



PRESS RELEASE (for immediate publication)

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NOTTINGHAM LEAVE EMPTY HANDED DESPITE STRONG PERFORMANCES AT UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The University of Nottingham Handball Club's Men's and Women's teams reached the semi finals of the National University Championships this weekend, but were disappointed to miss out on the silverware. After picking up second and third place respectively last season, the Men and Women were both confident of improving on their performances and made a strong start in the group games on day 1. The second day proved less successful, however, as both ended the competition in fourth place.

The Men's team powered through a tough group to record victories over Imperial College, Bath and Southampton, before producing their best performance of the day to upset the hosts Manchester. Meanwhile the Women's team defeated Manchester's second team before losing a tough match against Edinburgh. They made up for that disappointment with an incredible performance to defeat last year's runners up Oxford and take second place in the group.

The second day began very early, with the Men's team battling through a tough contest against Warwick. The short, 20 minute matches were producing some exciting games and this one gave the neutrals some drama as a draw took the two teams directly into a penalty shootout. Nottingham's goalkeeper, Rafa Manzano was the hero, as he produced some magic to deny Warwick's shooters. Nottingham scored enough of their five penalties to deservedly reach the semi final. That proved to be the first of four penalty shootouts on the day, but Nottingham's last taste of victory in this year's competition. The Men's team lost out to Strathclyde, while the Women were defeated by a Manchester team which went on to lift the trophy.

The Men's semi final, however, was the match of the day for many of the supporters, who may have wished for this match to be the final. The top scorers in the tournament came up against arguably the best defence as Strathclyde and Nottingham produced a thrilling encounter. The final moments were dramatic to say the least as both teams saw players excluded, a late goal was disallowed and an even later equaliser ensured the day's second shootout. This time Strathclyde claimed the victory and Nottingham were left to contest 3rd place with a shootout against Leeds. The final saw Strathclyde dominating Manchester but losing late goals for another draw, which saw the hosts emerge victorious.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The University of Nottingham Handball Club was established in February 1992 and is currently the only handball club in the East Midlands. The men's team are taking part in the National Division One North League in 2009/10. The club trains on Tuesdays (9-10:30pm) and Thursdays (8:30-10:30pm) at Nottingham University Park Sports Centre. Training is open to students and guests, male and female, of all levels from beginners up. More information is available from Ahmad Beltagui, University of Nottingham Handball Club communications officer, nottingham_handball@hotmail.com or online at www.handballclub.co.uk



Nottingham Men (Orange) during their victory over Manchester University



Nottingham Women after their final match



Nottingham Men celebrate victory in the quarter final over Warwick University



Nottingham Women during their victory over Oxford University