

East Region Senior Water Polo Championship 2006

The East Region held its second senior championships at Bishops Stortford College pool on Saturday 18th November.

With Beds unable to pull together a squad, the remaining five counties played a round robin tournament watched by, among others, East Region President Don Neate and Mrs. Neate, and Past President Andy Morton and Mrs. Morton.

Eventual winners Essex opened their account with a strong 6-1 win over Norfolk, before Suffolk squeaked home 3-2 against Herts in the second match.

Norfolk battled well in their second match before going down 3-7 to Cambs, and that set the tone for the afternoon, with all counties - whatever their strength or preparation - giving it their all until the final whistle.

This provided some lively entertainment and some great polo; Herts' hardworking performance in their final game almost caught out Cambs, before Norfolk and Suffolk's feisty encounter kept the spectators entertained.

The final game of the tournament between Essex and Cambs proved to be exactly that. Both sides remained unbeaten after three matches, but got their results with very different styles of polo.

Cambs' talented pit forward, Stu Taylor had already scored six quality goals going into the final, and their well organised and controlled style of polo had made them strong contenders.

Essex's squad, drawn from four different club sides, boasted some strong individual players, but with no preparation, played a looser game, deciding to trust their instincts and hope it paid off.

Cambs attacked strongly from the off but the Essex pit defender, Colchester's Martin Vinter, had the measure of Taylor, stifling Cambs' first three attacks to get Essex off to a confident start.

Shortly afterwards Essex opened the scoring through Chelmsford's Charlie Bullus, who picked up a loose ball and blasted home from a strong counter-attacking sprint down the wing.

Vinter added the second when he followed up Basildon's Matt Dempsey's drive into the pit, collecting a neat pass and finding the top corner.

Essex kept up the pressure in the second half; rotating the pit, making sharp drives and, most importantly, starving Cambs of much-needed possession. It paid off when their other defender, Basildon's Mark Donovan, fired home direct from a five-metre foul for Essex's third.

Essex continued to press all over the pitch and their efforts were rewarded at the final whistle with a fine 3-0 victory.

A big thank you to tournament organiser Chris Stephens and referees, Martin Unwin and Scott Woodley whose hard work helped make the tournament an enjoyable event for all.

Dave Warriner

SCORES

Norfolk	1	Essex	6
Herts	2	Suffolk	3
Cambs	7	Norfolk	3
Essex	3	Herts	3
Suffolk	2	Cambs	5
Herts	1	Norfolk	3
Suffolk	1	Essex	4
Cambs	5	Herts	3
Norfolk	4	Suffolk	1
Essex	3	Cambs	0

RESULTS

1 st	Essex	10 points
2 nd	Cambs	9
3 rd	Norfolk	6
4 th	Suffolk	3
5 th	Herts	1

TOP GOAL SCORERS

N. Haftel	Herts	7
Artie Radziunas	Suffolk	6
Stu Taylor	Cambs	6
Matt Dempsey	Essex	4
Michael Artt	Norfolk	4
Andy Hothersall	Norfolk	3
Charlie Bullus	Essex	3
M. Donovan	Essex	3
James Scott	Cambs	3
Chris Judge	Cambs	3