



# Swum 2 won 2

Just 12 months after winning the Arena Junior Inter-League final at the first attempt, City of Leeds returned to defend their title. Roger Guttridge reports from the Corby International Pool.

Pictures by Steve Harlow

City of Leeds seem to be getting the hang of this junior league business. Less than three years ago they were the new kids on the diddy block, contesting the local White Rose Junior League for the first time. In their second season they not only won it but went on to dominate the national final. Now they've successfully defended their title by a fractionally bigger margin - 51 points compared to 48 in 2011. But that seemed to surprise no-one except City of Leeds.

'We didn't expect to win it,' said coach Kevin Schofield after the 49-event final at Corby, Northants. 'We thought it was going to be tough today. After 12 events we were only 10 points in front whereas last year I think it was a lot more. But round about half-way we had a couple of wins and everybody picked up. I'm really proud of them. It shows that the training we've done has paid off. Hopefully we will be back next year to make it three in a row.'

The Corby arena was a cauldron of noise, colour and excitement as parents and supporters packed the spectator gallery to overflowing and swimmers, coaches and officials packed the poolside.

## Brisk start

Leeds started briskly, winning three of the opening five relays and knocking 1.9sec off their own league record as Kiani Campbell-Grady, Chloe Adams, Georgia Coates and Phebe Robinson won the 12/u 4x25m medley relay in 58.76. The quartet returned later to set another record in the freestyle (54.02). In between Adams won herself the 12yrs top girl swimmer award for her winning time of 35.92 in the 50m breaststroke. Benjamin Rayner equalled the

league record for the 9yrs 25m backstroke (18.29), won the 25m butterfly (17.14) and earned himself a 50 per cent share of the age group award with Ben Smith of Boldmere.

Other Leeds winners included Euan Coowan, who won a titanic battle with Boldmere's Tom Bloor in the 11/u 50m butterfly (32.60), Katherine Russell (9yrs 25m backstroke 18.92), Liam Birrell (10yrs 50m butterfly 33.83), Richard Mawson (12/u 50m breaststroke 37.20), Eleanor Jones (10yrs 50m freestyle 31.92) and Harry Devlin, who finished three seconds clear in the 11/u 50m breaststroke in 37.94. Four more successes in the final block of relays further increased Leeds' tally of wins.

## Missed out

Stockport Metro had missed out on the 2010 final by a single point but they justified their return for their third appearance with a comfortable second place.

'It was a good team effort,' said assistant head coach Lucas Connolly. 'We looked good in the skills. It's a fun team event. Winning is all right but the important thing is to get the kids to come here and enjoy it. We have some very good youngsters coming through. The junior coaches have done a fantastic job to get them to this level.'

Those youngsters include boys' captain Harrison Coulter, now treading in the early footsteps of his illustrious cousin James Goddard, and Yanis Belkhaladi, whose time of 15.34 in the 9yrs 25m freestyle added his name to the record books. Dylan Arzoni won the top boy record-breaker award after lowering the 11/u 50m backstroke mark to 32.54 in a showdown against Boldmere's Matt Price, the only one ahead of him in the 11yrs national rankings. Their positions were reversed in the freestyle. Stockport also won three relays, >



Clockwise from left: Swimmers dancing on the poolside as they await the final result; Leeds and Southport are neck and neck at the second takeover in the 11/u medley relay in which Southport went on to break the league record; Southport's Rebecca Cuff after winning the 11/u 50m breaststroke; Stockport Metro collect their runners-up medals

'We didn't expect to win it. We thought it was going to be tough today and so it proved'



'It was a good team effort. We looked good in the skills. It's a fun team event. Winning is all right but the important thing is for the kids to come here and enjoy it. We have some very good youngsters coming through'

including a thrilling 8x25m cannon in which just 0.1sec separated them from Leeds.

#### Northern domination

With only one of the eight finalists travelling from anywhere south of Birmingham, the line-up underlined the increasingly northern domination of this competition. Only Hillingdon bucked the trend, flying the flag for the whole of southern England and following up their second place in 2010 with third this time. 'We are only a small club with only 50 swimmers to select from for this event,' said coach Lesley Westendorp. 'We won the southern final for the second year running and this was a really good effort [in the national final]. For us, it's not about individuals - it's about the team. The whole team pull together and the results are coming.'

Westendorp's comments were underlined by the statistics: Hillingdon broke no league

records, won no individual awards and won only four of the 49 races. But six second places and 10 thirds kept the scoreboard ticking healthily for them. Their winners were 10-year-olds Alfie Collins in the 50m breaststroke (42.02) and Brodie Judge in the girls' 50m backstroke (36.68) and two relay teams.

#### Five records

The 2008 and 2009 champions Southport, in contrast, were responsible for five of the 12 records broken on the day with Abi Jones and Holly Hibbott respectively winning the 9yrs and 11yrs top girl awards. Fran Halsall's 11/u 50m freestyle record was among those to fall as fellow Southport native Hibbott recorded 29.22, a 0.17sec improvement on the standard set by the 2010 European and Commonwealth champion in 2001 for City of Liverpool. Hibbott, whose swim school owner dad Paul

actually worked with Halsall in her very early swimming days, demolished an even older record in the 50m butterfly, clocking 31.09 to slice 1.86sec off the time set by L Cox of Northampton in 1999.

Hibbott, Emma Whittingham, Rebecca Cuff, Niamh Wilgar and Lucy Kent also set new figures in the 11/u 4x25m freestyle and medley relays (54.02 and 1:02.44) while Abi Jones's time of 19.74 knocked 0.85sec off the 9yrs 25m breaststroke record set by Hibbott in 2009.

