

Water polo Scots aim to make a splash

Scotland's under 14 water polo development squad, containing six players from Edinburgh clubs, are aiming to make a splash in Walsall this weekend at a UK inter-regional tournament.

As well as facing Ireland the opposition will include regional teams from England. They are North West Tigers, London Sharks, East Midlands, South East, East, South West Sharks, West Midlands Warriors and North East Steelers.

Coach Ruairidh Henderson, a 20-year-old Sport and Exercise student at Edinburgh Napier University says it is an ideal opportunity for the fledgling squad to test themselves.

"The boys did compete in Ireland earlier this year but we will have a better idea of where we are at, standard-wise, when the two day competition finishes on Sunday.

"It is a very well rounded (13 player) squad who have come together from a variety of backgrounds."

One thing the squad definitely have in common is swimming ability.

Adds Henderson, who plays alongside team manager Peter Wilson for the crack Dunfermline club who have been to the forefront of the Scottish men's game in recent years along with Portobello:

“A lot of our players have transitioned from swimming as they wanted a bit more variety, more excitement in the water.”

It is certainly an interesting time for junior water polo.

“Many of our clubs actually have more junior than senior players so the future looks bright for the sport especially with under-16’s and under-18’s functioning well” says Henderson.

There is certainly a strong tradition in Scottish/British water polo to uphold.

“Team GB haven’t qualified for the Olympics since 2012 but right at the start water polo was the first team sport introduced to the Olympics and Britain won three tournaments in a row from 1908 onwards” says Henderson.

Team member Bram Stenhouse, aged 12, said, “We are really looking forward to playing in the tournament this weekend. It is an honour to play for our country. Everyone in the team has trained really hard to get to this point.”

Bram’s team-mate John Wilson, aged 13, said, “We’ve worked all year to be able to represent Scotland. We’re really excited to test ourselves against tough opposition.”

The squad has been selected following an intensive year-long training schedule with the Scottish Water Polo National Development Programme.

As well as overall tournament winner, accolades up for grabs include individual awards for top goal scorers and most valuable players for each team. The top five teams overall will form Division One for the under-16 boys inter-regional championships from 2025.

Team manager Wilson says: “The under 14s boys are ready for the

tournament and are excited to have the opportunity to represent Scotland in a very competitive environment.”

Scotland under-14 boys: Matt Alborough (Stirling), Frank Bacik (Menziesshill), Andrew Coulson (Menziesshill), Charlie Grey (Warrender), Fraser Hughes (Dunfermline), Alex Hurd (Portobello), James Lees (Dunfermline), Ben Maclean (Warrender), Dominic Moodie (Portobello), Murray Simpson (West Edinburgh Stingrays), Bram Stenhouse (Warrender), Caleb Wilson (Stirling) and John Wilson (Dunfermline).

