



Published by the British Octopush Association, the ruling body for underwater hockey in the UK

YOUTHS TURN BOA CASH... INTO GOLD



TOP OF THE WORLD: ECSTASY FOR GB UNDER 19S—AGONY FOR USA AND CANADA

THE GB YOUTH team applied the Midas touch to their £1000 BOA grant by turning the cash into Britain's first ever World Championship Gold medal.

The GB Youth team lost only one of their 10 qualifying games to secure their place in the final with the USA. They took control of that crunch game by scoring the only goal early on. From that point, they maintained control of the game to secure the historic win.

Jubilant Youth coach Dave Bailey (pictured back row, right) said: "The team was a great bunch of

boys and girls who got on well. The one game that they lost was lost on psychology, as the team was streets ahead of the USA."

Dave thanked his wife Elaine, who acted as a surrogate Mum to the players during the trip.

Final score: GB U19s 1, USA U19s 0.

**Recognition of the team's success has been acknowledged by 10 Downing Street with a letter of congratulation from Prime Minister Tony Blair.*

See page two and three.

PM'S ANTHEM TO GOLD YOUTH



TONY BLAIR: CONGRATS, FOLKS!

THE PRIME MINISTER took time out from his busy schedule – to pay tribute to Britain's underwater hockey players.

Tony Blair wrote to BOA chairman Tim Arnold to congratulate the under 19 team which won gold medal in the World Championships in Canada.

"I believe that we should congratulate sporting success in all sports, however large or small," said Blair.

"The benefits of sporting participation are well documented and I hope the success of your team encourages many more people to engage with healthy exercise."

The typed letter, reprinted on page 12, is on official Ten Downing Street paper. The PM personally signed it, adding in his own handwriting: "Well done."

BOA chairman Tim Arnold said: "This is a hugely significant step for underwater hockey in the UK.

"It is the first time that we have had this kind of third party endorsement from the highest levels of government in the half a century since we Brits invented the sport.

"This will help us in negotiations with local, regional, and national government bodies, such as pool owners and sports councils.

"Nothing succeeds like success, and this shows the BOA was right to invest time and money in giving special help to the under 19 squad.

"Everyone in UK Octopush should feel proud of our under 19 squad, particularly Dave Bailey and his wife who effectively acted as foster parents for the youngsters while they were away in Canada.

"We must now capitalise on this success in every area of our exciting sport."

The PM's senior policy adviser, Sarah Hunter, told Octopush News: "The Prime Minister was delighted to learn of the squad's recent success in the World Championships."

ALUN MITCHELL, Editor

IT'S YOUR SHOUT...

GOT AN IDEA, which could progress octopush? Let's hear it at the annual meeting, being held at the Lodge at Crystal Palace on Sunday 6th April 2002 at 10am. Motions need to be sent to the BOA secretary at fbuttery@inco.com by the 9th March to be included for discussion. *Ideas received after this date will be submitted to the committee for discussion at the earliest opportunity after the annual meeting.* This is also the time to put your name forward for a committee post.



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

1 October 2002

Dear Mr. Arnold,

I am writing to pass on my congratulations to your Under 19 Underwater Hockey Squad for winning gold medals in the recent World Championships.

I believe that we should congratulate sporting success in all sports – however large or small. The benefits of sporting participation are well documented and I hope the success of your team encourages many more people to engage with healthy exercise.

Well done.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Blair

Mr Tim Arnold

U.K. MEN'S ELITE TEAM COACH SAYS:

Let's learn the lessons

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, CALGARY, CANADA: The team was fit; very good swimmers and keen. Training had gone reasonably well with a couple of trips to Holland and France which yielded some good results, so on the whole we were confident to do well.

However, what was lacking was quality opposition at home to really test the team's physical and mental fitness as well as their technical ability. This fact played a large part in the final result.

Tony had organized the flights (interesting routes) and the accommodation, which was great and well priced. We felt comfortable and were itching to get wet. The pool was very good although a tad deep with a 'Sports Court' bottom, which played fairly fast. I put the team through its usual warm up routine, dry then wet then game. We arranged a few knock about games with various teams, there was a mix from non-competitive players, followed by the South African Masters (13 - 2) then an Italian and Spanish mix (16 - 0). Things were going well and the boys were looking and feeling fine, now we had to get the FOCUS / POSSESSION / SUPPORT / MOVEMENT = TEAM MENTALITY to the fore and we were ready!