Jones also won the 9yrs 25m freestyle in 15.12, Whittingham the 11/u 50m backstroke (33.51), Cuff the 11/u 50m breaststroke (37.48) and Hibbott (31.41) a 12/u 50m butterfly in which only 0.46sec covered the first three.

#### Matched places

Southport and Boldmere respectively matched their fourth and fifth places of the previous year. ▶



◀ Matt Price was involved in three of Boldmere's four wins, not only turning the tables on Arzoni to win the 50m freestyle but leading off the winning 11/u and 12/u freestyle teams of Tom Bloor, Archie Langston and Kai Alexander and Ben Campbell, Ben Stanford and Alexander. Stanford was the club's other individual winner in the 12/u 50m freestyle (27.32).

Chloe Galindez and Nick Perkins recorded an award-winning double as UEA City of Norwich, appearing in their fifth consecutive final, improved one place from 2010 and almost two places, as they ended up just one point behind Boldmere. Perkins was a double winner, taking the 10yrs 50m backstroke and freestyle in 36.52 and 30.57 to grab the award for the top boy in the age group. Galindez won the equivalent girls' award following her victory in the 10yrs 50m butterfly in 36.02. Other Norwich winners were Samuel Ross in the boys' 9yrs 25m breaststroke (21.01) and Lilyella Craw-Seaman in the girls' 12/u 50m freestyle (28.78).

Danny Johnson was a double winner as Derby and Notts Junior League champions City of Derby came seventh in their fourth appearance at this level and their second in two years. Johnson was

named top 12-year-old boy after winning the 12/u 50m butterfly and backstroke in 30.41 and 31.68, though he secured the fly by only 0.03sec following a late charge by Lewis Evers of Leeds.

Eleanor Baldwin made it a boy-girl double in the backstroke as she won in 32.23. Sophie Eley set a league record with her winning time of 39.89 in the 10yrs 50m breaststroke.

Durham and District Junior League champions City of Newcastle had to settle for eighth place but that was a good deal better than last year, when heavy November snow in the North East

forced them to abandon any thoughts of making the long trip to Northamptonshire.

'The team were devastated when they were unable to attend due to inclement weather,' said their programme notes.

But for that natural intervention, this would have been their seventh consecutive final. Race wins eluded them this time but they achieved a couple of second places and four thirds. Their best-placed swimmers were Christian Urbanan with second in the 10yrs 50m breaststroke (42.37) and Maisie Scott-Stuart in the 9yrs 25m breaststroke (21.64). ▶

**Clockwise from above left:** Southport's Holly Hibbott on her way to breaking Fran Halsall's 10-year-old 25m freestyle record; Norwich's Chloe Galindez wins the 10yrs 50m butterfly; City of Newcastle swimmers enjoy the carnival atmosphere; Matt Price was involved in three wins for Boldmere; supporters show support for their teams





Individual award winners (from top, l-r): Dylan Arzoni (Stockport); Holly Hibbott (Southport); Ben Smith (Boldmere) and Ben Rayner (Leeds) with Solo Sports' Richard Townsend; Abi Jones (Southport); Chloe Galindez (Norwich); Nick Perkins (Norwich); Matt Price (Boldmere); Danny Johnson (Derby); Chloe Adams (Leeds)

## ARENA JUNIOR INTER-LEAGUE FINAL CORBY, NOVEMBER 27, 2011 RESULTS AND AWARDS

### OVERALL RESULT

1	City of Leeds	321
2	Stockport Metro	270
3	Hillingdon	236
4	Southport	221
5	Boldmere	208
6	UEA City of Norwich	207
7	City of Derby	169
8	City of Newcastle	130

### TOP RECORD-BREAKERS

<b>Overall</b>	
Holly Hibbott (Southport) 11/u 50m fly	31.09 (-1.86sec)
Dylan Arzoni (Stockport Metro) 11/u 50m back	32.54 (-0.90sec)

### TOP SWIMMER AWARDS

<b>9yrs</b>	
Abi Jones (Southport)	
Ben Smith (Boldmere) & Benjamin Rayner (City of Leeds)	
<b>10yrs</b>	
Chloe Galindez (UEA City of Norwich)	
Nick Perkins (UEA City of Norwich)	
<b>11yrs</b>	
Holly Hibbott (Southport)	
Matt Price (Boldmere)	
<b>12yrs</b>	
Chloe Adams (City of Leeds)	
Danny Johnson (City of Derby)	

### LEAGUE FINAL RECORDS

<b>Girls</b>	
<b>9yrs</b>	
Abi Jones (Southport) 25m breaststroke	19.74
<b>10yrs</b>	
Sophie Eley (City of Derby) 50m breaststroke	39.89
<b>11/u</b>	
Holly Hibbott (Southport) 50m butterfly	31.09
Holly Hibbott (Southport) 50m freestyle	29.22
Southport (H Hibbott, R Cuff, N Wilgar, E Whittingham) girls' 4x25m freestyle relay	54.02
Southport (H Hibbott, L Kent, R Cuff, E Whittingham) girls' 4x25m medley relay	1:02.44
<b>12/u</b>	
City of Leeds (K Campbell-Grady, C Adams, G Coates, P Robinson) girls' 4x25m medley relay	58.76
City of Leeds (P Robinson, G Coates, C Adams, K Campbell-Grady) girls' 4x25m freestyle relay	54.02
<b>Boys</b>	
<b>9yrs</b>	
Yanis Belkhaladi (Stockport Metro) 25m freestyle	15.34
Benjamin Rayner (City of Leeds) 25m backstroke	18.29 (equalled)
<b>11/u</b>	
Dylan Arzoni (Stockport Metro) 50m backstroke	32.54
Boldmere (M Price, T Bloor, A Lanston, K Alexander) boys' 4x25m freestyle relay	54.69