

Water Polo 2005

National Update
October 2005

Norman Leighton Reports From Cairo, Egypt 26th Sept- 2nd October 2005



Monday morning 26th September I was up early packing bags for the long drive to Heathrow to meet up with a very young England squad, the first trip in three years – in fact, since the Commonwealth Tournament in April 2002.

This was also my first trip as Senior Coach. A 12 man squad was chosen and assembled at London Heathrow before checking in with Air Egypt for the 4½ hour direct flight to Cairo. The majority of the team were from the 1982 -1987 year groups, making this one of the youngest National Men's team to compete in a senior tournament. This was due in part to work, contractual obligations and the European Club championships taking place the same weekend!. Lancaster and Bristol travelled Europe.

What an opportunity this was for some young blood from the junior ranks to show their prowess. Mark Banwell was unavailable, or so we thought, because of his contract with Aix les Baines (France). However, just as we were boarding Alex Parsonage happened to mention that Banwell was coming home due to a change in circumstances in France. 20 minutes and thirty plus phone calls later we had him booked on the Wednesday flight out of London. He would make our third game! ...not.

It was late or was it early Tuesday morning when Assem our guide and No. 1 Egyptian supporter, helped us book in to the Karvan Hotel. He was a young ex-polo player with Heliopolis, and anything and everything was possible with him - we just had to ask!

Training was sorted for that morning - 1½ hours in the noon day sun. This gave us our first look at the 3 pool outdoor complex at the Heliopolis Club which, this year was celebrating 100 years!

There were 2 leagues of 5 teams thus guaranteeing 6 games as long as we didn't finish last in our group. I must stress at this point that winning at all cost was not the purpose of this tournament. Rather, these games were used as the first building block in preparation for forthcoming events in the short term (2006 Commonwealth's), midterm (2007 European Bs) and long term (Olympics).

The tournament was played under the 'old' rules, 35 sec etc. Having played with the new rules for a couple of weeks in the NWPL, reverting to the old rules did seem to make the game 'slower' – so maybe the new rules are for the better after all!

28th September 11.00am

v Wurzburg, Germany lost 4-6 (3-3,0-0,1-2,0-1) [Tournament finalists]

A strong counter attacking team, the Germans were well organised and knew their team mates play. England was well disciplined in defence adapting well between single drop and press. A very pleasing performance, the squad showed structure throughout the game. Especially pleasing were the juniors, with Ed Scott having a particularly confident start in the nets. Our downfall was scoring only once from 8 man ups!

Man Up scored 1 from 8 (12½%)

Man Down Conceded 1 from 2 (50%)

28th September 9.00pm

v Heliopolis lost 5-9 (2-3,1-1,1-1,1-4) [Tournament winners]

The home team proved too strong for our limited squad who showed great composure, England made significant improvements from the mornings encounter until the final period. Better deliveries into the pit forward was highlighted for one area of improvement. The other, Man Ups, again!!

Man Up scored 2 from 9 (22%)

Man Down conceded 2 from 3 (33%)

29th September 7.00pm

v Royal Brussels won 13-10 (3-1,3-2,3-3,4-4)

The game was a lot easier than the score suggests. Players were able to change defences to dictate the game.

Man Up scored 3 from 4 (75%)

Man Down conceded 4 from 6 (33%)

30th September 10.00am

v Al Ahly, Saudi Arabia won 14-12 (4-1,5-3,3-5,2-3)

A very strong physical side that had excellent shooters and strong pit players. However, Banwell was free-scoring and the whole team played well.

Man Up scored 3 from 5 (60%)

Man Down conceded 2 from 5 (80%)

30th September 8.00am A tour of the pyramids and the papyrus museum, FANTASTIC!

30th September 7.00pm

v Heliopolis Jnrs won 13-3 (3-1,2-2,2-0,6-0)

The score suggested everything. A spirited Heliopolis side capitulated in the second half of the game. The final period was very much a high press and counter attack.

