

CHESHIRE COUNTY WATER POLO & SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

WATER POLO REPORT 2009

1 Introduction

It is with some satisfaction the Water Polo Committee reports on another season of success and achievement. The report covers the water polo activities for the period from 11th October 2008 to 10th October 2009. As the majority of water polo competitions are played in the period from 1st April to 5th December the report completes and comments on a number of outstanding matches played at the end of the 2008 season and covers the initial part of the 2009 season.

The carryover of matches into the next season is now becoming a regular feature of an extended competition period resulting from a large increase in the number of competitions, particularly with the introduction by the Region in 2008 of two further championships for the women and one for the Junior Men based on the County Sports Partnership areas, the introduction in 2009 of an Inter Regional Championship for Men and Women for players at 18 years of age and under by the ASA and the expansion of the National Water Polo League into three divisions thus reducing the availability of players for the Junior matches normally played at the weekend and increasing the demand on a limited number of facilities and officials.

2 Completion of 2008 Season

At the time of the last Annual Water Polo Report in November 2008 it was reported the County had played a number of matches with some outstanding matches to be played in a range of different competitions. The majority of those matches were subsequently completed, although in a number of cases the competition was not completed until the early part of 2009.

2.1 Senior Men's Championships 2008

The continued use of a league structure for the County Championships, first introduced in 2005, once again resulted in some fixture congestion at the end of the 2008 season as the water polo calendar became overloaded and a number of pools were closed, in some cases for an extended period of time. This resulted in the league programme not being completed at the time the report for the Annual General meeting in November 2008 was compiled. I am now pleased to report that the Senior County Championship was completed at the end of the season with the results given below. Congratulations go to Birkenhead for retaining the Championship Trophy for another year

Senior League Table 2008

Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Birkenhead	10	9	0	1	18
Chester	10	8	0	2	16
Warrington	10	6	0	4	12
Port Sunlight	10	3	1	6	7
MMU Cheshire	10	1	0	9	2
Wallasey	10	0	1	6	1

2.2 Youth 16 Under Championships 2008

The Youth Championship final, for players born in 1992 and later, held over from 2008 was played at Europa Pool, Birkenhead on Sunday 10th May 2009 between Birkenhead, City of Chester and Warrington. Warrington comfortably won the championship with City of Chester in second place. Congratulations go to Warrington for retaining the Dr David Cooke Memorial Trophy for a further year. The results of the matches played are as follows:-

Match 1 Birkenhead v Chester 3 – 7
Match 2 Chester v Warrington 1 – 6
Match 3 Birkenhead v Warrington 0 – 6

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2.3 Academy 14 Under Championship 2008

As a result of the difficulties experienced in making the fixture arrangements the 2008 Academy Championship was not played and was eventually declared void by the Executive Committee. Therefore the Alf Harland Memorial Trophy was not presented in 2008.

3 Region County Sport Partnership Championships 2008

Following the success of the Ladies Inter County Sports Partnership Development programme in 2008 the North West Region introduced a similar competition at Junior level for boys aged 18 years and under (Players born 1990 and later). The team comprised the available players from Chester, Warrington and MMU Cheshire.

3.1 Junior Boys Region Championship 2008

Our thanks go to Louie Aseid (MMU Cheshire) and Mark Simkiss (Chester) for volunteering to take on the positions of Team Coach and Team Manager. It is pleasing to see two newly qualified officials becoming involved with the team. In the four tournaments played Cheshire dominated the championship winning all eight of the matches played and thus winning the Championship. Each match was of four periods of seven minutes actual play. The results of the eight matches played are as follows:-

Sunday 21 September at Palatine Pool, Blackpool Sunday 19 October at Europa Pool, Birkenhead

1	Cheshire	12	v	Merseyside	4	6	Gt Manchester	6	V	Merseyside	3
2	Cumbria	0	v	Gt Manchester	5	7	Cheshire	7	V	Lancashire	2
3	Lancashire	9	v	Merseyside	4	8	Merseyside	5	V	Cumbria	0
4	Cheshire	5	v	Cumbria	0	9	Cheshire	8	V	Gt Manchester	5
5	Gt Manchester	5	v	Lancashire	8	10	Cumbria	0	V	Lancashire	5

Sunday 9 November at Manchester Aqua Centre Sunday 7 December at Liverpool Aqua Centre

