

March 2, 2014

MEDIA RELEASE

Country WA Makes a Splash at Water Polo Champs

Bunbury and Geraldton shared the honours at the **Bendigo Bank WA Country Water Polo Championships** In Busselton at the weekend.

After two days of round robin competition, Bunbury's women successfully defended their title defeating Geraldton 11-9 in closely fought match.

The match MVP award went to former Australian representative Kylie English who starred for Bunbury with six goals.

Chelsea Rotheram (2), Ebony Frank, Chelsey Barrett and Tash O'Neill also found the net.

Geraldton was never more than two points down and despite Julie Coffin, Emma Hancox, Mia Claghorn and Ricki Papertalk each claiming two goals, Bunbury was just too good.

The tables were turned in the men's competition when Geraldton easily overpowered their southern rivals 10-5.

The first three quarters were close with Geraldton ahead 5-4 at the final change.

But they pulled away in the last term, piling on five goals to take the championship.

Geraldton's depth proved the difference with four players sharing the goals, lead by Mick Rock with three.

But it was Bunbury goalie Jack Deschamp who wowed the referees and took out the MVP award for his excellent defence at the net.

The championships' bronze medals went to Peel in both the men's and women's competitions, both defeating Busselton (men 5-4, women 8-5).

Teams from Karratha and Port Hedland also competed in the championships which are held in a different country WA town each year.

Outstanding players will be selected to represent WA at the National Country Water Polo Championships in Woy Woy, New South Wales in May.

Water Polo Western Australia chief executive Dale Balantyne said it was great to see such talent and enthusiasm from players across the State.

"The country championships is always an exciting and entertaining event with a high level of competition and skill," he said.

He added that having Bendigo Bank as a new major sponsor for country water

polo would continue to foster the development of the sport outside of the Perth metropolitan area.

“We’re extremely happy to have Bendigo Bank on board, this will mean very exciting things for the promotion of our sport in regional areas.”

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