Man Up scored 2 from 2 (100%)

Man Down conceded 0 from 2 (100%)

1st October 4.30pm PLAY OFF 5th–6th place

v Al Ahly, Saudi Arabia won 5-4 (1-1,1-0,1-2,2-1)

After studying the previous game with Al Ahly, we neutralised their best two players, adapting our defence between a single drop and high press. In return, they had worked hard to neutralise our centre forward as well! This was always going to be a low scoring game after the feast from the previous day, and was an extremely close nail-biting tactical match.

Man Up scored 1 from 7 (14%)

Man Down conceded 0 from 3 (100%)

Summary

A very encouraging start to the senior programme with a very enthusiastic, skilful and youthful squad which came together as individuals and left Egypt with a feeling of team spirit and a great desire to move onto the next phase together. We now move onto the Commonwealth Tournament and after that ... well, we've already been invited back to Heliopolis next September ...

FINAL PLACINGS:

1st Heliopolis 2nd Wurzburg (Germany) 3rd Caodurovicenza (Italy)

4th Makarska (Croatia) 5th England 6th Ahly (Saudi Arabia)

7th PSV Eindhoven (The Netherlands) 8th Heliopolis Juniors

9th Alqadisiyah (Saudi Arabia) 10th Royal Brussels

**“Water Polo 2005”
interviewed two new faces at
Grantham Academy about
their first impressions of the
college:
GRANTHAM
WATER POLO ACADEMY**

Part 1: Lucy & Sean's
New Term at Grantham

Name: Lucy Deacon

Club: Haywards Heath & member of the
British Youth Women's Squad

Name: Sean King

Club: Invicta & member of the British
Youth Men's Squad



**When did you start your Grantham
College course?**

Lucy: September 2005

Sean: September 2005

What course are you doing?

Lucy: BTEC National Diploma in Sports
Development, Fitness and Coaching

Sean: AS Levels in History, PE and Eng-
lish Literature

**How much training do you do per
week?**

Lucy: 17½ Hours

Sean: 19 Hours

**How does this compare with your
Club training?**

Lucy: Much more intense, normally only
get 6-7 hours max at my Club.

Sean: Club was only 8 hours max.

**How are you finding the Academy
Water Polo sessions?**

Lucy: Really, really fun!!! But a lot
harder than I expected and very chal-
lenging.

Sean: Challenging but also good fun!

**What are the other Academy Students
like?**

Lucy: Wicked! friendly and one big fam-
ily – we do nearly everything together.

Sean: Great, we are like a big family, we
cook together, live together and party
together.

**What is it like leaving home and living
in the halls?**

Lucy: Really good because you have
your own independence and even
though they have strict rules it's a good
laugh.

Sean: Not as difficult as I expected. At
first I was worried about leaving home
until I got here and settled in. I realised
that living in the halls is awesome, espe-
cially when you have a great bunch of
people who you make good friends with.

**What do you hope to achieve at Gran-
tham College?**

Lucy: To improve my position within the
British Youth Squad

Sean: I would like to leave Grantham
with a good set of grades and have im-
proved my position within the GB Youth
Men's Squad.

**What are your personal goals short
and long term?**

Lucy: Short term to improve my tech-
nique and power. Long term to reach a
high standard of water polo.

Sean: Short term I would like to remain
in the GB Youth Squad and make the
squad to travel to exotic places! In the
long term I want to be there for 2012.
Playing in an Olympics would be some-
thing very special, even more so as they
are in London.

**What do you like so far about attend-
ing the Grantham Academy?**

Lucy: The team atmosphere, and train-
ing with lots of people of a high stan-
dard so I can improve.

Sean: The way I can do all of my train-
ing and College work together. It's also
making me much more organised and
hopefully more mature!

**Do you have any advice for anyone
who is thinking about going to Gran-
tham College Water Polo Academy?**

Lucy: If you're serious about your
water polo and have the desire to be
the best then the only way is to go to
Grantham and increase your training
while you study.

Sean: The London Olympics are go-
ing to be awesome. If you want to
be there in 2012 Grantham College is
the path you must take.

