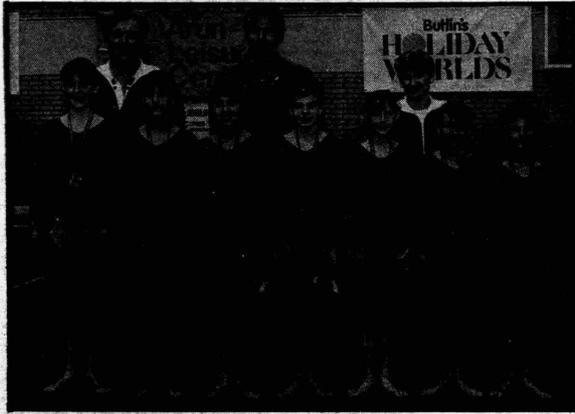


SPORT



Harrow's girls win team bronze

HARROW Gymnastics Club won the bronze medal at the Women's British Team Championships at Bognor.

The Butlins Holidays sponsored competition brought together the top 20 teams in Great Britain and it turned into a battle between London rivals Heathrow and Harrow and Surrey club Camberley, writes Philip Smith.

Heathrow produced a solid performance to retain their title, while Camberley made few errors to just pip Harrow for the silver.

But Harrow were not disappointed with the bronze. With an average team age of just 14, the Harrow girls performed brilliantly against much older and experienced gymnasts.

They also suffer from a lack of a

foam pit at the Harrow Leisure Centre — which would enable them to practice the difficult aerial moves that are now compulsory for top scores in perfect safety — a facility which both Heathrow and Camberley enjoy.

Notable performances came from Harrow's two youngest gymnasts, Susan Willis and Karen Swaine, both 12. Both produced confident routines and neither showed any signs of nerves.

The Harrow team of Tracey Curtis, Nichola Finlay, Nikki Drury, Maxine Davenport, Karen Swaine, Susan Willis and Zoe Hoppen is pictured (left), together with coaches Len and Yvonne Arnold and Olympic swimmer David Wilkie, who presented the prizes.

John Player Cup Special

Twickenham line-ups — how the teams compare

PLUS

Who is Wasps' heart-breaker?



Uttley: 'Double battle'

Hill's chasing record



All the latest news and views on the big clash

Inside on pages 24, 25 and 26

Smith wings in for Wasps

OLD GAYTONIANS have reached the Middlesex Sevens finals for the first time. They produced a gutsy display to beat their bogey side Exeter University in the preliminary round final on Saturday to book their Twickenham place on May 9.

Gaytonians were in good form in the previous rounds to record victories over St Nicholas OB 22-0, Old Elizabethans 28-0, Barnet 24-8 and Harrow 28-0.

In the final, they opened the scoring in the first minute when a break by Earnshaw found Maxted backing up to take the final pass for a 4-0 lead.

But Exeter always looked dangerous on the break and, despite Gaytonians' pressure, twice broke out to take a 12-4 half-time lead.

Gaytonians fought back well in the second half, denying their opponents the ball and opportunities for their speedy backs. Tackling was fierce on both sides, but after exerting continual pressure Abbott broke through to score in the corner and Yarrow converted to make the score 10-12.

Then, in the final minute, a good jinking run by Dickens again found Maxted backing up to score between the posts and Yarrow converted to end Gaytonians' frustration of just falling at the final hurdle in previous years.

Gaytonians meet Wakefield at Twickenham.

ENGLAND wing Simon Smith has been declared fit and is included in the Wasps line-up to face Bath in Saturday's John Player Cup final at Twickenham.

Smith, 27 yesterday (Wednesday), had been sidelined for six weeks with damaged ribs and only returned to the Wasps side on their Easter tour.

He has also had a couple of outings in sevens tournaments, as well as one game for Middlesex.

But Wasps captain David Pegler insists he is not taking a gamble by including Smith in the side. In fact, he believes his international pedigree should help swing the game Wasps' way.

"He is a seasoned international, a class player and a tremendous finisher," says Pegler. "Hopefully he will be able to show his true skills on the day. If there is a half chance he will score it."

Smith's inclusion is a bitter blow for Roger Pellow, dropped to the replacements' bench after deputising for the England man on the right wing during his absence.

"It is very tough on Roger and he is obviously very disappointed," said Pegler. "But you have to make these decisions now and again in

the best interests of the club and the side."

With Bath being tipped as red-hot favourites to lift the Cup for the fourth successive year, Pegler says all the pressure has been taken off Wasps. And that's the way he likes it.

"Nobody is giving us a chance. But we are reasonably confident," he said. "We will go out there with nothing to lose and will just enjoy the day."

"But we will have five internationals playing who were not available last year and I think that will swing the game in our favour."

"We are better organised now, have had a better run up to the final and the side is now a year older and a year wiser."

