

SWIM ENGLAND 2018 WATER POLO INTER REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

UNDER 16 BOYS (BORN 2003 & YOUNGER) DIVISION 2

LIVERPOOL AQUATIC CENTRE, 30TH JUNE-1ST JULY 2018

Having played the under 18 competition in Liverpool back in February, we were hoping that the younger age group would hopefully play closer to the South coast and originally this event was scheduled for Millfield school in Somerset. A problem with the pool booking resulted in a change of venue and as a result our second trip inside six months to the Liverpool aquatic centre.

The South-east squad was selected after a number of training sessions that took place at Splashpoint in Worthing and the Triangle at Burgess Hill and the coaching staff were pleased to have a large squad of boys to select from.

Eventually the following squad of players were selected; -

1. Owen Street (g/k)
2. Charlie Trumble
3. Charlie Elwell-Sutton
4. Ben Bolton
5. Josh Coulson
6. Josh Lu
7. Jamie Bond
8. James Croud
9. Mattie Smith
10. William Cavanagh
11. Tom Broadbridge
12. Leon Santer
13. Owen Peel

Reserves; - Max Luff & Zach Kingett

The competition over the two days was to be played on a round robin league basis resulting in four matches on the Saturday and two on the Sunday. The games were all two periods of 8 minutes actual play.

The individual match reports are as follows; -

1. Saturday 14.30, SE 6, Ireland 12 (Half-time 4-5)

The Irish junior teams are always a tough opposition playing a physical and uncompromising style of water polo based around an effective counter attack.

We actually played really well in the first half and Josh Luff scored a couple of early goals from a tactical play that the coach had devised to break down the Irish defence.

In the second half we ran out of steam but this was an encouraging start and it gave an early indication that we had a team that could compete at this competition.

Scorers; - Josh Luff 4, Charlie Trumble 2

Exclusions; - Jamie Bond 2, Josh Coulson 2, Mattie Smith 1, Owen Peel 1.

2. Saturday 16.30, SE 7, Wales 6 (Half-time 1-1)

The second match against the Welsh was a game that we felt we had a good chance to win. We always looked the better team and with under two minutes remaining we led 7-4 and looked in complete control but we contrived to give away two quick goals which led to a very nervous finish.

Although we won the match, this was an inconsistent performance and we really should have secured victory by a greater margin. We were punished for a number of unforced errors when we lost possession too easily but we still did enough to win the game.

Scorers; - Owen Peel 3, Josh Luff 2, Tom Broadbridge 1, Leon Santer 1

Exclusions; - Ben Bolton 1, Jamie Bond 1, James Croud 1, Mattie Smith 1

3. Saturday 17.10, SE 4, West Midlands 8 (Half-time 1-3)

This was a match that we definitely could have taken something from but a number of unforced errors at key moments really hurt us. The West Midlands are well organised but we created a number of chances throughout the game and we probably should have added to the goals that we scored.

But it was the unforced errors that really hurt us and this often gifted possession to the opposition in areas that made it really hard to defend.

Scorers; - Owen Peel 2, Charlie Elwell-Sutton 1, Josh Luff 1

Exclusions; - Mattie Smith 2, Charlie Trumble 1, Jamie Bond 1, Owen Peel 1

4. Saturday 19.10, SE 9, North West Ravens 0 (Half-time 5.0)

A terrific stand out performance and no other team in competition recorded this size of win against this opposition and we were the only team to keep a clean sheet in any game over the weekend. We played really well in both attack and especially defence where our pressing game regularly gained possession and limited the opposition to a small number of chances.

The margin of victory did not flatter us and it indicated what this squad of players is capable of.

Scorers; - Owen Peel 5, James Croud 2, Josh Luff 1, Charlie Trumble 1

Exclusions; - Charlie Elwell-Sutton 2, Josh Coulson 2, James Croud 1, Mattie Smith 1, Tom Broadbridge 1, Leon Santer 1, Owen Peel 1

5. Sunday 12.20, SE 2, East Midlands 10 (Half-time 1-6)

As good as we were in the final match on Saturday we were unfortunately back to our bad habits on Sunday morning against a good but not outstanding East Midlands.

We struggled throughout and we were particularly exposed by the oppositions pressing game which resulted in us losing the ball on too many occasions. Our attacking play was restricted to a small number of chances but Josh Coulson scored from one of our better "man up" attacks of the weekend and Josh Luff produced a good finish from open play.

Scorers; - Josh Coulson 1, Josh Luff 1

Exclusions; - Charlie Elwell-Sutton 3, Leon Santer 2, Mattie Smith 2, Josh Coulson 1.

6. Sunday 15.00, SE 2, South West 8 (Half-time 2-4)

Ultimately a similar game to the previous one but we did play slightly better, particularly during the first half but our short-comings against the pressing tactics of the opposition soon became self-evident. Once again, we were unable to maintain and develop possession on too many occasions and as a result we struggled to create enough opportunities to give us a chance to record a positive result. This was definitely a team that we could potentially have beaten but probably our lack of experience was the key difference.

Scorers; - Josh Luff 1, Mattie Smith 1

Exclusions; - Owen Peel 2, James Croud 1, Josh Coulson 1, Mattie Smith 1, William Cavanagh 1

Overall, the team finished 5th in the 7-team division 2 and this is an improvement of one position over where we finished with this age group in December 2016. This perhaps does not tell the whole story because the team was definitely a lot more competitive in some of the games that we lost than

we had been previously. That would indicate that we are closing the gap but we still have plenty of work to do.

Finally, all of the squad were a credit to the region and they were always willing to embrace the ideas and tactics that the coaches were trying to introduce. We were well supported by the parents who made the long journey to the north-west on what was the hottest weekend of the year.

Alastair Roberts

Squad Coach; - Ben Alcorn
Team Manager; - Steve Bond

Squad Photo; - L-R Alastair Roberts, Tom Broadbridge, James Croud, Josh Coulson, Leon Santer, William Cavanagh, Charlie Elwell-Sutton, Jamie Bond, Owen Street, Ben Bolton, Charlie Trumble, Josh Luff, Owen Peel, Mattie Smith, Ben Alcorn, Steve Bond.

