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## **2010 Northern Area Final (Lincoln)**

Southport Aqua Qualify for the fourth year in a row in making it to the National Junior Final.

Staged in an arena that was up with the best. Bright in colour, spacious all the facilities you require to hold a qualifying event of this magnitude. However with no electronic timing being available were the officials up to the standard that befits this prestigious competition "I think not". All will be revealed at the interim meeting.

Southport took to the road on Saturday afternoon making the journey down to Lincoln in plenty of time for this event engaging in an overnight stay whilst giving the squad plenty of rest in preparation for this gala. Chief coach and team officials constantly talking on how to approach this final already knowing through past history that the top four go on to the all important National Junior Final.

Current holders of the North of England and National Junior Champions, was this going to be an area final with insufficient glide in making it through to the all important final or was chief coach Mark Patrickson concerned about the number of sufficient strokes from the flags to gain a top four placing.

The shock waves had already appeared in the knowledge of knowing City of Liverpool's heads had resurfaced again by ousting that great club in Stockport Metro out of their qualification and the missing of the ever present Borough of Kirklees being replaced by City of Leeds but recognizing two familiar clubs in Lincoln Vulcan's and the City of Newcastle whilst Halesowen was of an unknown quantity.

The atmosphere was electric which was all thanks to the gala announcer drumming up the spectator gallery in crowd participation which was a wave of colour. And making all the clubs junior swimmers that they were the important ones on this occasion grabbing every opportunity in the lull of the gala with interviews asking the swimmers what events their swimming in, who do they aspire too. Making it a fantastic atmosphere.

It was made clear after twelve events when the results was announced what was needed to make it through to the next stage of the competition with City of Leeds making a big impact. At the half way stage you sensed which way this gala was heading City of Leeds out stretching all the other contenders and leaving Southport Aqua to battle it out with two other clubs namely City of Liverpool with the City of Newcastle.

Event after event our junior swimmers gave there all, showing great commitment in what's needed at this level but its fair to say when you are a club and you have to compete with squads the pulling power through the water sometimes is not there when its needed.

On numerous occasions the races was so exciting to the finish that they were too close to call.

The gala ending with only one winner and that was made clear at the beginning of the first event whilst standing on the blocks. City of Leeds were the worthy winners of this final and deservedly so with Southport finishing in third place just a butterfly touch away from the City of Liverpool.

Final Results:

City of Leeds 246pts

City of Liverpool 200pts

Southport Aqua 198pts

City of Newcastle 138pts

Halesowen 127pts

Lincoln Vulcan's 104pts.

Our congratulations go to Southport Aqua in maintaining not only their own clubs success but the continuing success of our League in making it through to this year National Junior Final.

Kind Regards

Kev(sec)