

14 UWH Strassbourg tournament

UWH Zürich@Strasbourg

13 October 2013

A big first for UWH Zürich - the first tournament ever which was attended by an all Zürich team, and a full team of ten players at that!

A big first for me as well, my first tournament in about 13 years, but it felt just like coming home!

The training sessions at Oerlikon leading up to the tournament were well attended, and I was lucky (cheeky) enough to be able to impose/connive/convince/persuade the team to try some fine tuning in terms of strategy and team formation. This mainly consisted of convincing Sylvania and Robin that they should play in positions that they were completely unfamiliar and uncomfortable with.

But I am convinced that the strategy paid off. Both did a very good job dealing with the new situation. And they are both still talking to me, so it couldn't have been such a terrible experience. Having ten players was a luxury, it meant we could give 100% throughout the tournament.

Philipp and I substituted at centre forward, which unfortunately meant that I never got to be in the game with Philipp at the same time, but also meant we could share the intensive work load that a centre forward has. Or more precisely, that I could let Philipp do most of the work.

First game for us, and the first game of the tournament, was against the Mulhouse men. I was really impressed with the focussed and relaxed way we played this game – a guy from Mulhouse later told me that they never

start a tournament well, but we certainly did, playing to our strengths and strategy and coming away with a solid 3 – 1 victory.

The Mulhouse men were followed by the Mulhouse women. Theoretically an easy game for us but, as I expected, the women did an excellent job of playing to their strengths (and we were kind enough to let them), which meant the game was more of a struggle than it should have been. We won fairly comfortably, about 7 – 2, but we definitely had the potential to score in the double figures.

The next team were definitely a bigger challenge – the stronger Strasbourg team. They had a close game against Mulhouse, winning just 3 – 2, so theoretically we had a good chance of beating them. Unfortunately the end result of about 7 – 1 against us didn't reflect how close the game really was. When we stayed tight and in formation we were more than capable of holding our own. Just a slightly better defence, and the result would have been dramatically different.

Last up was Strasbourg 2, again theoretically a relatively easy win for us. We played a good first half; probably our best performance of the day. Some dubious scoring (or maybe it's just my poor French) left us trailing by just one goal behind at half time. Despite our plentiful substitutes, the second half proved to be our downfall, we were all tired and our previously tight game plan came apart at the seams. The team in the water did a great job of keeping the pressure on and having the patience to convert a prolonged series of free pucks into a goal (Robin showing off



*Richard, Zsuzsa, Marie, Philipp, Sylvania, Robin, Jeremy, Warren, Alex, Martin.
It was a first for us to have a full team of ten players, ALL from Zürich!*

his huge pass), but this wasn't enough to stem the flow. The final result was a convincing victory for Strassbourg 2. Overall we placed third of five teams, but more important for me was the satisfaction of seeing a new team come together and perform well. Even more personally rewarding was to see that the team has much potential that remains yet untapped. Much respect and credit to Martin for having the patience, energy and vision to bring UWH Zürich to this point.

French tournaments are notorious for their lack of party, so we had to invent our own and headed off to what the locals said was a great restaurant.

Unfortunately we were again victims of French eccentricity and efficiency. It turns out that the French like to recycle street numbers in the same street, which made it hard to find the restaurant we were aiming for. The alternative was not too bad, a great Turkish restaurant, with lots of Turkish customers, which is always a good sign. Thanks everybody for the opportunity to play in such a motivated team, I am very much looking forward to my next tournament as part of an all UWH Zürich team!

Richard Deverson