

Hampshire based Weston Park reach National Finals.

Report supplied by 2 of their players.

Weston Park U16 have worked extremely hard in our training sessions for these playoffs which were held in Reading on the 27th of March. During the season we have played teams across Hampshire in our regional league. Playing with confidence and determination ensured that we remained unbeatable and so qualified for the play-offs.

On the 27th we met Eagles, Clan and Trinity in three hard and contesting matches, playing more competitive teams was challenging both physically and mentally. Part of our training sessions are spent discussing the previous match with our coaches, talking through the positives and negatives and what we can do to improve the performance of the team, we then use the training session to put these points into practice ensuring that in our next game we are even better !!

All the matches in the playoffs were different. Our first game was against Clan, we knew that this group of girls would prove our hardest competition as they were the other regional pools champions, and they didn't disappoint sinking goals from all areas of the circle. Due to nerves and lack of concentration we went into the half time break trailing. Tactical changes were made and the nerves settled, this made all the difference as we brought it back to an overall win of 15-11.

We then played Eagles, with the same starting seven that had finished the previous game. We played with confidence as we had won against them convincingly before, however that was over an hour and this only 20 minutes. However our confidence showed and we remained calm throughout creating turnovers in all areas of the court, resulting in another victory. This meant that going into the last game against trinity we were confident but again nervous as we needed to win it to go through to nationals as winners.

Our last game was against Trinity, these were the runners up in the other pool, but not to be underestimated, only losing to Eagles by two. Our first half again saw Weston trailing, but tactical changes were made at half time and fantastic movement both defensively and in attack saw us remain victorious.

Overall the coaches, parents and the player's were extremely proud as going through to the nationals has been a goal since the start of the season. We now have our parents to thank for travelling us all around the south to compete and to our coaches Bev Crook and Ellie Moore who give up so much time to train us and who also have to travel, so thank you!!!

The Team: Leanne Whalley, Ellie Whitlock, Freya Fownes, Harriet Crossen, Emily Jones, Rachael Montgomery, Hannah Joseph, Lucy Read, Lauren Watson, Amy Watson, Laura Stupple and Liz Domingo. Players who couldn't make it but were part of the team throughout the season are Freya Jones, Annie Wakemen and Jo Eden.

Report by Leanne and Harriet.