

Suffolk Girls and Herts Boys clinch titles

The East Region Inter-County Junior Championships took place on 1st November at Basildon Sporting Village with teams representing Essex, Hertfordshire and Suffolk Under-17 Girls and Boys.

The first match saw Herts Girls face Essex. Essex were missing several star players away at British Water Polo League and took the opportunity to give their younger girls some valuable experience. They played very well against the stronger Herts team who won 8-2 including a hat-trick from Rhiannon Ellis.

Suffolk Boys lined up against Herts and put in a sterling first half performance against the reigning champions. Suffolk opened the scoring, and their solid defence and counter-attack saw Herts contained to a 5-3 half time lead including three by Ross Leon. But another hat-trick from Leon in the third quarter set the scene for Herts to win 11-5, despite a brace from Suffolk's James Poole in the final minute.

Both counties were in action again as Suffolk and Herts Girls took to the water. Once again the half time score was close, this time with Suffolk holding a narrow 3-2 lead. They upped the pace after the break and overcame the Herts defence with a trio each from Rohan Etchingham and Poppy Mayall. Herts captain Sophie Wilson added two to their tally but Suffolk were comfortable 14-4 winners.

Essex Boys looked strong as they took to the water against Suffolk. The first quarter was a quiet affair which ended 2-0. Then Essex stepped up the pressure and James Warman added four before Suffolk replied with a goal from Philbrook. Two key Suffolk players were benched for technical fouls and Warman immediately countered to put Essex 8-1 ahead. Suffolk's fate was sealed and Essex won 13-3.

Suffolk Girls were too strong for the young Essex team and the result never looked in doubt. 9 goals from Poppy Mayall, 8 from Abi Lence and 5 from Eve Poole helped Suffolk to win 26-5 and retain the title despite a hat-trick for Essex's Meg Vaughan.

Essex boys now faced Herts in a repeat of their 2013 decider. Honours were even at 1-1 after the first quarter and the score reached 2-2 before Herts took a 2 goal half time lead thanks to Louis Waloschek and Ross Leon. The third quarter was a closely fought contest with the referees giving frequent exclusion fouls against both teams as Herts added two more goals to lead 6-3. Essex had given their all, and Leon scored two more in the last quarter to give Herts an 8-3 victory and the championship.

The medals and trophies were presented by no fewer than three ASA Presidents. Suffolk President Jeremy Duszynski presented the Jill Morton Memorial Trophy to his county's Girls, Herts President Ann Quinn presented the Andy Morton Trophy to her Boys team, and East Region President Gerry Metcalf congratulated all the players as she gave out the medals.

As always, we are very grateful to the referees, table officials and volunteers who make the

ASA East Region Junior Water Polo Championships

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competition possible. We also congratulate Suffolk's youngest referee, James Poole, who made his debut behind the whistle at a regional match only three weeks after his 16th birthday.