*We'll catch up with Lucy and
Sean later on in the Academic
Year to see how their studies
and water polo is going!*

The next Grantham College Water
Polo Academy Open Day is on **9th
December** contact Jim Caulfield or
Sue Langston for further informa-
tion.

jcaulfield@grantham.ac.uk
slangston@grantham.ac.uk



LEN Water Polo Referee Clinic Eger, Hungary 12 – 14 August 2005

“WP2005 asked Mike Jukes about his refs clinic”

When the phone call came to ask if I was available to attend the clinic, it caught me somewhat by surprise. The answer, however, was an automatic “yes”



Because of living in the Midlands it took some time to finalise the travel arrangements and necessitated a ten hour journey, though chunks of this were spent sitting in airport lounges.

On arrival, I think that it was fair to say there was an element of nerves present, though after brief introductions to the other course attendees these abated.

Then the course started on the Friday morning, bright and early.

Having heard of the old way that delegates approached tournaments and somewhat dictated the way games were to be refereed, it was nice to hear that the current LEN approach was for the delegate to be part of a team with the referees in a spirit of promotion of the sport. The two or three hour session that morning was interesting as it gave a further insight into the interpretations of the rules, and the way games should be approached by referees, expanding a lot further than been given in this country.

Then we were informed that we would be refereeing at a tournament with two games that afternoon. As the delegate went on to describe the importance of how the first game in a tournament is to be refereed, and how the standard is to be set by that game, we jokingly said that it would be one of the British referees who would act ‘as a guinea pig’ for that game.

Just before lunch, I was then informed I would be refereeing the first game that afternoon!

After lunch we went to the pool to start the tournament. Looking around and seeing fourteen other referees and a LEN delegate watching was a little nerve racking, though once we had a pre-match discussion and the game got underway, it was good to just be able to focus fully on the game in hand. At the end of the game and de-brief, it was a pleasant feeling to be congratulated by all the other referees and to be able to relax with them. With hindsight I probably felt better having got a game under my belt early on. Saturday was spent in two halves – answering a series of questions in the morning as a group for a later presentation that evening, then refereeing that afternoon. The second game I refereed, though a harder game, I was definitely more relaxed and felt better about. Sandwiched in between the halves was a guided visit to Eger, and Hungary’s water polo museum a place full of trophies, medals and history showing how good the Hungarians have been over the last seventy years. The early part of the evening was then spent in a presentation / question and answer session which allowed us to open out on the various interpretations of the rules, and the official LEN approach.

Sunday was again spent refereeing, though I was not involved having done my two games on the previous days.

Probably the only downside of the course itself was that with the imminent introduction of the new rules, no more than ten minutes can have been spent over the weekend discussing them, and considering that those of us on the course will hopefully be amongst the first LEN referees to be examined on the changes in the theory exam next year, I think that a longer time should possibly have been spent on them.

To end on a positive note, the course was very well organised, in a superb location, and gave me a chance to discuss water polo and to referee with a number of people from different countries.

Mike Jukes

WP2005 asked boys youth squad member Glen Robinson some questions



Your club: Lancaster/Kendal

Your coach: Ron Winn, Darren Gibson

How do you fit in your school work and training: Do it in free periods at college and free time at home

Your favourite player: Tom Curwen

Best game played in: When I played Manchester in Stirling

Worst water polo memory: Loosing ASA final

What do you enjoy about the sport: Its different to all other sports

Any polo dislikes: Very hard training

Other sports you play: football

Other sports you watch: football, cricket and rugby

Favourite food and drink: Pizza and chips

Spare time interests: Playing football

Your aspirations for the future in polo: Olympics

Your aspirations for the future outside polo: Fitness instructor

What does being a member of the youth squad mean to you? A lot as I am very proud of representing my Country

Why did you choose to start polo over other sports? Got bored of swimming so I got into water polo instead

Who has been your greatest inspiration: Tom Curwen

Who is your biggest fan : family

Who is your favourite coach and why: Ron as he is strict and good

What’s the best pool you have played in: Manchester Aquatics and Lancaster

What do your schoolmates think of all the training you do? Very proud of my achievement, but annoyed as I choose it over going out at night

Are there any sacrifices you make in your life to play polo: Not going on holiday

Favourite music/band: 50 Cent

LANCASTER MAKE WAVES IN LEN TROPHY

Report from Zak Sly



British Champions, Lancaster, have just returned from another successful week competing in the European Club Water Polo Championships in Rijeka, Croatia. Participation in the LEN Trophy was the club's fifth venture into Europe and for the second time the team managed to win two games and come within one place of qualifying for the next round.