Now on to our first game, South Africa, after a confident start and a one - nil lead the team started to lose it's way and momentum and finally lost 3 - 1. Disappointing but not a disaster. We went in to our next game, Holland, in a confident mood, as we had done well against them in the build up to the worlds. So again a good one - nil start but we were not able to get any strangle hold on scrappy end to end game panning out into a wholly disappointing 3 -2 loss. A very strong French side were our next opponents; the team needed a good result and were fully focused to get it. The boys were playing well and took the lead, it was a

tough game but the team was stoic and solid. However with one minute to go we let in two silly goals! The team was distraught but they had no need to be as they have played well and although we had lost there was something to build on.

However it proved to be the turning point. They had lost their way. They became afraid to lose, something that cannot be allowed to happen in any sport, as it's exceptionally hard to get out of; there are cases of many excellent sportsmen and women who have suffered.

They began to show all the symptoms, they began to try too hard, this led to poor teamwork, and so the moves broke down forcing them on the back foot. So they tried even harder which lengthened their recovery time, so less bottom time, this means no support and so there were too many individual runs. It was a downward spiral.

So as you can see the team didn't perform to its expectations and was very hard to take for all involved. In my view it wasn't a total disaster there were positives to be taken from it from which we can build on; we must keep together, learn from the errors, build on those positives and come back stronger! However we have a real need for people to play against that will test the squad to its limit, only then will we truly know if we are ready to take on the world and WIN. This may take some time but it must come from the roots, the clubs, to produce quality players and to do this they must adopt a different style of play and attitude. However the clubs have to be willing and not forced. I fully appreciate that many play for the pure joy of this great game and to socialize in the underwater hockey circles and to be honest that's what keeps it all going, to play to win but to always play for the sheer enjoyment of it.

DAVE SIMPSON, GB Men's Elite Coach

Mark Evans, Reading (Captain)
Chris Gerald, Southport (Vice Captain)
Eryl Adams, Slough
Nick Humphries, St Albans
Graham Fletcher, Southport
Dave Alcock, Southport

Adam Winter, Mercenary
Paul Chatwin, Mercenary
Vince Sheehy, Reading
Des Matthewman, Reading
Rob Howard, Reading
Skoda Kloda, Southsea

INSURANCE

The 9/11 ripple effect on Underwater Hockey

OSAMA Bin Laden hit Britain's underwater hockey players for six when his terrorists attacked the Twin Towers in New York in 2001. The strike worried the insurance markets, who responded with massive increases in all premiums.

Some syndicates decided to withdraw from particular business areas altogether. You've probably noticed the 9/11 effect on your household and motoring premiums already.

But it's been far, far, worse for octopush insurance. The BOA's premiums with its insurer all but doubled this season. Treasurer Tim Dey put in a great deal of hard work, trying to find new insurers with a better deal. Nevertheless, our original insurers eventually came up with the

"best" figure, which still resulted in around a seventy per cent increase year on year.

The BOA responded with a £50 a year increase in fees, since insurance is our single biggest overhead. However, that clearly does not meet the overall increase in insurance and we will have to cut back on expenditure accordingly.

The good news is that the overall membership fees are still less than it would cost for individual clubs to insure themselves.

Any pool owner, whether a local authority or a private owner, will want to make sure that an octopush club has proper third party insurance as a condition of hire.

STEVE PRINCE, BOA vice chairman

THE PHYSIO COUCH

Exercise induced cramp

CRAMP is a painful, spasmodic involuntary contraction of skeletal muscle. It occurs mainly in muscles that span two joints and those that are contracted in an already shortened position i.e. hamstrings and calf muscles in swimmers.

Risk factors, identified in marathon runners, include older age, higher body mass index, shorter daily stretching time, irregular stretching habits and a family history of cramping.

Treatment

Passive stretching of the affected muscle group - the muscle should be held in the stretched position until the twitching or cramp stops and then a return to normal length does not cause further cramp. This is only a temporary measure. Exercise should be stopped to prevent further cramping. General supportive treatment includes maintaining a comfortable temperature and adequate hydration if necessary.

Prevention

Key to prevention is protecting the muscle from developing premature fatigue during exercise. Be well conditioned for the exercise. Regularly stretch muscle groups that are prone to cramping. Maintain adequate nutrition (carbohydrate and fluid) to prevent premature muscle fatigue during exercise.