11	Cheshire	6	v	Gt Manchester	6	16	Lancashire	12	V	Cumbria	3
12	Cumbria	0	v	Merseyside	6	17	Gt Manchester	7	V	Merseyside	4
13	Lancashire	6	v	Gt Manchester	2	18	Cheshire	6	V	Lancashire	1
14	Cheshire	5	v	Cumbria	0	19	Cumbria	1	V	Gt Manchester	10
15	Merseyside	2	v	Lancashire	6	20	Cheshire	10	V	Merseyside	2

Men's Junior Championship Final Table

Team	Played	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points	G Diff
Cheshire	8	8	0	0	59	19	16	40
Lancashire	8	6	0	2	47	29	12	18
Gt Manchester	8	4	0	4	45	34	8	11
Merseyside	8	2	0	6	29	50	4	-21
Cumbria	8	0	0	8	4	52	0	-48

The successful Cheshire Team was represented by the following players

S Bennett	Chester	R Haydock	Chester	R Tahraoui	Warrington
C Bowness	Chester	P Horgan	Warrington	S Tahraoui	Warrington
M Connelly	Chester	B Koszegi	Chester	C Wall	Chester
C Dean	Warrington	B Lee	Chester	I Waters	Warrington
R Dickinson	Warrington	E Reid	Chester	S Williams	Chester
A Gittins	Chester				

4 Closure of Wirral Pools

A development proposal by the Borough Council to close the pools at Guinea Gap, Leasowe and Woodchurch has resulted in a two year delay to the proposal. However the long term problem has not been resolved and the clubs may still be faced with finding a new home at some time in the future. The Port Sunlight team has returned to play at the Bebington Oval pool following the protracted refurbishment of the pool. Unfortunately the changes have resulted in the pool being less attractive for water polo following an increase in the proportion of shallow water. The long term closure and the future uncertainty of the Byrne Avenue pool at Birkenhead continues to cause difficulty for implementing the water polo youth development programme as the majority of the training was undertaken at that pool.

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5 County Championships 2009 Season

The introduction in 2009 of additional National and Region Competitions at Junior and Youth level combined with an expansion of the Region Training Centres is once again putting pressure on the availability of clubs and players to complete the league championships by the end of the season.

5.1 Senior Men's League Programme

The Committee is pleased to report that in 2009 the County has once again organised a Senior Mens Water Polo Championship. In 2009 the County is pleased to welcome a new team, namely MMU Cheshire, to the Mens Senior Championship for the first time. The team is based at the Manchester Metropolitan University Campus at Alsager.

The fixture arrangements for the championship in 2009 have been completed and matches are currently being played as a league programme. However, continued difficulties of obtaining players the Senior Mens league programme is scheduled to be completed in the first week in December 2009.

5.2 Youth Championship 2009

At the time of compiling the report it has been agreed that the Junior Championship should be played as a tournament to reduce the pressure on the availability of players and pool time on club nights. The tournament will probably be played at Europa Pool, Birkenhead in November 2009 as this is the only deep water pool in the County.

5.3 Academy Championship 2009

The Academy Age Championship will be decided by the two matches to be played between City of Chester, Warrington and Birkenhead. However, at present it is difficult to find available dates to play the matches due to an extension of the Regional Water Polo Championships and an increase in many school activities. It is expected the championship will be played as a tournament at the end of the year.

6 Region Inter County Sport Partnership Championship 2009

The teams playing in the County have once again combined together to produce a group of players to represent the Cheshire County Sports Partnership area. This unfortunately prevents the players at Birkenhead, Halton, Port Sunlight and Wallasey representing Cheshire as they are part of the Merseyside County Sport Partnership area. The players are therefore selected from the teams at City of Chester, Warrington and MMU Cheshire.

6.1 Youth Girls Region Championship 2009

The girls competition was played at Youth level for players of 16 years of age and younger born in 1993 and later. Unfortunately the success of the team in 2008, when Cheshire finished in second place, could not be repeated in the 2009 competition as the majority of the team then at the top of the age group have moved on to play at Senior level. As a consequence the team was considerably weaker than in the previous year

An opportunity was taken to produce a virtually new, but inexperienced team with a number of younger players entering a championship for the first time. The team is being coached by Lauren Whitney (Warrington) and Conor Dean (Warrington) and Team Managed by Mrs Fiona Dean (Warrington) and Mrs Jane Fisher (Chester). The results of the matches were as follows:

