

Madrid tournament, May 14th 2011

What do you get when you put a scratch «Swiss» underwater hockey team together with ten players from seven different nations? Including several former nationals players, a few with more than 20 years playing experience and one with just a few short months? Surprisingly, a fairly cohesive team after nine Madrid tournament games together!

Despite the wealth of experience in the team and Martin Reed's able coaching, «Team Swiss» needed a game or two

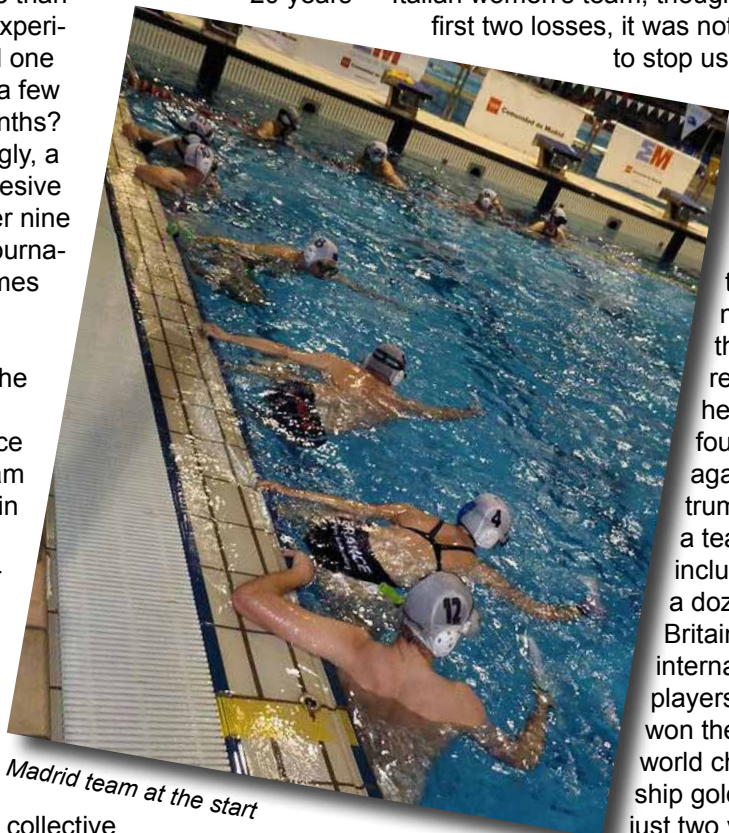
to find its collective feet, dropping a game to the Madrid men's team, followed by a painful loss to Dordrecht, one of Europe's top club teams. Our forwards had trouble advancing into Dordrecht's half, and our (Dutch, no less!) backs were no match for their individual skill and teamwork. Still, the losses to Madrid and Dordrecht, which went on to win

fourth place in the tournament's first division, helped Team Swiss settle into a practiced formation, which served us well throughout the rest of the day.

In our third game, Team Swiss racked up a relatively easy victory against the Italian women's team, though after the first two losses, it was not enough to stop us from

dropping into the lower division for the rest of Madrid tournament. Still, the pace remained hectic in our fourth game against Spectrum Angels, a team which included half a dozen Great Britain women's internationals players who had won the CMAS world championship gold medal just two years before. Spectrum

Angels outplayed us on almost every level other than speed, and our game consisted of constant defending. However, thanks mainly to our Dutch defenders (perhaps still nursing a grudge after the Dordrecht loss), we managed to hold on for a 0-0 draw.



Madrid team at the start

Team Swiss' fifth game was against the Madrid U-15s, which was a very educational one for the team's newest player due to the opponent's blatant and repeated fouling! Still, Team Swiss kept its cool to win 4-1, even though Martin—a qualified world championship referee—couldn't help but flip his lid at one particularly grievous offense near Madrid's goal. It didn't end up doing any good though.

Our sixth game was a second victory over the Italian women's team, but after six matches of just eight minutes each, the games were now extended to two 12-minute periods. Our first 24-minute game of the day ended in a comfortable 6-1 win over the Madrid ladies,

who played well as a team but couldn't match Team Swiss' speed and individual skill.

After a long and much-needed break, we played the South West Ladies in a tough and well-matched game, which we hung on to win. The highlight of this game was Kevin Broadfoot, who was playing right forward, being sent out for what seemed to be no reason. Kevin had substituted in for Dave McGaughey, who had apparently committed a minor infringement, for which he had been cautioned by the referee, before subbing out. Unfortunately, Kevin also committed a minor infringement a few moments later, and because Dave and Kevin were both playing with



Madrid team on the podium

number nine caps, the referee probably took it as another offense following the earlier warning and sent Dave-Kevin out--because what referee would expect two members of the same team playing the same position to wear the same cap number?

The day's last game - the second division final - was a rematch against Spectrum Angels--who we had struggled to hold to a draw earlier in the day--for top of the second division and ninth place overall. Late in the day with everyone tiring, this still proved to be a tenacious fight on the part of both teams. The quality of our back line really showed in this game, not just at stopping our op-

ponents' attempts on our goal but also scoring goals of their own for Team Swiss to ultimately come out victorious.

So what started as a disorganized squad of players with very different levels of experience grew in poise and solidarity throughout the day, and the Madrid tournament's Division 2 champion's trophy went back to Zurich with Martin and Katherine.

Text: Katherine Bart
Pictures: Martin Reed





Martin Reed and Katherine Bart from USZ-Zürich