

Match Report London Water Polo League Under 16 (born 1995). Round 1 Sunday October 10

A squad of 11 players (6 Marlins, 3 Crawley & 2 Brighton) travelled to Whitgift school yesterday for the first round of London winter league matches. When previously entering as a single club we have had to make up numbers by using younger players out of age group. The advantage of combining the club resources was clear since we were able to field a squad, all of whom were the correct age which meant we were not conceding in size and strength to our opponents.

The match stats were as follows:

Game 1 – v Worthing – WON 4-1 (HT3-0)

Our opponents were a strong swimming side but we marked them exceptionally well and prevented a single shot on our goal in the first half. Our constant pressure forced many turnovers of possession in our favour and we were able to exploit this and catch them frequently on the break. We had a hatful of chances and only a collection of excellent saves by their goalkeeper prevented us leading by more than 3 at half time. In the second half we brought on all 4 of our substitutes but still kept our shape well and held our own and could have scored several more.

Scorers: Joseph Jefferys 3, James O'Dell 1,

Major Fouls: Lauren Hand , Ben Cooper.

Game 2- v Beckenham – LOST 4-7 (HT 1-5).

This was a tough game. Beckenham were the strongest team in the tournament and they did to us what we had done to Worthing in the first game. They pressed us all over the pool and forced us to give away possession. Had our shooting been more clinical we could have been much closer at half time. Instead we squandered a number of chances, hitting the woodwork and a little inexperience in throwing too many players into attack allowed Beckenham to catch us on the break 4 times. At half time we were able to regroup and, by keeping 2 players in defence, we were able to nullify their ability to break. In fact, we outscored them 3-2 in the second half which was an excellent come back.

Scorers: Joseph Jefferys 2, James O'Dell 1, Hansy Shore1

Major Fouls: Lauren Hand , James Parrett-Jung, Joseph Jefferys

Squad:

Wesley Connellan (GK), Joseph Jefferys, Toby Fraser, James Parrett-Jung, Hansy Shore, Chloe Kells, (all MSM)
Lauren Hand, James Odell, Ben Cooper (CSC)
Chris Wiles, Daniel Low (Brighton)

Some general comments :

It was very encouraging to see how the players who have played previously in the London league are now demonstrating the benefit of the experience. We no longer need to rely so heavily on our 3 RTC players. Hansy, Lauren, Chloe & James P-J are all now contributing fully and with confidence. The inclusion of Chris added significantly to our swimming ability - it's always an advantage to win the ball at the start of each quarter! James O-D, belied his youth and displayed good game awareness and an accurate shot. Ben & Daniel, playing their first games for this team, both contributed and grew in confidence as the games went on.

The fact that we can now field a squad with a number of strong substitutes, instead of a bare 7 as has often previously been the case, is a big step forward. This will help us in future rounds when we will be playing 3 or more matches and other teams with smaller squads will tire.

Our ability to adapt to counter our opponents tactics at half time in the Beckenham game was very encouraging and is something we can build on. We need to learn to change our tactics during a period as well as at the end of it.

We also need to continue to work on our shooting technique –with better shot placement the results would have been even better.

Man up and Man down situations are also something that we can work on and we'll try to do this during training.

Considering it was the first time that this group of players had played together I was delighted with the way we combined as a team. By the end of the afternoon there was a good team spirit evident already which will put us in good stead for future rounds.

Thanks to the parents for your support on poolside and in providing transport.

Tim Fraser October 11 2010