

ASA SOUTH EAST REGION BOY'S WATER POLO
2002 & YOUNGER INTER REGION CHAMPIONSHIP
NORTHAMPTON BOY'S SCHOOL, 1ST-2ND JULY 2017

After a great deal of discussion and deliberation the region decided to enter the inter-regional competition for the 2002 age group. Our reticence was based around the low numbers of boys that we have in the region playing water polo who are actually born in 2002, but we decided that the entry would be an excellent development opportunity for all of the squad.

Training sessions were held predominantly at Splashpoint in Worthing but we also had a very productive session at K2 Crawley as part of the build up to the competition. Selection was made after the last training session two weeks prior to the competition and the coaches spent a great deal of time considering the options that were available.

As a result the following squad was selected:

1. Toby Masray 2002, Hythe
2. Akos Hausknecht, 2002, Worthing
3. Oscar Silk, 2002, Worthing
4. Josh Coulson, 2003, Worthing
5. James Croud, 2003, Hythe
6. William Cavanagh, 2003, Hythe
7. Jamie Bond, 2004, Worthing
8. Tom Broadbridge, 2003, Hythe
9. Ben Bolton, 2003, Worthing
10. Mattie Smith, 2004, Worthing
11. Jack Routledge, 2002, Basingstoke
12. Leon Santer, 2003, Hythe
13. William Gracie-Langrick, 2003, Mid Sussex Marlins

The six-team tournament was played on a "round robin" basis with all of the teams playing each other over the two days in matches of 4 x 5 minute quarters.

The individual match reports are as follows;

Saturday 14.45

South East 1, Ireland 14

Quarter scores; - 0-3, 0-6, 1-3, 0-2

This was a really tough opening game against a very big physical Irish team that is well organised and play a high tempo counter attacking game.

We actually started the game very well and it was late in the first period before we conceded the first goal but we lost concentration and ended the quarter 0-3. A poor defensive display in the second quarter was disappointing but the boy's worked really hard in the second half of the game to frustrate the opposition.

Scorer; - Oscar

Exclusions; - Mattie 1, William G-L 1

Saturday 16.15

South East 6, South West 11

Quarter scores; - 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 3-2

The South West team have the outstanding centre forward and as a result we asked the boys to play a defensive tactic that the majority of the squad had no experience of. We actually did well for long periods of the game and we frustrated the opposition by denying them the chance to pass to the centre forward who was starved of service.

We were also starting to put together some better attacking play and the speed of our counter attack was beginning to create chances.

This was a much better display by the squad who worked hard to play the way that the coaches had asked them to and although it ended in defeat it was a very promising performance.

Scorers; - Akos 2, Josh 1, William C 1, Jamie 1, Tom 1

Exclusions; - None

Saturday 19.15

South East 1, Midlands 21

Quarter scores; - 0-5, 0-7, 0-8, 1-1

Sometimes you have to tell it like it is and to be honest, we just didn't play very well. Perhaps we were starting to tire but we were ruthlessly exposed by a very well drilled opposition who played a simple press and counter attack. Unfortunately our unforced errors helped them time and again and it was only in the final period that we played anything like how we had in the two previous games. We were obviously disappointed by the manner of the defeat but this is a young squad that is still learning the game. As we said afterwards, it was best to put this behind us and remember how well we had played at times in the first two matches.

Scorer; - Jack

Exclusions; - James 2, Oscar 1, Josh 1, William C 1, Mattie 1, Jack 1, Leon 1

Sunday 9.45

South East 4, North West Ravens 13

Quarter scores; - 2-2, 1-1, 1-4, 0-6

After a good night's sleep we were back in pool early on Sunday morning against the eventual overall winners of the event.

We knew that this would be a tough game but our display in the first half was the best water polo that we played over the weekend when we defended well and also caused a very good team some problems with our attacking play. We ran out of steam in the second half but the coaches were delighted with the way that the squad had "bounced back" after the disappointment of the game the previous evening.

Scorers; - Akos 2, Oscar 1, Jamie 1

Exclusions; - Tom 1, Akos 1, Jamie 1, Toby 1, Mattie 1

Sunday 11.15

South East 15, Wales 7

Quarter scores; - 5-1, 4-4, 3-1, 3-1

This was a big game for us and we knew that a win would see the squad avoid finishing bottom. At the pre-match meeting we discussed the strengths of the opposition and we knew that we would have to work hard in the game if we were to secure a win. We started remarkably well and the speed of our attacking play, particularly Oscar on the counter, soon had Wales in trouble. We dominated the first quarter and soon led 5-0 but the relative lack of experience showed in the second quarter that let the opposition back into the game.

The boys then played a very well disciplined second half when our defence was well organised and we "managed" the game to a satisfactory conclusion.

The final score was a fair reflection of how well we had played and the squad really deserved to sign off with a win.

Scorers; - Oscar 6, Akos 4, Tom 2, William C 1, Leon 1

Exclusions; - Oscar 1, Jamie 1, Mattie 1

Toby was voted our MVP by the opposition coaches and he was excellent in goal in all five games. Akos also deserves a mention because as the most experienced out field player he led by example and put together a fine series of performances.

But all of the squad contributed and without doubt the decision to enter was the right one. This type of competition, and with it the chance to play against better players and teams, will help with all of the boy's development and nine of the squad will be eligible to play next year.

We know that we face many problems developing junior water polo in the South East but all of the squad were a credit to the region and they were always well behaved and easy to work with.

Alastair Roberts

2nd July 2017