KAREN LYNCH, Senior Physiotherapist

THE BOA SHOP

Kit in Stock

Pushers (various types) £10/pair
Gloves (one colour) £10 each
Gloves (two colour) £13 each
Lycra socks £5/pair

Single Mouth guards £2.50 each
Pack of 10 Mouth guards £20
Pucks £20/puck
Neoprene socks £8/pair

BOA Shop Manager: Georgina Ashley: boa_shop@hotmail.com

The Editor's talk talk – Alun Mitchell (Mitch)

As your new editor, I hope you find my 1st full copy of Octopush News meets the needs of the BOA and our membership.

If you have articles, tournament info or any news at all, then please send them into me. The more material that you send in, the more editions of Octopush News I can publish each year.

I am looking for tournament results & invitations, general UWH news, editor's letters, ideas for improving the game, tips and advice.

I am aiming for 3 –4 editions in the next year.

However one of my goals is to try and turn Octopush News in to an arm of the BOA that could possibly raise a small amount revenue rather than absorbing the limited funds BOA has.

The way I plan to do this is to try and attract relevant outlets (diving shops etc) to advertise in Octopush News.

So if you have a dive shop or a relevant outlet to UWH near you or you know someone who would like to advertise their product, then please send me their details and we will get in touch with them. You can make the difference.

PLEASE SEND ALL CORRESPONDANCE FOR
OCTOPUSH NEWS TO-

alun.mitchell@ntlworld.com

NEMOSEA OCTOPUSH CLUB

Open Tournament 2003

Aim: Joint Junior and Senior tournament.

Priority: For clubs with junior teams.

Max: 10 Junior & 10 Senior teams

Deposit: £10 per team

Individuals: You are also welcome if you want to play, but do not have a team... don't be shy.

Contact: 07092 162 419,
guiceayres@postmaster.co.uk

Website: www.nem-oc.org.uk

South West Girls continue unbeaten run

THANKS to all who came to the Annual Pembroke Women's Tournament in November.

It was greatly appreciated that so many made the effort to come all the way to rural West Wales. Once again it was very well attended with stiff competition between the 5 teams (Wahine Warriors were sadly missed this year) and some excellent games.

The South West continued their unbeaten run this year and were in excellent form to defend the trophy, beating off a brave attack from Spectrum Angels. London Ladies were a close third and the Welsh Ladies team fourth. Pembroke managed to score their annual goal

SUN SHINES ON SOUTHERNERS

TEAMS from all over Britain took part in the 2003 BOA Under-21 Championship played at Manchester Aquatic Centre early in the New Year.

The winning team, "South Stars," was composed of five players from TAROT and four from Southsea.

This last minute combination of these teams left the programme disrupted so the adults and officials stepped in to make a seventh team which provided some interesting opposition for the Youth teams but did not contribute to the placings.

despite only having 6 players (4 of them juniors) and brought up the rear in 5th place.

Very many thanks to all the local Pembrokeshire sponsors, who provided many prizes for the winners and raffles.

Also worthy of mention were all the very hard working water refs who stayed in for many games to make it a better tournament for all the ladies.

Colin and June Dellor once again donated their valuable time and effort to being chief referee and scorer. The tournament always runs smoothly thanks to them.

Most of the women said October would be a better date, as there are few other tournaments then. So next year's **Pembroke Ladies will be on Saturday 11th October 2003**. Put it in your diaries now and look forward to seeing you all again.

PENNY SIMON, Pembroke Octopush Club

Thanks to all those who part as players and officials.

A special mention to Neil Dixon and the contingent from Rochdale who took the majority of the refereeing load.

Congratulations to the "South Stars." This title as BOA Youth Champions has been held by Southsea and now 'South Stars' for the past three years.

Commiserations to the augmented Rochdale team. They put up a spirited challenge but the relentless attack from the Southerners proved just too much in the end.

Medals will be in the post soon.

*CHRIS CARELESS, Junior Competitions
Manager.*

YOUR LETTERS

Does the earth move for you?

On behalf of Scotland, I have just received an invitation to the European Championships to be held in Italy this year. This invitation has come directly from the Tournament organisers but does not have CMAS approval, at the moment.

After the European championships in Yugoslavia (when Scotland and many other non competitive nation teams entered) I was under the impression that CMAS would only allow competitive nations to enter the European Championships. However the nations involved in the championships were happy to allow these 'guest' teams to compete.

As a result of this I have several unanswered questions regarding CMAS and its role. Firstly why has CMAS adopted this stance? I have heard talk of Olympic recognition and maintaining standards, but have not heard anything about progress in their discussions with the International Olympic Committee and surely allowing more teams to compete in such tournaments would assist in developing the sport.