The first game played was against the host side Primorje Ersta Banka. Lancaster started nervously as the home side backed by a large partisan crowd got off to a confident start and soon established a three goal advantage. However, Lancaster adapted well to the raised tempo of the game and responded with goals from Colin Burgess and Dougie Campbell. For the remainder of the game Lancaster held their own but Primorje went on to win by 12:8.

Next up, less than five hours later, was Bayer Uerdingen from Germany. As many people from football have often stated 'why is it always the Germans'. The game started at a frenetic pace with Lancaster establishing a 2:0 lead through early strikes from Colin Burgess and Tom Curwen. The teams then exchanged goals as the game approached half time. What happened next arguably had a major impact not only on the final outcome of this game, but also on Lancaster's chances of progressing in the competition. Following a tussle near the German goal, one of their players punched Colin Burgess and took him out of the game. The incident, unfortunately missed by all three officials, went unpunished and with Colin out of the game and heading

for hospital, the Germans gradually got on top and eventually ran out 13:7 winners.

Friday saw Lancaster take on the powerful Dinamo Moscow side from Russia. Burgess was ruled out for this for this game. X-rays had revealed no break in his jaw but a dislocation which needed further time to settle down. The Russians started at an impressive pace and were soon 3:0 up. The whole Lancaster side dug deep and battled hard, replying with goals from Neil Bowers, Tom Curwen and Dougie Campbell. However, the Russians finished strongly and the game ended 21:6 to the eventual tournament winners.

SpreyHout Alphen from Holland were the opponents on Saturday lunchtime in a game earmarked by the players and Coach Mark Taylor as a potential victory opportunity. Driven forward by former England Captain Neil Bowers, and lifted by the shock return of Burgess, Lancaster started well and enjoyed the bulk of possession in the early stages. This advantage was driven home with goals from Bowers, Burgess and Curwen (2). Lancaster then had goalkeeper Dave Bush to thank as he brought off a string of top class saves, including a penalty. Further goals were then added by Campbell Curwen, Bowers and Andy Squires which helped Lancaster maintain their slender lead and run out winners by 8:6.

The Italians from Bissolata Crimona were the fifth opponents for Lancaster. Crimona included in their ranks American International [Antony Azevedo](#) (pictured below) who is on a \$250K contract to play in Italy, a reality check when you consider each of the Lancaster players had to pay to represent their club and country. The Italians controlled the game from the early stages and gradually developed a comfortable lead with the help of three goals from Azevedo. Lancaster managed to check the Italian's advantage with goals from Curwen and Campbell but eventually went down 14:6.



The final game for Lancaster saw the challenge of CH Hornets Kosice from Slovakia. Lancaster started impressively and soon developed a four goal lead through Hartley,

Burgess, Bowers and Curwen. Following half-time Lancaster continued to push on in what was widely acknowledged as one of club's most impressive performances in recent memory. The game also became a personal highlight for youngster Tom Curwen who weighed in with an amazing personal tally of 8 goals as Lancaster entered the last two minutes with a comfortable advantage of 13:6. Kosice did hit back with 3 goals in the late stages to give a final scoreline of 13:9.

This rounded off a great week for the northern club, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all players and supporters alike. The total party travelling with Lancaster numbered 27, and outside the home side, Lancaster enjoyed the most vocal and committed support. Many thanks from the players, Coach Mark Taylor and Team Manager Duncan Holmes to those who travelled to support the team.

Finally the club managed to make many encouraging contacts for possible training camps and player opportunities, which will hopefully be explored during the coming months as Lancaster continue to play their part in promoting British water polo.

