

**SWIM ENGLAND SOUTH EAST REGION WATER POLO**  
**UNDER 18 INTER-REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022**  
**WOODSIDE LEISURE CENTRE WATFORD, 26 & 27 MARCH**

The South East water polo coaches and management were really pleased when Swim England announced the re-introduction of the inter region water polo competition program that like so many things, had to be suspended due to the global pandemic.

The first post pandemic event was played late last year when the under 16 (2006 & younger) South East team finished as runners up in a very entertaining competition played at the Walsall Gala Baths in the West Midlands.

The under 18 competition is played in two divisions and the seeding was based on the results of the under 14 event that was played back in 2018 which was the last opportunity that this age group had played together. As a result of this, the region was seeded to play in division 2 along with Scotland, Wales, East Midlands and West Midlands but at least this meant that we avoided a very long trip to Blackpool which was the venue for division 1.

The region has always seemingly lacked a large number of boys who are from the 2005 age group and after a number of training sessions the squad that was selected featured many of the squad that had played in the under 16 event last November.

The final training session took place on the Saturday prior to the tournament at Watford and we spent all of the time developing some relatively simple but potentially effective tactics. The session went really well but unfortunately Antonio Bardella, who has been part of the South East squad for several years and had been selected to play at Watford, suffered a fractured finger which ruled him out of the tournament. As a result, Will Carter was brought into the squad as his replacement.

The full squad selected was as follows; -

1. Harris Lindsay (Goalkeeper)
2. William Carter
3. Alexander Stephenson
4. Joey Taylor
5. Archie Moon
6. Henry Broadhurst
7. Ethan Lecuyer
8. Matthew Williams
9. Jacob Bryant
10. Tumay Evcimen
11. Indy Nash
12. Maty Skoda
13. Felix Monaghan (Goalkeeper)

The individual match reports are as follows; -

**Saturday 15.20 - South East 8, Scotland 6**

Quarter Scores; - 0-1, 3-2, 3-3, 2-0

This was a pulsating encounter against a decent Scotland team that looked to play on the counter attack but the South East boys worked hard throughout match to finally record an excellent win. As the match progressed it was obvious that the teams were well matched but we went behind early on before equalising at 3-3 and then again just before the end of the third quarter when the score was 6-6.

The final period was very close with both teams having chances to score but Henry settled our nerves to give us the lead and Indy made the result safe with a back hand shot late on.

Scorers; - Henry 3, Will 1, Ethan 1, Matthew 1, Jacob 1, Indy 1

Exclusions; - Henry 3, Archie 2, Jacob 2, Alex 1, Ethan 1, Matthew 1, Tumay 1

#### **Saturday 17.20 - South East 4, East Midlands 6**

Quarter Scores; - 0-2, 1-2, 3-0, 0-2

Another good performance from our squad against a talented and strong East Midlands who just about deserved to take the win. That said, the key period of the match was the start of the final quarter when we had worked incredibly hard to level the match at 4-4 and we then created a number of chances to take the lead.

Unfortunately, we didn't score from any of these opportunities and two late goals from East Midlands resulted in a defeat that was hard on our squad.

Overall, this was a match that potentially we could have taken something from but no one could fault the efforts that the squad made to try and produce a positive result.

The only down side was the dismissal of Tumay Evcimen during the third quarter of match for misconduct towards the referee, and as a result he missed the remainder of the competition.

Scorers; - Henry 3, Tumay 1

Exclusions; - Tumay 3, Felix 3, Henry 2, Indy 2, Ethan 1, Jacob 1

#### **Saturday 19.20 - South East 18, Wales 1**

Quarter Scores; - 3-0, 4-0, 7-0, 4-1

Playing 3 full 4 quarter matches in the day is always a tough ask but we produced a good all-round team performance against an enthusiastic but limited Wales team.

We dominated the match throughout with our aggressive press defence turning possession in our favour on many occasions which often resulted in a number of the goals we scored from the resulting counter attacks.

We were too strong and too well organised for the opposition and it was nice to see the goals that we scored shared around nine members of the squad

It looked for a long period that we would record a very rare defensive clean sheet but we did concede late on but this was small mistake in what was a very good team performance.

Scorers; - Matthew 5, Maty 3, Indy 3, Archie 2, Alexander 1, Joey 1, Ethan 1, Jacob 1, Felix 1

Exclusions; - Will 3, Jacob 3, Ethan 1, Indy 1

#### **Sunday 12.50 - South East 5, West Midlands 15**

Quarter Scores; - 1-5, 1-5, 2-2, 1-3

After two wins and a narrow defeat on the Saturday, and having watched the West Midlands lose to East Midlands by a similar margin to ourselves, we hoped that if we played well in our final match of the weekend, we would have a realistic chance of a win.

We knew that to have a chance of victory it was important that the team made a good start but unfortunately, we did exactly the opposite and as a result we were 0-5 down in the first 5 minutes. We could not deal with the opposition press defence and we really struggled to move the ball forward often losing possession in areas that made it very difficult to defend. As a result, we committed far too many exclusion fouls, many of which were penalties, and we never played as well we had at times on the Saturday.

It was disappointing to finish the tournament with a poor performance but all of the squad realised that we had not played well and more importantly, what we needed to do both individually and collectively, to avoid similar defeats as we move forward.

Scorers; - Ethan 3, Indy 1, Alexander 1

Exclusions; - Henry 3, Will 2, Joey 2, Maty 2, Alexander 1, Ethan 1, Matt 1, Jacob 1, Felix 1

Overall, the squad should be pleased with the two wins against Scotland and Wales and also the way that we played so well in a very competitive and narrow defeat to East Midlands who were the overall winners, but we were all disappointed with the manner of the defeat on the Sunday. That said, we played the tournament without one of key members due to injury and the squad at Watford only contained 3 boys who will be too old to play in this event next year.

Matthew Williams, who worked hard in every game, was voted out Most Valuable Player by the opposition coaches but we had a number of squad members who must have come under consideration for this award.

The team were well supported throughout and I was very grateful to Steve Bond who acted as team manager/assistant coach throughout the weekend.

Alastair Roberts

28<sup>th</sup> March 2022