

BRITISH SWIMMING BOY'S UNDER 14 INTER REGIONS WATER POLO
CHAMPIONSHIP

WALSALL GALA BATHS

7TH- 8TH DECEMBER 2019

Six months before this competition took place, the regional coaching staff were still considering if we had enough boys in the age group attending the training sessions to make an entry into the competition viable.

We were always keen to enter because we know that we have a number of talented boys but in the last few months a number of new squad members started attending the sessions and as result we actually ended up having to make a selection naming 2 reserves in the process.

For the last number of years, the tournament has been played in Walsall with the qualifying rounds on the Saturday and the "place games" on the Sunday.

This is always a tough age group to predict because this is the first competition of this type for boys of this age group (2006 & younger).

We weren't helped by the draw that saw us opening the event in the first match after a 3+ hour drive against the West Midlands who were playing in their home pool.

In the group we faced the home team along with North-east who for many years have produced highly competitive junior boy's teams along with the Welsh who are continuing to improve.

The South-east squad selected for this event was as follows; -

1. Felix Monaghan
2. Max Cooper
3. Thomas Hunt
4. Ed Cooper
5. Luke Heaton
6. Ethan Foxwell
7. Henry Broadhurst
8. Maty Skoda
9. Stanley Barnes
10. Indy Nash
11. Archie Moon
12. Ethan Lecuyer
13. Joey Taylor

Non-travelling reserves; - Joe Boot & Oliver Philips

The individual match reports are as follows; -

Saturday 12.15

South East 4, West Midlands 7 (HT 2-3)

As mentioned previously, it is never easy to judge the relative strengths of the team but the West Midlands historically have been one of the stronger teams so we anticipated a tough match.

This proved to be the case but we were always in the game and the key moment came with just over two minutes left. We missed a relatively easy chance to make the score 5-6 and then conceded a poor goal which was huge shame because the boys had put in a terrific display. This became more evident as the weekend progressed and eventually the West Midlands finished runners losing a very close game against the North West in what effectively was a final.

Scorers; - Max 2, Henry 2

Exclusions; - Henry 1, Ethan Foxwell 1

Saturday 15.45

South East 7, North East 3 (HT 3-1)

We had seen the North-East play their first group game and we were confident that if we played to our game plan, we would have every chance of taking a win.

This proved to be the case and we dominated the match from start to finish and in all truth, we probably should have won the match by a bigger margin.

We were guilty of conceding too many exclusions which unfortunately became a theme in the other games, but this was a very good win.

Scorers; - Henry 4, Indy 1, Felix 1, Joey 1

Exclusions; - Max 1, Ethan Foxwell 1, Archie 1, Ethan Lecuyer 1

Saturday 18.45

South East 5, Wales 2 (HT 1-2)

This was always going to be tough game against a much-improved Wales team and although we made a relatively slow start, we put up an excellent second half display to come from behind and secure the win.

It was obvious that our defending was of a high standard and as you will see no team that we played scored more than the 7 we conceded in the first game to the West Midlands.

We struggled a little to create many chances but we definitely deserved to win this game.

Scorers; - Luke 2, Max 1, Henry 1, Joey 1

Exclusions; - Ethan Lecuyer 1, Stanley 1, Joey 1

As a result of these three results we secured second place in the group in the first phase and as result on the Sunday we would play two matches that would decide if we finished 4th, 5th or 6th.

Sunday 11.15

South East 2, Ireland 5 (HT 1-2)

Quite simply, we didn't play as well as we hoped against a typical big and strong Irish team and it was only a number of excellent saves from Felix that kept us in the match in the first half.

We improved in the second period but we conceded three quick goals in quick succession which cost us any chance of a second half comeback.

This was the match when our indiscipline caught up with us and we conceded far too many "avoidable" exclusions.

Scorers; - Luke 1, Henry 1

Exclusions; - Archie 3, Maty 2, Max 1, Ethan Lecuyer 1

Sunday 13.15

South East 5, South West 6 (HT 3-2)

Having watched the South West in the previous game we were confident that if we played well, we might be able to sign off with a win and secure 5th place.

We started the game really well and we were ahead at half time but the game was too close to call.

A couple of poor goals defensively really hurt us and with a minute left we trailed 5-6. We called a time out with 30 seconds left and we sent Felix forward to try and score the goal to secure a draw

which we probably deserved. Felix took the shot but unfortunately, he hit the inside of the post and we missed out by the narrowest margin.

Scorers; - Ethan Foxwell 1, Henry 1, Indy 1, Archie 1, Jody 1

Exclusions; - Archie 3, Luke 1, Henry 1, Maty 1, Stanley 1, Indy 1

Overall, we were very pleased how the squad performed over the weekend and they were well worth the 6th place finish out of the 12 teams who were present.

A number of the boys put in a string of excellent performances but the most valuable player award was presented to Henry and Felix who were equally influential in how the team played.

Finally, Thanks must go to Ben Alcorn who coached the team and we played the weekend using some imaginative tactics that he felt suited the players we had available.

All of the parents who travelled to Walsall supported the team enthusiastically and I think that everyone enjoyed the weekend.

I have attached a picture of the squad which is L-R, Archie, Indy, Stanley, Ethan Lecuyer, Luke, Tom, Felix, Ed, Jody, Henry, Max, Maty & Ethan Foxwell.

Alastair Roberts

9th December 2019