Final League Table

	Pld	Pts
1. Dinamo Moscow	6	12
2. Bissolata Cremona	6	10
3. Primorje Rijeka	6	8
4. Bayer Uerdingen	6	6
5. Lancaster City	6	4
6. CH Hornets Kosice	6	2
7. Spreyhout Alphen	6	0

Leading Marksmen

Tom Curwen	23
Dougie Campbell	9
Colin Burgess	7
Neil Bowers	4
Andy Squires	2
Chris Hartley	2
Jamie McIlQuaham	1

Players: D. Bush (Gk), Z. Sly (GK) T. Curwen C. Burgess D. Campbell C. Hartley N. Bowers R. Pinington A.Squries J. Mcilquham S. Broadbent R. Davis Ro. Davis J. Lawlor

Bristol Central LEN Trophy Sept 28th - Oct 2nd, Brescia, Italy



Bristol Central expect the worst and usually get drawn in some far flung Eastern European water polo stronghold where the food and accommodation can be best described as 'ropey' and where pools are coloured dark green !
So, when the draw was made in August and we were off to Brescia Italy, there was a whoop of delight to be playing in the land of Pasta and Pizza. Then we saw the list of teams !!!!
From Hungary, Croatia, Greece and the host Italians..... world class countries and also the French and Austrians.... Stiff competition !

Our 1st game V Patras – Greece - gave us an early wake up call as to the standard of play..... Physically they weren't much bigger but they were a fit team and they reacted quicker on change of possession. This showed with 3 counter attack goals leaving a 1st Qtr score of 4 -1. In the 2nd & 3rd Quarters, Patras scored freely from set attacks and extra man, and they ran out easy winners **16 – 5**.

The 2nd game on the Thursday V Medvescak Zagreb of Croatia was a much closer game. Only 4- 2 down after the 1st quarter and lots of missed extra man chances made the team realise that we could compete against a professional team. We hung on grimly at times but with halftime at 7 -4 & 3rd Qtr at 9 -5 we kept the opposing team under pressure. We finally lost **11 -8** but not before Craig Figes unleashed a rocket in the top corner from 15 metres out . That set the Croatian coach into a final 'rant' at his team for not dispatching us Brits into oblivion. He was not a happy coach!

Friday's game was against Brendon Eger of Hungary. This was a very harsh lesson of how to counter attack and score of **28 -3** reflected that. To our credit, we kept maintaining a full 6 man attack and didn't use negative tactics. The French & Austrian teams were beaten by similar scores using such tactics so we felt we had a small moral victory.

Saturday morning saw us play the home team Brescia , who were clear favourites to win this round and full of world class internationals such as Calcaterra , Hinic and Vicevic. Knowing what to expect and better use of possession saw Central not suffer so many counter attack goals. Playing an active defence on the centre forward position reduced goals from this position but the quality of the outside shooting was exceptional. Our tally of 5 goals were pleasing and so was a score of 1 -1 halfway through the 1st quarter! But Brescia ran out clear winners **18 -5** and we were pleased we kept going throughout the game with a full 6 man attack.

Saturday evening saw us play Taverny from France. Clearly they were favourites and they included 5 Russians – 1 being veteran Apasencko who starred for Russia in the '93 Europeans at Sheffield. We started very strongly by going 5- 2 up mid way through the 2nd, but once again good outside shooting kept them in the game. Our very active defence and constant counter attack put pressure on them throughout, but we tired and fell behind 12 -9 early in the 4th quarter. A time – out gave us a respite and then the team began a fight back that caught Taverny completely off guard. We levelled it 12 -12 with less than 2 minutes to go and then missed an extra man chance to go ahead. Taverny's extra experience told in the final part of the game and 2 late goals sealed it for them to win 14 -12. We felt we had a real opportunity to beat a higher placed team, and were very disappointed.

Our final game V Tirol Innsbruck on Sunday morning was our last chance to win. We don't normally start well when playing morning water polo but this was a fabulous exception! Constant counter attack and excellent finishing saw us take a 6 – 0 lead midway through the 2nd quarter and a 9 -2 half time score sent the game out of reach for the demoralised Austrians. We included all of our bench players in the 2nd half and to gain valuable experience and we ran out comfortable winners 13 – 7.

This meant we finished in 6th place, one off the bottom. Brescia (who beat beat Eger in the feature game on TV 15 -10) won the group. Eger, Patras and Medvescak qualified for the next round.

