Worcestershire side Old Elizabethans.

Batting first, Elizabethans started slowly against some good bowling from John Baig (1-19) and James Hunt.

When they tried to accelerate the run rate, wickets fell quickly and, from 100 without loss, they crumpled to 165-9 in their 45 overs.

Lloyd (6-42), including a hat-trick, was the star bowler for Streetly.

In reply, Lloyd (56), Hunt (50no) and Guy (28) took Streetly to victory inside 39 overs.



Walmley CC's youth section, sponsored by Wilson Field LLP, still have places available – e-mail walmleyccyouth

section@hotmail.com for details. Pictured are Neil Jeeves from sponsors Wilson Field LLP and Will Hemming from kit manufacturers Kukri

with Walmley youth section chairman Nathan Hill, vice chairman James Heron and club captains.

Sutton and Saints set to do top flight battle

Warwickshire League

THERE will be plenty of Royal Town interest in the top flight of the Warwickshire Cricket League this season.

Sutton Coldfield CC will be playing in the Warwickshire Premier for the first time in many years after their relegation from the Birmingham League last season.

Coming up through the other door are Four Oaks Saints, who won promotion from Warwickshire One last year.

Sutton begin with a home game against Bablake Old Boys tomorrow (Saturday), while Saints kick off their season at Solihull Blossomfield, both 1.30pm starts.

And the following weekend, Sutton and Saints will meet in

the first derby of the season at Oaks' Clarence Road ground.

Elsewhere in the Warwickshire League, Aston Unity will hope to make the most of their narrow escape from relegation last season in Division Two – they visit Castle Bromwich on the opening day.

In Division Three, Erdington Court host Corley, while Wishaw play North Warwick.

Walmley women get off to a winning start

CLIFTON (95-8) lost to WALMLEY LADIES CC FIRST XI (146-8)

Women's Midlands League Premier Division

WALMLEY Ladies started their season in style with a fine win in a rain-affected clash at Clifton.

The hosts won the toss and decided to put Walmley into

bat – and the departures of Fran Clarkson, Kayleigh Alsop and Sarvy Razavi left them struggling at 44-3.

But captain Liz Smart (13) Vicky Cannon (30), Becky Morrell (21no) and Liz Russell (20) helped Walmley to a respectable 146-8 off 50 overs.

During the tea break the weather deteriorated and Clifton were set a target of 132

in a reduced-overs innings.

Becky Grundy (2-21) and Izzy Watson (2-28) were the best Walmley bowlers, dismissing the top four batsmen.

Alsop and Cannon (2-7) also took two wickets apiece as Clifton finished on 95-8 off 45 overs, resulting in Walmley winning by 36 runs.

Walmley are back in action on Sunday, hosting Moseley.

APPEAL Sutton Coldfield Cricket Club Junior nets are being held every Friday from 6.30pm at their Rectory Park ground. The club is looking for juniors of any age to play in Warwickshire Under 13 Premier league. Please contact Mike Mackey on 07973 472 083