Being a Yorkshire girl and with strong Scottish influences of late, the issue of money is never far from my mind. I would like to know how CMAS spends the membership fee each nation pays, more particularly how this benefits underwater hockey. I am also aware that CMAS has no involvement in the Southern Hemisphere championships and this seems very inconsistent.

I am of the view that a sport's governing body should respect the wishes of its members; otherwise the governing body serves little purpose. I appreciate the need for an organisation that oversees UWH at an international level, maintains standards, sets

rules and develops the sport to Olympic level, but are CMAS doing that?

A lot of questions which I am hoping someone out there might be able to answer, but essentially (as Mr Powers would put it)—does CMAS do it for us, baby?

LIBBY PORTEOUS, Scottish Ladies

Hand on the tiller

With reference to the Chairman's New Year address: thanks for your good wishes, Tim, and for an interesting and illuminating newsletter.

From our part, the membership, we should give credit where it is due and I think our collective thanks are due to you for the effort and influence you have attained for the BOA in the media, through your own knowledge of the industry and expertise in getting the BOA publicised in 2002.

As Chairman of the BOA you have brought us forward in 2002. May 2003 be as successful with your hand on the tiller.

Happy New Year to you and your family, as well as to all the Under Water Hockey fraternity worldwide.

IAN PARSONS, Putney

(See page 9 for a copy of the chairman's New Year address).

Thanks, Zoë

On behalf of everyone involved with the BOA I'd like to give a big thank—you to Zoë Dunkinson for all her work over the last two years in both setting up and running the BOA shop plus ensuring that it has become so popular. I'd also like to thank Georgina Ashley for offering to take over the running of the BOA shop, and look forward to seeing her continue building on Zoë's success.

STEVE PRINCE, BOA Vice-Chairman

Continuing success in 2003

THE LAST YEAR was a milestone in British underwater hockey. We brought back gold from the world championships for the first time, and were recognised accordingly by the Prime Minister.

This edition of Octopush News includes a facsimile of Tony Blair's letter, which players can use in their own publicity efforts with their local media.

There were also other important lessons to be learned in the old year... for all of us. Massive insurance increases following 9/11 have resulted in belt tightening for the association. And we know that coaches and players at international level will have to put *much* more effort into the mental health of teams which compete on the world's stage. I am sure we can all learn from the lessons brought home by Dave Simpson on this issue.

2002 was also the year when a number of committee members stood down; thank you all for your efforts. Zoë Dunkinson has just given up managing the BOA shop, having delivered hundreds of pounds of profits into team funds. A special thank you to Zoë, who wants to spend more time with her family. Congratulations, too, to the ladies' teams who won a groundbreaking sponsorship deal with Oceanic, the sub-aqua equipment manufacturers. Georgina Ashley is the new BOA shop manager.

I have long believed that British underwater hockey is on the cusp of a revival. Dave Bailey's efforts with the youth team are I am sure a harbinger of more success to come.

My personal priority has been to make sure that players win the recognition that they and our sport deserve. Publicity results in profile, which is a pre-condition to getting major sponsorship. Political clout is also important; for the first time, Sarah Liscoe has been briefing Westminster about the challenges we face as a sport in our relationships with government agencies. My thanks to all those who have gone that extra mile to help the BOA win recognition for the efforts made by every corner of our sport.

It's all about making sure our voice is heard - so that we can influence decision makers to think our needs in the future. For example, one major threat to our sport is the increasing trend towards leisure pools, which are too shallow in which to play octopush effectively.

The New Year beckons with more opportunities and challenges than ever before. There is much to play for, as we look forward to the European Championships. I have just learned that Neil Dixon has been selected as the chief referee for this important event. This is another example of how our small association can punch above its weight, and influence events on the world stage. Well done, Neil, for providing such excellent news at the beginning of 2003!

I am sure there will be more good news to come, if we can work together for the common good. I think we can all take pride in what we have achieved so far, and look towards 2003 with anticipation.

Congratulations to you all, and a Happy New Year to you, your families, and your communities, wherever you are in the world.

TIM ARNOLD, Chairman

This is a reprint of an address on the British Octopush E-group. It is included here in Octopush News as not every member of the BOA subscribes to the e-group... yet. Ed.

FULL RESULTS SERVICE

Nautilus: Reading and SW Ladies win honours

THE NAUTILUS NATIONAL League was held at Crystal Palace, repeating last year's success by being mounted over two days and introducing a the ladies division. In fact the numbers of teams attending were more than the membership we have!

