

Woking Break British and European Records and Masters National Championships Decathlon and World Rankings

Woking Masters travelled to Swansea for a thrilling three days of racing at the 2024 British Masters Championships, which took place 19-21 April at the Welsh National Pool in Swansea. Masters swimmers from all across the UK came together for the event which showcased the fun and competitive spirit of the Masters community.

The Woking 19-strong squad returned with a truly incredible array of individual and relay medals and an even more impressive range of newly set British and European Records, narrowly missing a couple of World Records. **The squad came back with a staggering total of 52 medals (31 Gold, 9 silver and 12 bronze) and 11 new records (7 GB and 4 European/GB).**

The Woking Masters squad, which started as a squad of only 12 swimmers in 2021, has rapidly grown to an impressive quad of over 45 dedicated competitive indoor and open water swimmers and triathletes. The achievements of this squad are truly amazing (read on..).

The 63 individual swims from the 19 Woking swimmers, resulted in **an incredible individual 24 Gold medals (4 of them swum in a new British record and 1 new European), 5 silver and 10 bronze medals and many more top 10 finishers.** Of note were 5 individual gold medals for Mike Hodgson, 4 Gold medals for David Bryant, Gina Heyn and Lynda Coggins with Coggins also picking up 2 Silver medals. Impressively Heyn setting new British records for the 40-44 age category in both the 100m breast in a time of 1:14.16s and 50m free in 27.54s. Hodgson added yet another record to his collection by setting a new 200IM record of 2:27.44s in his 55-59 age group. Michelle Ware came home with 2 of her own gold medals, even more impressively setting a new European and British record in 50m backstroke of 31.68s - only a whisker away, 9 hundredths, from a new World Record! Henry Goodlud impressively matched Ware's 2 Gold medals in 100m Breast and 200IM but expanded his medal haul with an extra 2 Silver medals in 50m Breast and Free.

Jamie Cunningham stuck gold on the blue-ribbon event of 100m freestyle, and Alex Smith, just returning from his great performance at the Olympic trials, stuck gold in the 'splash and dash' 50m freestyle, setting a new British Record in the 30-35 category in an impressive 23.10s. Older brother Ben Smith gained 2 bronze medals from his 3 swims. The final individual gold medal went to Simon Scully in his truly gruelling 1500m freestyle, adding a lovely bronze in the slightly less gruelling 800m Free.

Others came home with more medals, triple bronzes for both Dean Blackman and Jennie Clarke, Clarke going one better with Silver in her 100m breaststroke. James Norman, Cassie Allen, Conor Brunt, Crystal Brownnett, Max Freedman, Alice Reeves-Turner and Gemma Spencer also had some great individual swims, narrowly missing out on the podium places.

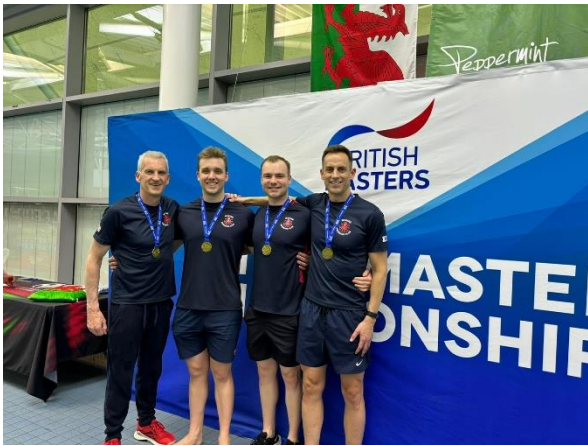
With great success in the individual events, the squad were keen to replicate the success in the Relay events.

The Masters relay events are swum in 'Total Age of the relay team', with Woking taking part in numerous 160+ age and 120+ age categories, for both Men, Women and Mixed relays. **Out of the 14 relay events swum, a staggering 7 Gold, 4 Silver and 2 Bronze medals resulting in 3 new British and 3 new European records.** Congratulations to all the other medal winning relay teams!

British records were set by the 160+ men's 4 x 100m free relay of Henry Goodlud, Mike Hodgson, Dean Blackman and Jamie Cunningham. Hodgson and Goodlud were joined by Michelle Ware and Gina Heyn to go one better and set new European records in the both the mixed 4 x 100m Free and 4x100m Medley relays.

A third European record, and just 6/100ths shy of a World Record, came from the Alex Smith, Heyn, Ware and Hodgson, this time in the 160+ 4 x 50m Free with Alex also breaking the British individual record on the lead off leg. In the men's relays, more records tumbled with British records in 120+ 4x 50m Free (Cunningham, Norman and Freedman and Alex Smith) and also in 160+ 4 x 50m Med relay (Hodgson, Goodlud, Blackman and Alex Smith).

Dean Blackman, James Norman and Max Freedman all celebrated their first British records and Alex Smith and Henry Goodlud their first European records!



(Left Photo) British Record: Men's 4 x 100m Free 160+ team : Mike Hodgson, Henry Goodlud, Jamie Cunningham, Dean Blackman
(Right Photo) British Record: Men's 4 x 50m Medley 160+ team: Hodgson, Goodlud, Blackman, Alex Smith



(Left Photo): Men's 4 x 50m free 120+ team: Max Freedman, James Norman, Jamie Cunningham, Connor Brunt.
(Middle Photo): European and British Record 4 x 50m Free 160+ team: Alex Smith, Heyn, Ware and Hodgson, with Alex also breaking the British individual record on the lead off leg
(Right Photo): Europe and British Record: Mixed 160+ 4 x 100m Medley & 4 x 100m Free: Goodlud, Ware, Heyn and Hodgson

Woking Top The British Masters Decathlon

During the Championships, the winners of the 2023 British Masters Decathlon were also honoured.

The British Swimming Masters Decathlon is a true test of versatility over the course of the season: Swimmers' performances from Masters competitions throughout the year are assigned points. Each English, Scottish and Welsh swimmer is then awarded an overall tally based on their top points scores from 10 of the 18 individual events. There is no age group split in the Masters Decathlon. Instead, points are adjusted depending on age to ensure a fair comparison. Cash prizes are on offer for the top individual swimmers as well as the top club.

Woking's Mike Hodgson took top spot winning the open/male individual event and an amazing Woking one-two in the female event with Georgina Heyn taking overall top female and Michelle Ware was second. This is truly a remarkable achievement taking the top male/female Masters swimming, independent of age, in the UK!

Woking also won top open/male club thanks to Hodgson, Henry Goodlud, David Bryant and Mark Tuddenham and a fabulous second place for the female club with Gina Heyne, Michelle Ware, Julie Howe and Jennie Clarke.



Mike Hodgson: Top Male Decathlon Swimmer



Gina Heyn: Top Female Decathlon Swimmer

Woking Top World Rankings

And yet there is more..... The World Masters 2023 rankings were published this month, where a published list of the top 10 best swimmers in each event and age category across Masters competitions globally. Woking yet again appear on the World top rankings. **Both Michelle Ware and Mike Hodgson were ranked No 1 in the world last year with Gina Heyn, David Bryant, Alex Smith and Hannah Angel featuring high up in their individual events.** The Woking relay teams featured a stunning 18 times from their performances at the national and world championship events in 2023. This group of Masters swimmers continue to build, grow stronger and set more National and European Records and having been tantalisingly close this weekend now have their sights on World Records in the near future.

Well done to all the team swimming!

