

WORTHING SWIMMING CLUB

WATER POLO DEVELOPMENT

I have been asked on many occasions to produce a detailed guide to water polo at WSC and I hope that the following will answer many of the questions that players and parents may have.

As an overview, we have for many years run a successful junior program at the club that has produced many players that have gone on to play for the Worthing senior team. Our juniors have also represented Sussex county, the South-east region and the GB national team and it is only a few years ago that 3 of our boys were playing in the national junior squad at the same time which was a truly remarkable achievement.

At the current time our men's team play in the 3rd division of the British Water Polo League and we are the current South-east region and Sussex county champions. Our juniors play in various age group competitions in the London winter and summer leagues and at the under 16 age group these matches can feature mixed teams of boys and girls. On other occasions, Sussex county development teams enter the London league to give players the opportunity of some much needed match practice. This has worked particularly well with the girls when all of the polo playing clubs in the county (WSC, Mid-Sussex Marlins and Crawley) have joined together to play as a development team, and I would anticipate that this arrangement will continue in the coming years.

CURRENT TRAINING SESSIONS

We are lucky that we have various sessions available and these are currently utilised as follows; -

Tuesday, 20.30-22.00. Juniors (age 14-18 approx) + some seniors
Wednesday, 20.30-22.00. Senior squad + selected juniors and girls
Thursday, 19.00-20.00. Juniors (age 10-16 approx)
Thursday, 20.30-21.30. Water polo swim session
Thursday, 21.30-22.00. Shooting and passing (all age groups)

In addition, we run Sunday sessions for the senior squad and talented juniors (20.00-21.00) on the first and third Sunday's of each month.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The training sessions that we operate are designed to progress junior players from beginners to hopefully playing at the highest possible standard. Ideally we would like every junior to develop and play in the various representative teams as well as representing the club in both junior and senior competitions. The Thursday 19.00 session acts as the introduction to the sport where we work on the basic core skills with the youngest members. As the players develop, (both boys and girls) they will be asked at some point to join the Tuesday 20.30 session which is aimed at the older and better junior players when we work on the more technical aspects of the sport. For a while, certain squad members will attend both sessions until eventually concentrating on the Tuesday session.

The better juniors will also be asked to attend the Wednesday sessions and at this time they will probably join our senior squad playing in county league fixtures. We have always played our talented junior players in the senior team which is an excellent way of accelerating the development process.

Now that we are playing in national competition it is even more important that we continue to produce talented junior players and we hope that as many as possible will progress to play at this level.

As previously mentioned, many junior squad members have represented Sussex and the South-east region. The county teams play in under 14 (mixed), with separate competitions for boys and girls at under 16 and under 18 and the squads are selected by the county coaches after trials and training sessions.

The South-east region enters teams in the national inter-region championships with competitions for boys and girls teams at under 14, 16 and 18 age groups. Selection for these squads is normally as a result of a combination of trials and training sessions and currently the girl's squads have sessions at K2 Crawley on Saturday afternoons. Regional boy's training sessions are now scheduled to take place at Splashpoint (19.00-21.00) on certain Saturday evenings throughout the year.

The inter-region competitions are always played at a central deep water location over a weekend and selection for one of these teams is an excellent way to play at a better standard against the talented boys and girls from around the UK and Ireland.

To gain inclusion into the GB national squads individual squad members initially have to attend one of the regional training centres (RTC) around the UK. These centres operate on approximately the same calendar as the schools with 3 ten week terms and follow a national teaching program. Unfortunately, at present the two nearest RTC's are at Crystal Palace (Friday evenings) and Basingstoke (Sunday afternoons) which obviously requires a fair degree of travelling. Boys and girls who attend the RTC are invited to the national squad sessions (held currently at Cardiff) and also the summer national training camp at Millfield School in Somerset.

ASA NATIONAL CLUB COMPETITIONS

The ASA organise inter-club championships for boys and girl's teams at the same age groups as the inter districts. (Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18).

Worthing has entered teams in the past but because this is a high standard of competition we often supply players to regional teams such as Invicta. Invicta were formed a number of years ago with the specific intention of entering the national club competitions and a number of our boys and girls have enjoyed the opportunity of playing, and winning in the various age groups over the past few years.

Rather like the inter-districts, these ASA championships tend to be played at a central deep water venue for the qualifying rounds with the finals played at the Manchester Aquatic centre.

Invicta are currently only entering the boy's competitions but the girls who are attending the training sessions at K2 will be given the opportunity to play as a club team in the championships in 2013.

Playing in these club competitions is another excellent opportunity to play at a higher standard against the better players from around the UK.

SPASHPOINT NEW POOL

The move to the new pool in the spring of 2013 has offered us an even better opportunity to develop water polo at WSC. We worked hard in negotiations at the planning stage to ensure that the main pool is deep water with a 2 metre depth, and this will be a great improvement over the deep/shallow Aquarena. We are obviously making good use of the deep water diving/teaching pool for the majority of the junior training. The amount of water time that we have for water polo at Worthing is far in excess of a large number of clubs and we try to maximise every opportunity that we have available.

CONCLUSION

Water polo is a very demanding team game and it can require a high level of swimming speed and stamina to play to a good standard. We are very lucky at Worthing that the swimming club offers many opportunities for the junior squad members to work hard on their fitness and it is vitally important that any prospective players continue to swim as often as possible.

Please contact me, or speak to any of the coaches if you should have any questions.

Alastair Roberts

alastair@roberts3bt.fsnet.co.uk

07770 916721

December 2013.