

ASA Girls 93s Water Polo Tournament Report

Hello all,

I just wanted to give you a quick update on this past weekend's ASA inter-regional championships for 1993+ girls. It was a terrifically run tournament and the other regions were very excited to see the Scotland girls playing a part in it and encouraged us to keep developing.

We took down a squad of 10 girls:

Nicola Tate, Beth Mooney, Caitlin Mooney, Kerry Falconer- Dunfermline
Cara Brown, Louise Fox, Paige Henderson, Kirsti Adams – Menzieshill & Whitehall
Alison Thomson – E. Dunbartonshire
Anna Green – Warrender

I coached, Graeme Brown was team manager and Brenda Tate helped out with driving and providing the needed female adult presence. Unfortunately Julia MacKay who had originally planned to be the coach pulled out as she started a new job that takes up her weekends.

Considering that 4 of our players had a grand total game experience of 7 proper games combined between them, my expectations were not as high as my hopes. It was a terrific learning experience and the girls got along well and started gelling by the last few games.

Our results sound awful, and at times we couldn't complete a pass for the life of us.

However, I am convinced that by the end of the tournament the girls had developed an awareness of how to play the game, move the ball down the pool, get open for shots and play press defense. We just didn't have the fitness or experience to deal with far more experienced and trained squads.

First round we finished 4th in our group of 4: v Northwest lost 19-1, v. Southwest lost 11-4, v. Ireland lost 13-1 in this set of 2 x 8 Min games.

Playoff round (4x5Min): we beat London (third in other group) 5-3, thus advancing to the 5th/6th game against Ireland which we lost 16-3. Hence we finished 6th out of 8 teams. Frankly, much better than I expected after the first couple of games!

Scorers were: Nicola Tate 7, Cara Brown 2, Louise Fox 2, Alison Thomson 1, Kerry Falconer 1, Kirsti Adams 1

During the second game I chose Anna Green to be our primary keeper as she made 8 saves that game and showed terrific reflexes along with her 6' long arms. She's definitely a girl that is now keenly motivated to learn more about being a keeper and her potential was recognized by many at the tournament. The older girls born 1993: Cara, Paige, Kerry and Kirsti showed their experience and were key to our defense throughout. Cara was especially fierce in front of the goal with the ball and at one time scored with two girls hanging all over her. Nicola showed her vast GB experience and while her shooting was off, she was still easily our leading offensive threat and more importantly, she started being a bit of a leader which was a new role for her. The Mooneys and Alison Thomson were keenly absorbing a lot of information about how to play the game at this level with Alison showing a real desire to score and get into shooting position; they probably improved the most over the tournament. Louise Fox, the youngest - just a month younger than Alison (Nov 1995s) played nearly the entirety of all the games and was really coming on at the end and will surely be one to watch going forward.

In general, all the girls played their hearts out and seemed keen to play more as a group in the future. A number of them kept pointing out how unfit they felt going against the other teams, but there was no quit when they were in the water. They also were recognizing their mistakes by the end, both individually and as a team which is a good step forward in my opinion.

Hopefully, they'll be keen to come back to your clubs and put in the effort to improve.

Four of the girls are 1993s which means that when the age group switches to 1994 next year, we'll be down to 6 of these girls and we have very few other girls playing in Scotland, so we'll all need to go and find some!!!! In the meantime, Ireland is keen to set up more competitions as are most of the English Clubs, especially Carlisle which has an entire team of girls this age.

Best,

Neal

Neal Rayner
Water Polo Development Officer
Scottish Swimming