

Girls U16 Inter Regional Competition

8th-9th July 2017, Walsall

Tournament report



The East Angels entered this year's competition having narrowly lost to Ireland in the 2016 U16 final and coming 3rd in the 2015 U14 age group (London won that year) which formed the seeding for this year's U16 competition.

Playing in Division 1 was always going to be a challenge but deservedly the East girls have earned their position with several years of consistent form at U14 and U16 age groups. Sitting amongst quality regions such as London, North West, Midlands and Wales it wasn't going to be easy by any stretch.

The format for the event was a round robin playing each team once with 4 x 8min actual time quarters (full match), all teams having to play 2 games each day. We had Wales first then London on Saturday and North West and Midlands Sunday.

The team were prepared, briefed and motivated for the tournament. Captain Anna Leeson was to lead the defence tactics from the back and provide us with a stable back line and protect our goalie.

Match One - Wales

Wales up first and we started very positively with our girls taking a 2-0 lead in the first quarter. Wales found some resolve in the second quarter drawing 3-3 in the quarter and 5-3 at half time. Effective defence with superb pit defence from Anna Leeson and dropping players in defence kept the favour to East and with Ciara Nicholson finding the target, East comfortably won the 3rd quarter 5-2 taking the score line to 10-5 to East. Last quarter saw plenty of substitutions and everyone had a hand in the final quarter drawn 4-4 leaving the game at 13-9 to East. A good game to settle the nerves and get some league points in the bag! The score line could have been more if Wales didn't have such a prolific goalie in Anna Jenkins-Delf quite easily the best goalie at the tournament.

Goals from Ciara Nicholson (7), Eve Poole (3), Isabel Wyatt (1), Faye Poole (1) and Eda Colliver (1).

Match Two - London

Second game saw us play London the reigning champions from the U14 competition in 2015 and well known to many of the East girls. We knew they would be well drilled and skilful and fast. With several of the players feeling weary from only one match rest and an intense match against Wales previously, they had to pull themselves into a fighting spirit if this game was to be contained. London started strong and it was clear that we weren't mentally or physically prepared enough for this game. Silly mistakes and a relentless attack from London saw East slip away to 9-0 down at half time. It wasn't until the fourth quarter where East won two penalties and finished the game 14-2 losers. A real kick in the shins from London and a test for the coaching staff to raise the girl's spirits and leave all the negative feelings at the pool and have a good night's rest ready for the following day.

Goals from Ciara Nicholson (2)

Match Three – North West

Sunday morning saw another hard game ahead, the unbeaten North West team were to face East and we had to pull ourselves together to prevent a repeat of the London game. We knew the North West had a very good centre forward and set about a tight dropping defence to neutralise her. This worked a treat but they did have an outside shot and were able to exploit corners in the East goal where Sophie Johnson couldn't quite reach. Starting strong the North West got to 8-3 at half time, not out of reach, and our girls were responding to the challenge which was great to see. The girls continued to dig deep and despite losing their captain early in Q4 for 3 majors, finished strongly, drawing the last quarter 4-4 but losing out as the match finished 16-9 to the North West.

Goals from Eve Poole (4), Ciara Nicholson (3), Eloise Bailey (1), Eda Colliver (1)

Match 4 - Midlands

Last game against Midlands and last chance to grab some honours from the weekend was soon upon us. Although we were already safe from relegation for the U18 tournament in two years' time, 3rd place was up for grabs. The girls were prepared and clearly very focussed for the challenge. Midlands had struggled to find a winning formula so far but drawing with Wales to share the honours and gain a point each, we knew that we could not treat the opposition lightly.

Assistant Coach, Rose Younger took charge of the team for the final game. East started strong and it was clear that East would dominate this game which our intense defence and strike force in counter attack. Q1 saw East 4-1 up. Second quarter Midlands started to come back and showed that the game was by no means out of their grasp challenging East and drawing out 3 goals in the quarter to enter half time 8-4 to East. The East side needed to dig deep to keep Midlands at bay. The girls needed to defend well, after losing Anna in Q3 but with Eve Poole taking up the mantle at the heart of the defence, the girls rallied winning the final two quarters to end up winning 18-12. This secured a fantastic third place (bronze) in the Division 1 tournament.

Well done to the girls who played as a team and worked extremely hard, especially the senior players who covered extraordinary amounts time in the pool.

Thanks to the coaching team of Rose Younger (Asst. Coach), Dawn Poole (Team Manager) and our regional referee James Poole.

A massive thanks goes to all of the parents whose support is essential, and especially pool side cheer leading!

Team list with goals scored:

- 1 (GK) Sophie Johnson
- 2 Faye Poole (2)
- 3 Isabel Wyatt (1)
- 4 Ella Bright
- 5 Eve Poole (12)
- 6 Laura Page
- 7 (C) Anna Leeson (1)
- 8 Felicity Massie
- 9 Eda Colliver (4)
- 10 Ciara Nicholson (18)
- 11 Miranda Edwards (1)
- 12 Eloise Bailey (3)

Most Valuable Player for East was selected to be Ciara Nicholson, well done Ciara sterling performance.

Report by Head Coach, Brian Poole