

ASA U18 Junior Boys Qualification Round 2010 Report By Ron Winn



Lancaster verses City of Birmingham is the ASA Junior Men's Water Polo Final 2010

Lancaster last meeting with Birmingham resulted in Lancaster losing by 1goal scored in the last seconds of the game. Lancaster was determined to redress the balance as they felt robbed by their own negligence.

The final started well for Lancaster as Decland Ellwood playing pit forward forced a Birmingham exclusion which resulted in Elliott Trafford scoring the opening goal. Birmingham hit back directly forcing a Lancaster exclusion which they scored from. Lancaster had lost their focus as Birmingham scored their 2nd. Lancaster bounced back immediately for Michael Brown to level the scores. Birmingham responded by forcing a Lancaster exclusion and scoring from the man advantage. Decland restored parity with a fine pit forwards goal. The game was swinging from end to end, first Lancaster attacking then Birmingham taking up the challenge. One Birmingham attack forced Lancaster exclusion as Birmingham increased the lead. Lancaster then suffered a mini disaster ,first an exclusion which they managed to defend, then they suffered a second exclusion, but the Lancaster player played on causing a third major incident. Birmingham was awarded a penalty and the Lancaster player was excluded for the rest of the game. Birmingham scored the penalty to take a 2 goal lead. Lancaster seemed stunned by these decisions and lost 2 quick goals to leave the score at the end of the 1st quarter Birmingham7 Lancaster 4

Lancaster had to be reassured that they could get something out of this game despite losing one of their main players and trailing by 3goals.

Lancaster started the 2nd quarter well forcing Birmingham to concede a penalty. Luke Franks scored. Luke full of endeavour raced forward from the restart to steal a 2nd goal reducing Birmingham's lead to 1 goal. Lancaster continued to charge forward and was rewarded with another goal this time from Sam Smith. Lancaster persistent attacking forced Birmingham exclusion, Luke completed his hat trick and Lancaster had the lead. Lancaster had dominated the quarter scoring 4 goals to Birmingham's none. The score at the end of the 2nd quarter Birmingham 7 Lancaster 8

Lancaster started positively forcing yet another Birmingham exclusion as Jake Starkie increased Lancaster's lead. Birmingham regained their composure forcing Lancaster exclusion and reducing the deficit to 1 goal. Lancaster were now confident and determined not to allow Birmingham space as Lancaster scored through Decland after forcing Birmingham to concede an exclusion . Birmingham hit back and scored to keep the deficit to 1 goal. Birmingham did not seem to know how to control Lancaster's forward play as Decland scored. Birmingham hit back with strong attacking play and scored twice to level the score. Lancaster responded positively as Decland and Jake score to restore Lancaster 2 goal advantage. Birmingham's response was to force Lancaster to concede a penalty. Dylan Smith in the Lancaster goal pulled of a magnificent save to keep Lancaster's noses in front. The game had entered a phase where both teams were trying to establish a control on the game. The 3rd quarter finished Birmingham 11 Lancaster 13

Decland got Lancaster of to an excellent start with a well worked goal. Birmingham hit back immediately with a speculative goal. Birmingham then suffered a setback as their Captain was excluded and would miss the rest of the game. Elliott scored from the resultant extra man set up play and increased Lancaster's lead to 3 goals. Lancaster who had been controlled well by their young coach Zak Sly throughout the game called a timeout. From the resultant set up play Decland scores his 6th of the game. Birmingham fought back to score after

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Lancaster exclusion. Lancaster called a second timeout but failed to score from the setup play. Birmingham hit back and scored to reduce the deficit to 2 goals with 2 minutes remaining of the game. The next goal would be crucial; Lancaster pressed forward causing Birmingham exclusion. Jake Starkie scored from the extraman situation to give Lancaster a 3 goal cushion with 1 minute remaining. The exciting game finished with Lancaster winning the ASA U18 trophy again after a 19 year absence.

Final score Lancaster 17 Birmingham 14

Lancaster showed great resolve as Coach Zak Sly had to play with 2 of his first 7 excluded early in the game. He used his squad selectively getting the best out of the team. The whole team should take great pride in the way they performed under pressure. The team showed good discipline and controlled themselves in a professional manner as early in the game things were not going their way. Congratulations to all concerned.

The ASA U18 2010 Champions are :- Dylan Smith, Sam Liver, Lawrence Daykin, Luke Franks(3), Elliott Trafford(2), Michael Brown(1), Robert Simpson, Mathew Grieve(1), Mathew Calvert(1), Decland Ellwood(6), Jake Starkie(2), Sam Smith(1), Stefan Detko