



BUCS wins for women's water polo

York's women's water polo squad headed to Northumbria this weekend hopeful of continuing their run of good results.

The BUCS tournament started well for the girls in black and gold, their first game seeing them pitted against a slightly depleted MMU side. Beth Richards quickly set the tone of the match, opening the scoring with a close range shot and following it up with another shortly after. Sarah Peacop got herself into some good space and found the net to extend York's lead to 3 before halftime.

The second half began in a similar fashion, with another goal each for both Richards and Peacop. MMU managed to pull a goal back but York were relentless, a well-organised attack leading to Rebecca Hall finding the top corner. York looked strong on the attack, several attempts only narrowly missing their targets. A surprise counterattack by MMU caught York off-guard and a heavy last-man tackle from Hall left them to defend with a man down but keeper Fran Falcini and Peacop kept MMU at bay. There was just time for Player of the Match Annie Russell to notch up her first goal of the tournament after a rapid swim down the wing before the match ended 7-1 to York.

Next up were Lancaster who were no doubt apprehensive after their heavy defeat away at York earlier in the season. Their fears were realised within seconds of the starting whistle when Player of the Match Richards swept through their defence to put York in front. This was repeated minutes later, Richards shaking off her defender and firing a goal past the powerless Lancaster keeper. Jenny Worrell faced some aggressive marking at centre

forward but out-played her to grab her first goal of the tournament. Strong defending by Peacop and Ellie Roche swiftly cut off any signs of a Lancaster attack and a long ball from Falcini set up Richards nicely for her third goal of the half. Russell continued her impressive form and found the net after previous attempts flew just past their mark. Richards chalked up a fourth goal to send York into the second half with a 6-0 lead.

York continued to dominate in the second half, piling the pressure on to a weak Lancaster defence. They soon cracked, conceding again to a strong shot from Katherine Newton. Worrell made it eight before a lapse allowed Lancaster through for a consolatory goal. York played out the game in dominant fashion, captain Fiona Whiting rounding off the scoring and leaving Lancaster in no doubt as to who the Roses favourites are.

The final game of the tournament saw York pitted against the Northumbria team that had outwitted them previously. York started defensively, keen to not replicate the early goals conceded last time the teams met. The previous games had taken their toll however, and it was not long before Northumbria had gone three goals ahead. This seemed to revive the UYSWC girls, Player of the Match Newton pulling out a good performance to net two goals and bring York back into contention. Northumbria were unforgiving though and York's defence eventually caved to allow a fourth goal before half time.

York's tiredness showed into the second half, confusion at the back allowing a free shot that Northumbria were happy to convert. Peacop had a strong half under heavy attacking pressure and Rebecca Mott supported the York attack with quick swims on the wing. Whiting and Richards combined for York's third goal but Northumbria were quick on the restart to find their way past Falcini, ending the game at the same 6-3 as when the teams last met.

Captain Fiona Whiting was satisfied with how her team performed – “we played really well in the first two games, and it was fantastic to beat Lancaster so comfortably. Our tiredness definitely played a part in the last game so we need to make sure we work on our fitness a bit more in the lead up to Roses.”

YORK – Falcini, Richards, Newton, Roche, Peacop, Whiting (C), Hall, Chidwick, How, Worrell, Mott, Russell

Player of the Match v MMU – Annie Russell

Player of the Match v Lancaster – Beth Richards

Player of the Match v Northumbria – Katherine Newton