

SWIM ENGLAND SOUTH EAST REGION BOYS WATER POLO
2023 UNDER 18 (2006 & YOUNGER) INTER REGION CHAMPIONSHIPS
PALATINE LEISURE CENTRE BLACKPOOL, 29TH & 30TH JANUARY 2023

As we drove into the salubrious surroundings of a damp and grey Blackpool on the last weekend of January, it did occur to everyone who had made the long trip from the south of England, that this was long way to travel to play or watch a water polo tournament.

I'm pleased to report that after an exciting weekend when the South East team played some excellent water polo, the common consensus was that it had been a very worthwhile trip.

This group of players had finished as runners up in a very competitive under 16 competition 18 months ago and as a result we were optimistic that we had a team that should have good chance in this event and this very much proved to be the case.

After a number of training and selection sessions the following squad was chosen to represent the region; -

1. Felix Monaghan (GK)
2. Joe Boot
3. Nikolaos Karamanlis
4. Oliver Phillips
5. Ethan Sharman
6. Henry Broadhurst
7. Ethan Lecuyer
8. Matthew Williams
9. William Carter
10. Tumay Evcimen
11. Indy Nash
12. Edward Cooper
13. Joey Taylor

The format of the competition was always going to be punishing for all of the five teams that were involved with the matches scheduled for the full playing time of 4 x 8-minute quarters.

Add to this that on both days we would only have a 75 minute gap between our two matches and it was obvious that this was going to be a very tough weekend.

These are the individual match reports; -

Saturday 16.00

South East 10, Scotland 8

Quarter scores; - 3-1, 2-0, 2-4, 3-3

This was a tough and attritional opening game against a physical Scottish team that eventually went on to finish third in the competition.

The first two periods of play saw the South East take control and the driving tactics that were employed in attack were creating chances resulting in a 5-1 lead at half time.

We lost our way in the second half of the match which was compounded by committing far too many exclusion fouls and a good number of these should have been avoided.

Ultimately, we controlled the final few minutes and although we had made hard work of it we deservedly won the game.

Scorers; - Henry 5, Nikolaos 1, Ethan L 1, Matt 1, Indy 1, Joey 1

Exclusions; - Nikolaos 3, Ethan L 3, Joey 3, Henry 2, Matt 2, Indy 2, Olly 1, Ethan S 1, Ed C 1

Saturday 18.30

South East 2, North West 10

Quarter scores; - 1-1, 0-4, 1-3, 1-2

It was obvious that the match against the North West would be the key match of the tournament and it would probably decide the overall winners.

We know the strengths of the opposition and we worked hard to develop plans in both attack and defence that we hoped would give us the best chance of a win.

The defence worked well for long periods and frustrated the opposition but we always struggled to create many opportunities in attack. That said, the first quarter was evenly contested but we missed a number of chances when we really would have expected to have scored and if we had taken a lead it might have been a different story.

Unfortunately we conceded a couple of poor goals in the second period and 1-5 deficit at half time was always going to be difficult to overcome.

We were not helped when Henry was excluded before half-time after a couple of very questionable decisions from the officials.

We didn't play badly, and the final score was probably not quite a fair reflection of the match, but our failure to take our chances when they came along was the key difference between the teams.

Scorers; - Tumay 1, Indy 1

Exclusions; - Henry 3, Ethan L 1, Matt 1

Sunday 10.00

South East 16, West Midlands

Quarter scores; - 8-1, 3-0, 4-1, 1-2

This was an excellent performance against a decent team that went on to play a very competitive match against the North West.

We started the match with a very high tempo and we led 3-0 after just over 2 minutes of the game and we dominated the period resulting in the opposition taking a time out to try and re-organise.

It made very little difference and the team played some excellent water polo throughout the match and we eventually ran out very comfortable winners.

Once again, our innovative tactics in both attack and defence proved far too much for the opposition who could not cope with the quality of our play.

This was a very good win against a decent opposition and all of the squad made good contributions.

Scorers; - Ethan L 4, Henry 3, Matt 3, Joey 2, Olly 2, Tumay 1, Indy 1

Exclusions; - Nikolaos 3, Will 2, Joe 1, Henry 1, Tumay 1, Indy 1, Ed 1

Sunday 12.30

South East 17, South West 5

Quarter scores; - 5-0, 3-2, 6-0, 3-3

We finished the competition with another comprehensive win this time against the South West who really struggled to deal with our attacking play and strong defence backed up by some excellent goal keeping by Felix.

It was really encouraging that 8 of the outfield players scored in this match and we probably should have added further goals on a number of other occasions.

All of the squad made good contributions to this good win which secured a second placed finish overall.

Scorers; - Tumay 4, Ethan L 3, Henry 3, Matt 2, Joey 2, Nikolaos 1, Will 1, Joe 1

Exclusions; - Henry 2, Nikolaos 2, Ethan L 2, Will 2, Olly 1, Ethan S 1, Matt 1

Overall, we very much deserved the second place in the competition, finishing above other regions who have historically been very strong, and all of the boys who represented the South East should be very proud of what was achieved.

The team was well supported by a large number of family members who made the long journey to the north west and we hope that everyone enjoyed watching the boys compete.

I would like to thank Ben Curtis who coached the team enthusiastically and skilfully throughout the weekend and also Tumay Evcimen Snr who was always on hand to help when required.

We are also indebted to Fran Collings, who not long ago was playing for the South East girls in the regional competitions, and now was our nominated referee doing an excellent job.

Finally, we should also thank the committee and management of the region who continue to support junior water polo in the South East and although we don't have large number of boys playing we seemingly continue to produce very talented individuals and competitive teams.

Alastair Roberts
30th January 2023

The squad picture was taken prior to the presentations and is L-R; -

Indy, Nikolaos, Ethan L, Ed, Will, Joe, Felix, Henry, Joey, Tumay, Matt, Olly & Ethan S

The presentation picture does not include Ed who had to leave to catch a plane home to Guernsey.

The final Picture is of Joey Taylor receiving his MVP award from Swim England president Jim Wilks.