

East Region Water Polo Junior Championship

The East Region held a new water polo event this year, the inter-county Junior Championship, open to boys and girls aged 16 or under.

Five of the Region's counties sent teams to the Bishops Stortford College pool on Saturday 28th October to play in a round robin tournament. Distinguished spectators included East Region President Don Neate and Mrs. Neate, and Past President Andy Morton and Mrs. Morton.

The first two games saw a convincing win for Cambs over a very young Essex side then a narrow Herts victory over Beds. Suffolk notched up a close win against Cambs. Herts crushed Essex, then Suffolk took an emphatic victory against Beds. Yet another win for Herts, this time over Cambs established them 2 points clear of Suffolk at the top of the table, while Essex opened their goal-scoring account against the stronger Beds.

The stage was now set for the game which would decide the Championship. Herts looked to be favourites with nine strong players while Suffolk had the minimum seven with no reserves. At half-time Herts were 3-2 up, and though Suffolk briefly levelled the score their fatigue took its toll and Herts clinched the title with a 6-3 win.

A thrilling game between Cambs and Beds for the bronze medals ended in a 3-3 draw and level points, with Cambs taking third place on goal difference. Suffolk finished in second place with a win over Essex. Although ending bottom of the table, plucky Essex deserve a special mention for their enthusiasm and team spirit when facing all the older and stronger teams.

So an exciting Championship closed with Cambs collecting the bronze medals, Suffolk taking silver and Herts winning gold and the Andy Morton trophy. Andy, himself a past GB water polo team manager, was full of praise for the players. "I'm very impressed with the high standard of junior polo across the Region, and I'm delighted that all the youngsters have enjoyed themselves so much" he said. Andy explained that the trophy was originally won by his GB team in 1981 and he was proud to give it a new lease of life as the ASA East Region Junior Championship Cup. We are honoured to receive it.

The event was a tremendous success thanks to the support of all the parents, coaches, volunteers and of course the players themselves. Junior water polo now has a firm foundation across East Region which we can build on.

Chris Stephens
East Region Water Polo manager

Points	Match Scores		Top goal scorers	
1 st Herts (8)	Cambs 6	Essex 0	M. Toothill (Herts)	10
2 nd Suffolk (6)	Herts 5	Beds 2	Peter Stephens (Suffolk)	8
3 rd Cambs (3) *	Suffolk 3	Cambs 1	A. Houppenerouwers (Herts)	7
4 th Beds (3) *	Essex 0	Herts 8	Tom Ealham (Suffolk)	6
5 th Essex (0)	Beds 0	Suffolk 6	Alex Maven-Hazelton (Beds)	5
	Herts 6	Cambs 2	Kris Elder (Cambs)	4
* on goal difference	Beds 7	Essex 3	Sam Breeden (Beds)	4
	Suffolk 3	Herts 6	James Bigley (Suffolk)	4
	Cambs 3	Beds 3		
	Essex 1	Suffolk 8		