**Swim England South West Open Water Championships - 2017**

(incorporating the Gloucestershire Open Water Championships)

A fairly overcast and slightly drizzly Weymouth again played host to the regional and county championships on June 24th. This year, however, marked the first implementation of the recently introduced FINA Rules on the use of wetsuits – previously banned in all FINA/LEN/ASA competitions – and may go some way to explain the 58% increase in swimmer numbers (up to 199)!

The changes relate mainly to the temperature at which a race can be held and what kind of swimwear is permissible. Put simply, if the water is between 16OC and 18OC then wetsuits are compulsory; between 18OC and 20OC then wetsuits are optional and over 20OC then wetsuits are prohibited. Temperatures below 16OC and above 30OC will result in the race being cancelled as the water is deemed to be outside safety limits.

On the day, the sea temperature started at a balmy 16.4OC, rising the heady height of 16.9OC for the last race – so all competitors were obliged to wear wetsuits.

The first race of the day was the 5k. It turned out to be a hotly fought contest between Matt Munden (Gloucester City) and Imogen Moroney (Weston-Super-Mare). Imogen led for most of the race but was drafted by Matt until the final turn. Coming into the finishing funnel Matt was leading, just, but a small mistake allowed the WSM swimmer to use all her skill and experience to re-take the lead and finish just three seconds ahead. As 17+ age group winner Matt also qualifies for Swim England Open Water National Competition at the end of July at Rother Valley nr. Sheffield.

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| **5K** | | | | | |
| **Swimmer** | **Club** | **Age Group** | **Time** | **Positon SW** | **Position Glos** |
| Matthew Munden | Gloucester City | 17+ | 1:07:33.96 | 1Q | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Mark Partridge | Stroud Masters | 50+ | 1:31:12.47 | 1 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Jorgi Longdon | Gloucester City | 17+ | 1:17:28.87 |  | 1 |

Q indicates qualification for Nationals in 17+ age group

A strong contingent from Gloucester City took part in the 3K event with Don Bisset shining with a fast swim and a National qualifying position in the 15-16 age group.

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| **3K** | | | | | |
| **Swimmer** | **Club** | **Age Group** | **Time** | **Positon SW** | **Position Glos** |
| Don Bisset | Gloucester City | 16 | 41:01.02 | 1Q | 1 |
| Scott Munden | Gloucester City | 16 | 48:03.41 |  | 2 |
|  | | | | | |
| Duncan Bisset | Gloucester City | 15 | 48:04.20 |  | 1 |
| Daniel Webb | Gloucester City | 15 | 55:18.58 |  | 2 |
|  | | | | | |
| Zoe Ward | Southwold SC | 30-39 | 53:03.78 | 1 | 1 |

Q indicates qualification for Nationals in 15-16 age group

The 1500m race was also well populated with Gloucestershire swimmers with Olivia Butler (CoB) being the pick of the youngsters with a National Qualifying swim in the 12-14 age group.

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| **1.5K** | | | | | |
| **Swimmer** | **Club** | **Age Group** | **Time** | **Positon SW** | **Position Glos** |
| Jonah Silk | CoB | 14 | 21:31.54 |  | 1 |
| James Stoodley | CoB | 14 | 25:43.55 |  | 2 |
| Will Crofts | Cheltenham | 14 | 27:02.43 |  | 3 |
|  | | | | | |
| William Cooper | Gloucester City | 13 | 23:33.94 | 3 | 1 |
| Lucas Tompkins | Severnside Tritons | 13 | 25:04.18 |  | 2 |
|  | | | | | |
| Amos Starkey | Gloucester City | 12 | 23:49.69 | 2 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Brian Armstrong | Gloucester Masters | 50+ | 24:04.56 | 1 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Olivia Butler | CoB | 14 | 21:48.42 | 1Q | 1 |
| Erika Mawer | Cirencester | 14 | 28:23.75 |  | 2 |
|  | | | | | |
| Alice Hayward | Severnside Tritons | 12 | 26:06.87 | 3 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Daisy Bond | Gloucester Masters | 19-29 | 25:57.84 | 2 | 1 |

Q indicates qualification for Nationals in the 12-14 age group

Three of the County’s age groupers have therefore qualified for the National Competition at Rother Valley at the end of July – this matches last year’s level of success.

The final race of the day was the taster event for those new to open water racing over a range of age groups. Three Gloucestershire competitors entered and the two Byatts from CoB won their respective SW region age groups.

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| **750m** | | | | | |
| **Swimmer** | **Club** | **Age Group** | **Time** | **Positon SW** | **Position Glos** |
| Owen Byatt | CoB | 12 | 15:51.51 | 1 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Jenifer Byatt | CoB | 14 | 13:51.35 | 1 | 1 |
|  | | | | | |
| Lucie King | Cheltenham | 11 | 16:15.95 |  | 1 |

A few of the County’s Masters swimmers were present at the event with Mark Partridge (5K; Stroud Masters; 50+), Zoe Ward (Southwold; 3k; 30-39) and Brian Armstrong (1.5K; Gloucester Masters; 50+) all winning their respective SW events and Daisy Bond (1.5K; Gloucester Masters; 19-29) coming in a creditable second in her race. Mark, Daisy & Brian will be among the 9 swimmers from the county who will be taking part in the Masters National Competition at Rother Valley also at the end of July, the day before the age group event.