Pegler says Wasps will be prepared to run the ball at every opportunity — as they did last year

with some success.

But Bath skipper Richard Hill says his side will be prepared for that this time.

"We will be much more aware of Wasps potential in their own 22 this time," he said. "They took us by surprise last year and to their credit were prepared to attack from deep."

"I must admit we were not quite ready for that. But we will be on Saturday. We will not underestimate Wasps."

Hill has earmarked full back Huw Davies as the Wasps danger-man, saying: "They are a different side to the one we met in last year's final. They have high quality players and Huw Davies coming from the back will have to be watched. He is their dangerman."

"But we know we can beat them."

THE WINNER of the Observer's John Player Cup competition is James Gallon, from Harrow Weald. He, and a guest, will watch Saturday's final from British Telecom's box in the new South stand.

Consolation prizes went to: M. Griffin, of Harrow; B. Levison, Pinner; B. Smith, North Harrow; R. Thompson, Harrow; A. Free, Harrow; R. Mitchell, South Harrow; J. Williams, Pinner; Mrs C. Booth, Harrow; D. O'Farrell, Wembley; I. Armstrong, Sudbury.

SOCCER ROUND-UP

Wealdstone safe — despite defeat

WEALDSTONE 0, Kidderminster 3
WEALDSTONE are assured of their GM Vauxhall Conference status for next season, despite crashing 3-0 to Kidderminster in their final match at Lower Mead.

Kim Casey struck with a second half hat-trick to sink Stones in an ill-tempered match. But Welling's 2-0 defeat at Cheltenham settled the final relegation place.

They now go down.
Harrow Borough 0, Bognor 1
MANAGER Keith Chamberlin was presented with his manager of the month award before Harrow Borough's last home match of the season, against Bognor.

Playing Bognor in the first of two games between the sides in five days to end their season, Boro frittered away any home advantage, lacking ideas up front, lacking control in midfield and handed the visitors the only goal with a defensive error.

The only goal came 10 minutes after the break when Stuart MacKenzie came for a cross, which was Steve Bateman's to clear, and the ball fell lose for Cooper to net.

Despite the defeat, Borough are assured of sixth spot.

Leatherhead 0, Wembley 1
PETER SHODEINDE took his goal tally for the season to 26 with the strike that beat Leatherhead, his former club.

The only goal came after 49 minutes when Wayne Falloon tried to head a Bryan Kearns free kick back to Leatherhead keeper Peter Caswell.

Caswell failed to collect and the ball fell conveniently for Shodeinde to tap it into an empty net.

Wembley had several chances to add to their score, while Jeff Fanner, in the Lions' goal, was only called upon to handle long range efforts.

Rayners Lane 1, Hounslow 2
RAYNERS LANE fell 2-1 to second-placed Hounslow at Lower Mead last Wednesday.

Hounslow took a 25th minute lead through former Harrow Borough player Steve Smith, but Lane came back in the second half to dominate the game.

Steve Card had a shot tipped on to the bar before Phil Lynn equalised, stabbing the ball home through a crowd of players from a corner.

Darren Colswill, Fergus McNeary and Roland Matthews all went close for Lane before Hounslow broke again and the ball fell kindly for Smith to restore their lead with a shot that took a deflection past stranded Dave Russell.



Keith Chamberlin receives his manager of the month award.

Rayners Lane 4, Wantage 1

RANYERS LANE rediscovered their scoring touch on Saturday in the 4-1 drubbing of bottom of the table Wantage.

Matthews and Meaney both hit posts in a goalless first half, in which Matthews was forced off with a broken nose.

Wantage took a shock lead just after the break but Lane fought back. Williams netted from a corner to level the scores and then put Lane ahead after the keeper had only blocked his first attempt.

Ventri wrapped up Lane's victory with two goals, first turning the ball in from

close range and then netting in a goal-mouth scramble just before the end. "I've got to be satisfied after scoring four and winning. It has been a long time coming. But to be honest we should have doubled the score," said Lane boss Don Durkin.

Harrow St Mary's 3, Brooke House 0
HARROW ST MARY'S cruised to an easy 3-0 victory over Brooke House in their last game of the season.

All the goals came in the first half as the Saints' midfield trio of Ian Dutch, Paul Strachan and Andy Osborn took control.

Cecil James slotted home an Alan Day pass after 15 minutes and then fired in the second 10 minutes later from the edge of the area.

Just before half time Osborn was pulled down by the Brooke House keeper and Day converted the spot kick.

FIXTURES:
Thursday, April 30: Vauxhall-Opel Division One — Wembley v Hampton (Vale Farm, 7.30).

Saturday, May 2: Middlesex Charity Cup Final — Wembley v Feltham (Vale Farm, 3); Hellenic League Premier — Abingdon Town v Rayners Lane.

Monday, May 4: Hellenic League Premier — Wellingford v Rayners Lane.

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