

## **Griffins take M11 junior Speedo league division two title in fine style**

Last Sunday (29 June) Griffins' junior swimmers travelled to Braintree again for the third and final round of the M11 junior Speedo league, hoping to emulate their senior counterparts by winning the division two title and gain promotion to league one. There was nervous anticipation on the team coach carrying the squad, coaches and some supporters who were joined in force by others travelling independently. The position after the first two rounds could not have been closer; Griffins were level on league points with Halstead and just one gala point ahead of them. It soon became apparent that the title was likely to be won by either Griffins or Halstead.

With the strongest six teams participating in this gala, wins were harder to come by than in previous rounds but Griffins' strength in the opening events saw them win half of the first fourteen races and open up a 3 point lead over their closest challengers. Although, as in previous rounds, the next quarter of the programme proved less fruitful with only one win, all the swimmers dug deep, many coming through strongly in the second half of races to pick up valuable extra points to ensure that Griffins led by a single point at the halfway stage (25 events). Indeed Halstead had at one point overhauled Griffins when they led by 3 points after 20 events.

Halstead drew level on points after the next event but some tremendous individual performances in the next fourteen events, which included another seven wins but also four second places, enabled Griffins to open up a fourteen point lead after 40 events with just nine relay events to go. As throughout the entire gala, the swimmers from Griffins used their stamina to finish races strongly moving through the field in the latter stages of races.

However any complacent thoughts were soon swept aside when Halstead won three out of the first four relays and although Griffins responded by similarly winning three out of the next four relays, Halstead's superior minor placings in these relays significantly narrowed the point gap so that the margin was reduced to six points with just the 8 swimmer squadron relay to go. Griffins needed to avoid disqualification to take the title but were determined to finish in style. The level of noise during the final race was deafening with every supporter loudly and enthusiastically cheering on their team. Halstead and Annaconda started strongly but Griffins gradually clawed back their early lead ending in a photo finish between all three teams. Although Griffins finished second to Halstead in the final race, they took the trophy back to Enfield, the winning margin being 5 points.

Every swimmer gave their all in an exciting, tense (for spectators in particular) and close gala. Griffins were delighted and extremely proud of the performance of the entire team and look forward to the future with anticipation with such young talent.

### **Gala placings (3rd gala only)**

Griffins	216 points
Halstead	211 points
Annaconda	169 points
Braintree & Bocking	149 points
Rochford	143 points
Greenwich BM	142 points

### **Final league table (top six clubs only)**

	Club	Gala points	League points
1	Griffins	689	36
2	Halstead	683	34
3	Anaconda	549	29
4	Braintree	516	26
5	Greenwich Boro Mariners	560	24
6	Rochford	466	24