

## **ASA East Region Water Polo Senior Championships 2007**

(Report by Dave Warriner)

The third East Region Senior Championships took place at Queen Elizabeth School, Barnet on 24 November.

This all-deep water venue was regarded with trepidation by some players used to the sanctuary of the shallow end – and the sight of 30-second possession “shot clocks” further alarmed those used to a more leisurely approach to build-up play.

Amidst all this professionalism the tournament lacked just two things: Bedfordshire (to make up a full complement of counties) and National League referees (despite enormous efforts from tournament organiser Chris Stephens to secure them).

Fortunately between the counties we came up with enough ‘men in white’ and the whistling began in earnest with Norfolk facing last year’s runners-up, Cambs.

Despite the brave efforts of the men from the north-east, Cambs ran out 9-1 winners. It was a similar story in the second match, with current champions Essex easing past Herts 8-1.

There was just one game’s rest for Norfolk who were back in the pool against neighbours Suffolk in a game which went right to the wire. Heading for a draw at 4-4, Norfolk were awarded a penalty seconds from the end of the game which was successfully converted. Cambs continued their progress with a 6-0 victory over Herts, and Essex eventually overpowered Suffolk 8-3.

Herts, having conceded 14 goals in their opening two encounters, came back at Norfolk with a strong performance to win 6-1 and Cambs beat Suffolk by the same scoreline. Cambs would have enjoyed a second clean sheet of the competition but for the temporary loss of concentration by their keeper Andy Knight, caught unawares by a screamer from the halfway line by Suffolk’s Chris Pryke.

Essex wobbled badly against Norfolk who held onto a 3-3 scoreline until Essex recovered their composure to take the game 7-4. Herts then beat Suffolk 6-2 to give them third place overall and leave the Suffolk without a victory in the tournament.

The final game, like last year, was also the championship decider – as Cambs, fielding a full team sheet of players from the City and University clubs, lined up against Essex, a side which drew together players from Basildon, Chelmsford, Clacton & Colchester and who had trained for months for this event (this may not be true).

The game was poised at 2-2 in the early stages of the first half when the tournament’s top goal scorer, Clacton’s Adrian Westlake, reacted to a decision and his outburst resulted in a walk to the changing rooms.

Defending champions Essex battled on, but there was to be no repeat of last year’s final as they were squeezed out by the greater fitness and organization of the Cambs’ well-drilled squad, whose invaluable National League experience saw them pop in three more goals to take the match 5-2.

The President’s Trophy and medals were presented by East Region President Mike Rayner assisted by past President and former GB Coach Andy Morton.

Many thanks to Cambridge City for providing the timing equipment, to Cambs, Essex & Suffolk for providing referees and to all the table officials who helped to keep the event running smoothly.

**Match scores:**

Norfolk 1 Cambs 9  
Herts 1 Essex 8  
Suffolk 4 Norfolk 5  
Cambs 6 Herts 0  
Essex 8 Suffolk 3  
Norfolk 1 Herts 6  
Suffolk 1 Cambs 6  
Essex 7 Norfolk 4  
Herts 6 Suffolk 2  
Cambs 5 Essex 2

**Points:**

Cambs 12, Essex 9, Herts 6, Norfolk 3, Suffolk 0.

**Top goal scorers:**

Adrian Westlake (Essex)	8
James Scott (Cambs)	7
Michael Artt (Norfolk)	6
Tony Woolley (Essex)	6
Matt Dempsey (Essex)	6
Artie Radziunas (Suffolk)	5
Neil Haftel (Herts)	4
Nick Ludford (Cambs)	4