Sunday 23 May at Liverpool Aquatic Centre					Saturday 16 June at Palatine Pool Blackpool						
1	Cheshire	1	v	Cumbria	7	9	Cheshire	2	v	Lancashire	2
2	Gt Manchester	3	v	Lancashire	0	10	Merseyside	2	v	Gt Manchester	4
3	Merseyside	2	v	Cumbria	8	11	Cheshire	4	v	Cumbria	2
4	Cheshire	1	v	Gt Manchester	9	12	Gt Manchester	7	v	Lancashire	2
5	Merseyside	0	v	Lancashire	6	13	Merseyside	3	v	Cumbria	5
6	Cumbria	3	v	Gt Manchester	4	14	Cheshire	3	v	Gt Manchester	5
7	Merseyside	5	v	Cheshire	4	15	Merseyside	9	v	Lancashire	3
8	Cumbria	7	v	Lancashire	4	16	Cumbria	2	v	Gt Manchester	9
Saturday 18 July Liverpool Aquatic Centre											
17	Merseyside	6	v	Cheshire	0	19	Merseyside	1	v	Gt Manchester	5
18	Cumbria	6	v	Lancashire	9	20	Cheshire	3	v	Lancashire	6

Girls Youth Results

Team	Played	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	G Diff	Points
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Gt Manchester	8	8	0	0	46	14	32	16
Cumbria	8	4	0	4	40	36	4	8
Lancashire	8	3	1	4	32	37	-5	7
Merseyside	8	3	0	5	28	35	-7	6
Cheshire	8	1	1	6	18	42	-24	3

The Cheshire team was represented by the following players

B Bolton	Chester	R Huck	Warrington	O Metcalf	Warrington
C Dean	Warrington	L Johnson-Cree	Chester	C Penny	Chester
C Gregson	Warrington	H Knowles-Jones	Warrington	T Penny	Chester
E Huck	Warrington	J Lee	Chester	H Rex	Warrington

6.2 Senior Ladies Region Championship 2009

For the first time it was agreed that the girls should only play in one age group so that the girls playing in the Youth Championship generally avoided playing in the Senior ladies competition. It was pleasing to see a number of the ladies still playing who have moved away to play at University and College. Once again all the players were selected from Chester and Warrington. The results of the matches played are as follows:

Sunday 7 June Europa Pool Birkenhead						Sunday 5 July Liverpool Aquatic Centre					
1	Cheshire	4	v	Cumbria	2	9	Cheshire	6	v	Lancashire	2
2	Gt Manchester	3	v	Lancashire	1	10	Merseyside	6	v	Gt Manchester	0
3	Merseyside	5	v	Cumbria	3	11	Cheshire	3	v	Cumbria	2
4	Cheshire	4	v	Gt Manchester	4	12	Gt Manchester	5	v	Lancashire	4
5	Merseyside	5	v	Lancashire	0	13	Merseyside	7	v	Cumbria	2
6	Cumbria	3	v	Gt Manchester	4	14	Cheshire	14	v	Gt Manchester	0
7	Merseyside	5	v	Cheshire	3	15	Merseyside	7	v	Lancashire	1
8	Cumbria	3	v	Lancashire	4	16	Cumbria		v	Gt Manchester	
Saturday 18 July Liverpool Aquatic Centre											
17	Merseyside	5	v	Cheshire	5						
18	Cumbria	7	v	Lancashire	5						
19	Merseyside	4	v	Gt Manchester	3						
20	Cheshire	10	v	Lancashire	5						

Ladies Senior Results

Team	Played	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	G Diff	Points
Merseyside	8	7	1	0	44	17	27	15
Cheshire	8	5	2	1	49	25	24	12
Gt Manchester	8	3	1	4	24	36	-12	7
Cumbria	8	2	0	6	22	37	-15	4
Lancashire	8	1	0	7	22	46	-24	2

The Cheshire team was represented by the following players

E Bartlett	Warrington	H Fox	Warrington	L Tahraoui	Warrington
C Dean	Warrington	H Langridge	Chester	L Whitney	Warrington
A Donnell-Jones	Warrington	J Lee	Chester	G Wolley	Chester

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S Fisher	Chester	H Rex	Warrington		
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6.3 Junior Boys Region Championship 2009

