

SWIM ENGLAND SOUTH EAST REGION BOY'S WATER POLO
UNDER 16 (2007 & YOUNGER) INTER REGION CHAMPIONSHIPS
MILLFIELD SCHOOL, SOMERSET, 2ND-3RD JULY 2022

The South East were pleased to enter the under 16 inter region boy's water polo Championships that were played in the excellent 50 metre pool at Millfield school in Somerset.

Normally at this age group the competition is played in two divisions, but because of covid the under 14 event was never played, which meant that no seeding was possible.

As a result, all of the 10 teams that entered were split into two divisions and the South East would play against London, North East, East Midlands and South West on the Saturday which would then decide the place games for the Sunday.

Unfortunately, due to injury, we did lose one of our key players prior to the tournament but the following squad was selected to represent the region at Millfield; -

1. Jamie King G/K
 2. Thomas Fourcade
 3. Alexander Matthews
 4. Cassius Humphrey
 5. Jamie Miles
 6. Edward Moakes
 7. Oliver Phillips
 8. Henry Priest
 9. Caleb Slingo
 10. Toby Taylor
 11. Joey Taylor
- Coach; - Alastair Roberts
Assistant Coach; - Tumay Evcimen

The format was always going to be tough with the four group games (2 x 8-minute periods) on the Saturday, with very little rest between the matches, followed by two full place games on the Sunday (4 x 8-minute periods).

These are the individual match reports; -

1. South East 2, London 5 (H/T 2-2)
A match that ultimately that we contrived to lose even though we looked the slightly better team but we created many chances that we failed to take and we conceded some poor goals when we switched off in defence.
It really was a game that you could have made an argument that any of a win, draw or defeat were possible but it did serve as an early indication of how close all the group matches were likely to be.
Scorers; - Thomas 1, Cassius 1
Exclusions; - Alexander 1, Edward 1, Oliver 1, Joey 1
2. South East 8, North East 5 (H/T 5-3)
This was a much better performance when crucially we started to take more of the chances that we created and we were also beginning to make more of the tactics that we were trying to employ when we didn't have possession.

We possibly could have won by more but it was still good to record our first win in the competition.

Scorers; - Joey 4, Cassius 2, Oliver 2

Exclusions; - Joey 2

3. South East 5, East Midlands 4 (H/T 0-1)

Probably our best performance of the weekend when we came back from 0-3 early in the second half to score 5 times in a row playing some excellent water polo.

It's hard to know what made the change but after going 3 goals behind we suddenly took over the match and as a result looked much the better team for the remainder of the game.

Scorers; - Caleb 3, Joey 2

Exclusions; - Thomas 2, Oliver 2, Joey 1

4. South East 5, South West 5 (H/T 1-2)

This was pulsating affair played by two very evenly matched but tiring teams and once again any of the three possible results could have happened.

Because the group was so tight with teams taking points off each other, we knew that a win would see us top the group which would have resulted in a place in one of the semi-finals on the Sunday with a top four finish guaranteed.

We managed to take the lead with just over a minute and a half left but unfortunately, we conceded what turned out to be the equaliser with only 28 seconds left.

Scorers; - Joey 2, Cassius 1, Edward 1, Thomas 1

Exclusions; - Edward 2, Joey 2, Oliver 1, Henry 1

After the draw, and following the final group match between East Midlands and North East, four of the teams (South East, South West, London and East Midlands) finished level on 5 points.

An extremely convoluted formula which involved the head-to-head results and goal difference was used to decide the placing and we ended up in fourth place with East Midlands top even though we had beaten them.

As a result, we would face Scotland on Sunday in the match that would be part of the process to decide the 5th to 8th places.

5. South East 6, Scotland 16 (Quarter scores; - 0-3, 3-6, 1-5, 2-3)

The Sunday matches were played over the full 4 x 8-minute quarters and for a number of our squad this was the first experience of playing this demanding format.

We actually didn't play that badly but it was obvious that Scotland had been unlucky to be drawn in the other group and then finish 3rd behind two very strong teams.

We were further hampered when Joey was excluded for the third and final time just after half time but all of the remaining squad members put in a really strong performance in his absence.

Scorers; - Oliver 2, Joey 2, Cassius 1

Exclusions; - Joey 3, Toby 2, Edward 1, Alexander 1, Cassius 1

6. Match to decide 7th/8th place.

South East 11, East 11 (Quarter scores; - 3-5, 2-2, 3-1, 3-3)

Penalty Shoot Out; - South East 2, East 3

This was a terrific match to finish the competition with but it was very disappointing to eventually lose out after a penalty shoot-out.

We came from behind on several occasions throughout the match but most notably with just over 30 seconds left when the opposition had a player excluded, we took a time out and then scored from the subsequent extra man play.

To be fair this was another match that could have gone either way but all of the squad worked really hard to try and secure a win

Penalty shoot-outs are always a lottery but we missed the first two and that really accounted for our chances of securing a win.

This was particularly hard on Joey who had played well throughout the weekend and managed to score 8 of the 11 goals in this match.

Scorers; - Joey 8, Oliver 2, Thomas 1

Exclusions; - Thomas 2, Oliver 2, Edward 1, Caleb 1, Joey 1.

Overall, we might have been slightly disappointed with the final position but the squad should be very pleased with the way that they played and we were tantalisingly close to finishing in the top 4. All of the squad were a credit to the region and I'm sure that they will all benefit from having played in such a tough competition. Joey was deservedly awarded the MVP award for his efforts which was voted for by the opposition coaches.

We were well supported throughout the tournament by the many friends and family who travelled to Millfield and we certainly produced a number of really exciting and nail-biting matches for them to enjoy.

Alastair Roberts

5th July 2022

The attached picture of the squad is as follows L-R; -

Jamie Miles, Henry Priest, Toby Taylor, Caleb Slingo, Cassius Humphrey, Jamie King, Joey Taylor, Oliver Phillips, Thomas Fourcade, Alexander Matthews & Edward Moakes.