

EPA INTER REGIONALS 2007

KERNOW JUNIORS

Having not qualified to play myself this year, I appreciated the chance given to me to look after the Kernow Juniors. As Kernow are very short on members they were not able to raise a junior team, so SCPA Juniors Callum Lombard and Matt Silvester were called upon.

We met up with the Kernow President Friday night in the Pub to collect our kit, at this time I did not know who the third player was!.

Come the Saturday Morning, I still had no idea the identity of the third player. Then I saw a little long haired blonde boy stroll up with the Kernow President.

“Graham, this is Jess”

Initially I thought, what the hell have I got here, so I asked him to chuck a few boules, let me see your stuff. I tell you the amount of spin that young lad can put on a boule is incredible!! Jess also said that he likes to shoot, with this in mind I decided to put Jess at middle, because I did not think a 10 year old would be able to sustain a high enough hit ratio, although Matt prefers to point, I asked if he would like to shoot, and away we went !!.

We opened our conquest against the Combined Team. We started slowly going 5-0 down! Then we woke up and decided to play going 8-5 up!. The game changed when with only one boule left, the opponents had a shot which hit the coch, the coch would have gone dead, but it hit Callum and stayed in leaving Combined on for two. Matt had one boule left, which he rolled on excellently, and then to be fair an excellent carreau from Combined left them on for three, leaving a very easy point for four. It seemed to take the fight out of the lads and they did not score after that !.

The second game against London was very similar, we raced into a great 12-4 lead, then London scored a big end of five !. The boys then got a little bit nervous, and we ended losing to 12. The morale of the team and myself just sank; this was understandable for a team so young and inexperienced.

The next game was against Thames Valley; we never got into it, and easily lost to 5. Thames Valley was by far the best team we came up against.

The next game was the IOW, the last game before lunch, a game I thought would be absolutely vital, going into lunch with four loses would be devastating for the boys, so I told them before hand that they just had to keep focused, think about every boule, take your time, do not get stressed as I knew it would be a difficult game. It was a very tight the whole way through, with no team having a real advantage. The boys did me proud though, winning 13-11.

After lunch we had Anglia, a match we really should have won, it was a similar story to the previous games in the day, we would get ourselves into a very good position and then it all went wrong – a defeat to 9 which was very very hard to take for the lads and myself.

The next game was against Sussex, the boys knew what I wanted from them, and they put in a very good performance, winning 13-4.

I made a pretty big time keeping mistake before the last game of the day, I arrived five minutes late, I think it was a combination of a lapse of time keeping and fatigue which contributed to a bad 13-4 loss against Great Western who were a decent team as well. I gave my humble apologies to the boys after the game, and reassured them that they had all played well all day and with a bit more of a killer instinct, then we could have easily achieved 5 wins. I told them not to get too down about the results and put all their efforts in on the Sunday.

On Sunday morning, having looked at the draw we had for the day, I saw that we had Great Western to start off with. The boys seemed well up for it !! wanting revenge for the last game on Saturday. The lads came out of that game with a 13-7 win, every one was so delighted with it and the confidence and morale was high straight away, and it was a sign of more great things to come from the boys in the day.

The second game was against London was a bit disappointing after the high of the first win, we lost 13-9. A game in which a little bit of luck here and there, it could have easily been ours.

Next up we faced Anglia; the boys really did not want to lose this one, as we knew we were a better team than them and wanted to put right what happened on Saturday. We did play some really great boule, and came

though with a fantastic 13-4 win, with two wins under our belts before the lunch break was a really good effort, but we needed to keep our concentration after lunch for games against Sussex and Combined.

The Sunday afternoon performance was by far the best we played all weekend, it was noticeable that the team had been gelling a lot more and thinking and talking about what they wanted to do with every boule, which was great, made my job very easy !.

We rolled over Sussex 13-5 without any problems what so ever. The thing I liked about the Sussex was that they were very sociable, which is nice to see among Juniors.

As the old saying goes, save the best till last ! that's exactly what they did. I knew we faced a tough encounter against Combined, but a tough encounter was exactly what we did not get, we wouldn't let combined play!. We gave away 3 in the first end, but after that we didn't give any away to win 13-3.

When all the results came in, it was great to see that the boys ended up in 3rd place with a point's difference of +12, just one win behind 2nd placed Great Western.

Over the weekend I really could not have asked any more from the boys, they all respected me and my decisions and took on board what I had to say to them, which I thank them for. I would like to say that they were a credit to the region and themselves and the SCPA and the WPA can be very proud of them, as I was. Also a big thanks to the WPA for Jess, who was a real character and not scared to lead when needed, and a total pleasure to work with.

Graham Galton

Kernow Junior Manager 2007