The competition was played under the new rules and this will have a major effect on the game particularly the longer quarters and shorter possession time. It will mean more fitness and swimming required and the difference between the professional teams who train daily and teams like us will widen considerably

Players who shone throughout the competition for Central were Craig Figes – with 21 goals, Daniel Williams and Jon Hutchens in attack - Matt Thresher & John Sissons in defence and Andy Crawford as goalkeeper.

19/10/05

WP2005 has received a communication from the Men's National League Committee regarding the proposed structure of the league for the 2006 season.

The committee of the men's National League has announced radical plans for changes in the competition's structure in 2006. This involves a switch from three divisions each of 10 teams to four eight-team divisions.

Subject to the approval of clubs at next January's AGM, there will be no promotion or relegation after the current programme and no end-of-season play-offs this December. Based on final positions in 2005, the league will operate like this:

Div One	Div Two	Div Three	Div Four
Top 8	Teams 9/10, Div 1 Teams 1-6, Div 2	Teams 7-10, Div 2 Teams 1-4, Div 3	Teams 5-10, Div 3 2 new teams

In future, teams will play only one match per day – or two games on each of seven weekends. The mid-season split in Division One will no longer apply.

The committee believes change is inevitable on two fronts. The new FINA rules on duration of matches demand significantly more pool time (*75 minutes* per game in pools with warm-up facilities; *90 minutes*, where no warm-up area is available).

Secondly, the league is increasingly experiencing difficulty in booking pools of sufficient quality – and with convenient timings – to accommodate the season as it now operates. Some pools are not available until 3pm on Saturday. Therefore, there are weekends this year involving six matches on one day and as many as nine on the other, inevitably leading to late finishes and late journeys home for officials and players.

The advantages of eight-team divisions include:

- With only four matches per division per day, most venues could stage matches from two divisions at the same pool.
- While the league will increase its membership (30 to 32), the total number of games will decrease – reducing pool time requirements, referee/officials commitments and costs.
- With careful planning, the number of venues should not substantially increase.

Retaining the present 10-team divisions would mean more weekends and considerable extra expense for clubs in pool hire, travel and accommodation. The season would be much longer, some divisions playing on consecutive weekends, which is never popular.

The other key consideration is that the current programme already puts great demands on delegates, event managers, referees and table officials. The league committee believes that further expansion would stretch demand beyond the present thin resources.

Clearly, the “no promotion” proposal is controversial. The committee acknowledges that it will be a disappointment to the Division 2 and 3 champions as well as to the respective divisional runners-up, who would normally issue a promotion challenge. However, it is argued that eight-team divisions will still move these clubs into more competitive divisions.

The league is organising a tournament for potential new clubs at Walsall on 10/11 December.

**“Waller Invitation”
U13s Water Polo
Tournament**

**Hosted by Exeter City Water Polo Club and the Devon
ASA**

Sunday 27th November 12.00hrs start

**Pyramids Leisure Centre,
Exeter**

Admission free

**For further information
contact:-**

Jaggers@exeterwaterpolo.co.uk

www.exeterwaterpolo.co.uk

R.T.C. update

The first block of ten weeks in the second year of the RTC cycle is now underway. As part of a continuing improvement process administration has now been centralised and is overseen by National Junior Women's coach Sue Langston. If you have an enquiry about the RTC please contact Sue at :-

slangston@grantham.ac.uk

The centres are:

South: Crystal Palace
West: Taunton
Midlands: Nottingham Uni
North East: Leeds
North: Miles Platting, Bolton School
Man Grammar

Contact Us:

E-Mail:
waterpolo@swimming.org

website:
www.britishswimming.org

Regional Development Coordinators:

South East: **TBA**
London: **TBA**
South West: **Mike Coles**
West Mids: **TBA**
East Region: **Steve Chambers**
East Mids Region: **Simon Horton**
North East: **Felicity O'Leary**
RDO
North West Region: **Fran Leighton**

**If you or your company would like
to get involved in sponsoring**

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**please contact Nick Hume at
waterpolo@swimming.org**