The Competition is for players at 18 years of age and younger, born in 1991 and later. The boys Junior Region Championship commenced on Sunday 20th September with the first round matches being played at Europa Pool, Birkenhead. Due to a number of clashes with ASA Inter Regional and National League Competitions some of the County Sport Partnership areas were short of players with the result that Cumbria combined with Lancashire and Greater Manchester were not able to find the necessary team officials for a Team Coach and Team Manager to be appointed. The majority of the players who formed the very strong Cheshire team that easily won the championship in 2008 have now moved out of the age group combined with very few players in the two club who are at the top of the age group. Matches were eventually played as follows:

Sunday 22nd September Europa Birkenhead

1	Merseyside	v	Cheshire
2	Lancs/Cumbria	v	Gt Manchester
3	Merseyside	v	Cheshire
4	Lancs/Cumbria	v	Gt Manchester

The remaining matches are scheduled to take place on the following dates

Sunday 18 October at Manchester Aquatic Centre
 Saturday 31 October at Palatine Pool, Blackpool
 Sunday 15 November at Liverpool Aquatic Centre

7 Water Polo Officials

Following a number of retirements from the ASA and the Regional Water Polo Referees Officials list in recent years, the County at the start of the 2008 season only had four Registered ASA Water Polo Referee to cover all the County Championship matches. In recent years it has become normal practice to invite referees from both Staffordshire and Manchester to officiate at the County matches. It is with great pleasure that we report on the success of a number of individuals from the County who attended the ASA Water Polo Official Course at Manchester on 28th and 29th June 2008 and at Liverpool Aquatic Centre on the weekend of 18th and 19th July 2009. Congratulations go to the following persons who successfully completed both the theory and the practical examination of the referees course and they have been added to the ASA list of referees:-

Louie Aseid	MMU Cheshire	Damian Keil	MMU Cheshire	Tim Ryan	Birkenhead
Chris Byrne	Warrington	Casey Lee	MMU Cheshire	Mark Simkiss	Chester
Connor Dean	Warrington	Garry Peek	Wallasey	Lauren Whitney	Warrington

8 Water Polo Coaches Success

Congratulation go to Lauren Whitney and Conor Dean (Warrington) who obtained the Teachers Swimming Level 1 at Manchester in June and the Water Polo Level 2 qualifications while attending the course held at Millfield in August 2009 in support of the National Water Polo Academy.

9 Club and Coach Development programme

The provision of a County Sports Partnership Water Polo Coach for Merseyside and Cheshire funded through the North West Region Club and Coach Development programme is an exciting development that should benefit all the clubs and players in the County. At present a coach has been appointed who is expected to work from the pools at Liverpool and Lancaster. This has resulted in a lack of clarity in respect of the programme management and delivery. A number of meetings have been arranged to take place in October to work through the issues raised. A water polo coach, Tim Dunsby has been appointed to work in the Greater Manchester area and is starting to engage with the Cheshire clubs in that area.

10 Development Programme

The County Water Polo Development programme is now fully integrated into the North West Region Water Polo Development programme. It is making a positive contribution to satisfying the ASA Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the Region and in the County.

Priority is being given to helping clubs to meet the new requirements for the water polo Swim21 modules associated with water polo coaches and officials. Congratulations go to City of Chester and Birkenhead in becoming the first clubs in the County to be accredited for water polo. A number of other clubs in the County are currently in the process of submitting their water polo Swim21 programmes and we wish them every success.

Clubs in the County continue to support the Water Polo Regional training centre at Manchester with the clubs now seeing the benefit of academy and youth age players making a significant contribution to the overall club water polo programme. The youth and academy County championships continue to support the Region competitive structure but the senior competitions are currently under review in the Region.

11 Conclusions

Although the County has a relatively small water polo base in terms of the number of clubs involved in the game, only six, the clubs and the Officials from the County are very active in the National Water Polo League, in the North West Region Championships and in the

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local Liverpool and District and Manchester and District Leagues. It is with pleasure the County recognise all their achievements. Virtually all the water polo in the County is still concentrated in the Merseyside area and the County still does not have any teams competing from the Greater Manchester area of the County.

The Water Polo Committee wish to record their thanks to the Officers and the Executive Committee of the County for their continued help and encouragement. In particular, thanks are recorded to the water polo committee members for their support throughout the year, for their help and organisation of the County Championships and for officiating at the different events. The Committee also thanks the club Officials and Water Polo Secretaries for their valued help and assistance.

For and on behalf of the Water Polo Committee
Mr P Fisher Dr A Boyle
Chairman Secretary
October 2009