

## SUSSEX COUNTY ASA

### JUNIOR BOYS (1992 + YOUNGER) INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

BASINGSTOKE AQUADROME, SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2010

The 2010 joint South-east and London regions inter county boys water polo championship was played at the deep water 25 metre Basingstoke Aquadrome pool but unfortunately due to a clash of dates only three counties entered.

Hampshire as the host county has a fast improving squad of players and Surrey are a very talented team that we have had a number of highly competitive matches with over the years.

Sussex were missing a number of players but we were still able to field a strong team that we were confident would be competitive in this age group.

The competition would be run on a "round-robin" basis and the draw probably favoured the Sussex team with a match against Surrey first before playing against the host team Hampshire.

The Sussex Squad selected for this event was as follows:

1. Wesley Connellan (G/K) Mid Sussex Marlins
2. Joe Callus, Crawley SC
3. Peter Flynn, Worthing SC
4. Nathan Tonkin, Hailsham SC
5. Kevin Chan, Worthing SC
6. Sam Abbott, Worthing SC
7. Scott Martin, Invicta
8. Sam Maloney, Worthing SC
9. Alex Burns, Crawley SC
10. Alastair Hardinge, Worthing SC

The individual match reports are as follows:

Sussex 10, Surrey 10.

Quarter Scores: 3-2, 3-3, 2-3, 2-2

This was an excellent match of a high standard that built to a remarkable conclusion in the final seconds.

We started the match well and we soon took a two goal lead but Surrey kept working hard and we never able to completely dominate the game.

We were unable to take the imitative and at the start of the final quarter the match was tied at 8-8.

The final period was a tense affair and we were always struggling to produce the play that would create the chances to win the match. Alex Burns scored with an excellent back-hand shot but with less than a minute left Surrey scored to take the lead 10-9.

We called a time-out but at the re-start we quickly squandered possession and Wesley had to produce a good save to keep the margin to a 1 goal deficit.

With 6 seconds remaining Nathan Tonkin managed to “steal” the ball and a quick pass to Sam Abbott saw us equalise, via the post and the back of the goal-keepers head, with three seconds left.

We knew that we had “pinched” the draw in dramatic circumstances and all the team realised that we hadn’t really done enough to secure the win.

Scorers: Sam Abbott 4, Alastair Hardinge 3, Scott Martin 2, Alex Burns 1.

Exclusions: Joe Callus 2, Scott Martin 2, Peter Flynn 1, Sam Abbott 1, Sam Maloney 1, Alastair Hardinge 1.

Sussex 17, Hampshire 3.

Quarter Scores: 2-2, 3-0, 7-1, 5-0

Having seen Surrey defeat Hampshire 14-5 and after the draw in the first match, we knew that we needed to win the second match by a margin of over 9 goals.

This was never going to be easy because Hampshire are a much improved team and we would also have to recover quickly from the efforts of the match against Surrey.

We again started well but bad defending late in the first period cost us two poor goals and after a slightly better second quarter we only had a three goal advantage.

The second half saw the team take control and Hampshire were unable to deal with the combination of our aggressive defending and quick counter-attacking. The play of Sam Abbott, Scott Martin and Alastair Hardinge proved far too strong for the opposition we soon scored the goals that would ultimately secure the title.

Scorers: Scott Martin 7, Sam Abbott 5, Alastair Hardinge 3, Nathan Tonkin 1, Sam Maloney 1.

Exclusions: Nathan Tonkin 2, Joe Callus 1, Scott Martin 1, Alastair Hardinge 1.

This was a very exciting after-noon and we were delighted to win the title. We didn’t always play as well as we probably could but the team worked extremely hard to get the results that were required.

All the squad contributed to the win but a special mention should be made of 15 year old Wesley Connellan who played extremely well in goal making a number of good saves and his quick and accurate passing led to a number of our goals.

The trophy and medals were presented by the president of Hampshire ASA and we are already looking forward to defending the title in 2011.

Alastair Roberts.

07770 916721 (M)

[alastair@roberts3bt.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:alastair@roberts3bt.fsnet.co.uk)

27<sup>th</sup> March 2010.