It was especially encouraging to see new teams such as Nemosea, a brand new team from Newcastle, Manchester, a merger from a few teams in the North, as well as the reappearance of Aberdeen, Kingsbridge Krays and Plymouth Pirates.

Division 1

1st Reading
2nd Southport
3rd West Wickham
4th Dewsbury
5th Slough
6th Southsea (will be joining division 2 next year)

Division 2

1st Reading F (promotion to division 1)
2nd Leeds (promotion to division 1)
3rd Totnes
4th Putney
5th Brighton (will be joining division 3)
6th Islington (will be joining division 3)

Division 3

1st Aberdeen (promoted to division 2)
2nd Watford & Acton (promoted to division 2)
3rd Bristol & Cheltenham
4th St Albans
5th Farnham & Guildford (will be joining division 4)

Division 4

1st Batley (promoted to division 3)
2nd Neros (promoted to division 3)
3rd Ipswich
4th Newport
5th Sheffield Tykes (will be joining division 5)
6th Dunstable (will be joining division 5)

The competition was structured for teams with similar standard playing each other's. On both days, there were play-offs between teams to determine their final positions. A three way tie happened on Sunday between Manchester, Llwchwr and Coventry!

The main contribution to the competition's success apart from the members' support, lies with the support from volunteers who put themselves forward as official referees. Martin Reed especially who did not participate as a player, but dedicated both days to refereeing.

Division 5

1st Manchester (promoted to division 4)
2nd Llwchwr (promoted to division 4)
3rd Coventry
4th Kingsbridge Krays
5th Totton
6th Nemosea
7th Plymouth Pirates

Ladies division

1st Southwest Ladies
2nd Reading Ladies
3rd Spectrum Angels
4th Wahine Warriors
5th London Ladies
6th Doll-fins

Player registration were also re-introduced this time. Dunstable has invented a hand held device for the water referees, which transmits signals to the buzzer. This was trailed successfully and hopefully an improved protocol will be developed for the future competitions.

The next national competition is the National Qualifying Rounds on 1st March 2003 Invitation have been sent out to all members. The National Finals will be held on 5th April 2003.

MICHELE KWOK, Competitions Manager

COACHING TIP

Treat your pushers to a New Year makeover

Question: *How can you easily flick the puck high, long or accurately with a pusher that resembles a washed up piece of driftwood?*
Answer: *You can't!*

We spend hours on fitness and practice to improve ourselves in this manic sport we play but improving the ONLY thing that is allowed to touch the puck comes a long way down our mental list.

The pusher that you use needs to be the right size for you. So many times I have seen a small child with an old “rams horn pusher” that they can hardly pick up let alone swim underwater with. This idea is often seen in adults too although they can still swim with it the resistance of it through the water will ultimately impair performance.

Having a “new” bevelled edge at the front of your pusher has two benefits for you:

- it will always mean that you need to put less effort into your flick
- it will keep the splinters at bay, saving the nasty grazes that are often seen on the oppositions' back or arms after you

missed the puck! (This saves buying the extra pint at the pub to say sorry.)

Ultimately you need three pairs of pushers: one pair in use, one pair drying at home from the newly applied paint (after the last time you used it) and one pair in your bag, in case you snap the first! When you first buy or make them, treat your bats with a good brush on under-coat and then use spray paint in layers to build up a good covering.

In short:

- ***Check the size of pusher you use***
- ***Narrower is the better option for speed of control and less water resistance***
- ***Splash out and buy three sets the same***
- ***Keep them “looking new”***
- ***Dry the pushers naturally after each game***
- ***Keep your glove in the same condition.***

SARAH LISCOE, Director of Coaching



PLAYERS from the GB Ladies Elite Team celebrate a £3000 sponsorship deal with sub-aqua equipment makers, Oceanic. It's the single biggest contract of its kind in the history of our sport.
Pic: Rob Liscoe

IT'S CULLODEN AGAIN AS SCOTLAND BATTLE ENGLAND LADIES UNDER18S



A TENSE AND dramatic play off led to an historic one —nil victory by the Scottish Under 18s (pictured) against their English counterparts U18s at this year's Ladies Home Internationals.

An earlier encounter that day between the two teams ended in a draw. At the end of the competition, both teams were in equal 3rd place. Therefore, the two teams

had to go into battle again in a play off, where Scotland took the honours. It was the first time Scottish youth had conquered the England young guns in the three year history of the competition.

England Masters were the overall champions this year, winning the Home Nations trophy. The England elite squad won the Victor Ludorum Trophy. A full competition report with results in our next edition. *AM*

BOA NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND GB SQUADS POSTS

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