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TEARS AND CELEBRATIONS



The first of two days gets underway as the directors head off to Worcester on a chilly but bright Saturday morning.

We arrive to a warm welcome as we unload the car for the days event. We set up the stalls and start to welcome players and spectators, officials and YBL officers as we're nearly ready for the days event.

All set up, the first game gets underway, with CoB Rockets Red taking on Worcester Bears in the U11s first game of the day. A great way to start the day as these teams battle and they do battle hard for that win! Approaching the half time buzzer and there's only three points in it. We were treated to a half court shot, which the crowd go wild for! The second half continues to be a close quartered game, however, in the fourth, Worcester Bears just had the edge beating CoB Rockets Red 56 to 48.

Leicester Riders travel the distance to meet CoB Rockets White in their Semi-Final game. Just as entertaining and exciting as the previous U11 game, the four point half time score reflects the hunger these players have to get the 'W'. CoB Rockets White got their sustenance with an eight point win over the Riders. CoB Rockets White see Worcester Bears in the Championship Finals.

Warwickshire Hawks and Yardley Defenders take to the floor in the first under fifteens game of the day. The first half seems pretty slow for the Hawks as they don't find their feet until the second half of the second quarter. With a 15 point difference, the Hawks have a three minute uncontested run to bring the score to within five points of Yardley going into the half. These evenly matched teams continue hard until the final buzzer, but it's Yardley who had the edge and beat league winners Hawks 55 to 46.

Worcester Bears were met on court by WBA D-Squad in the second U15 game of the day. The coaches, the fans and the crowd were treated to an evenly matched contest of skill and determination, as both teams go point for point for much of the four quarters. Half time sees D-Squad up by 1. End of the fourth see a 55 point game a piece. Going into overtime D-Squad quickly gain traction as their baskets swish in but at the last minutes Worcester Bears' streak notches the score into their favour and Bears win by two (64-62 o/t).

The Under 19 Men's league finish the day with two great games of basketball, starting with the second WBA team on the line up. They take on Coventry Elite.

D-Squad and Coventry Elite meet for the third time this season and quickly get into the game, with the first half finishing with a one point difference. The second half continues to show each teams' skill as we approach the final buzzer. Down by one point, D-Squad take to the line for two. However, the player make only one and the game goes into overtime. Elite continue the battle, but unfortunately, D-Squad take the edge at win 65 - 58 at the end of overtime.

The final game on Saturday sees Bournville Bears and Frankley Falcons continue their campaign for the Finals. Both teams show impressive decision making and ball handling skills in this tight ball game. This two point game starts and finishes each quarter, each team returning the favour right down to the end of the fourth. Falcons get the last basket taking them through to the finals to face WBA D-Squad (Falcons 72-70 Bears).

Saturday draws to a close with some very happy players but tired officials and directors.

SEMI-FINAL REVIEW

WORDS: JAMES DAVIES

Day two of the Semi-Finals sees West Brom and Bournville Bears start the day off in their U13s clash. West Brom get off to a very slow start seeing Bournville finish the first quarter up by 16 points. The second quarter proves West Brom were hungry for the win as they push several great offences, bringing the score to a two point game at the half time buzzer. Still pretty close at the start of the fourth, Bournville lead by four. Even after their hard fought return West Brom just couldn't quite catch them up. Bournville win 65 to 56.

Coventry Elite faced Warwickshire Hawks in the second U13s game of the day. Where, like many games across the weekend have been extremely close and well fought for. This was no different. Elite take a quick lead and continue to show their strength on offence. Half way through the third quarter, Warwickshire Hawks switch on and start to show Elite they wasn't going to be beaten a third time. Ninth minute in the fourth and Hawks take the lead for only the second time in the game. However, it was enough as they keep that lead and score three uncontested baskets (74-65). Warwickshire Hawks take on Bournville Bears in the Finals.

Finishing the weekend off sees the Under 17s take centre stage with Shropshire Warriors taking on Frankley Falcons. Both teams beating each other once this season, this was going to be the decider. Falcons start off strong sinking 21 baskets in the first to Warriors' 9! But, everything changed from the second as Shropshire Warriors came back on strong. Going into the half Falcons led by 7. The 7th minute of the fourth saw Shropshire closing the gap. Falcons continuing their game with passion. Like, Coventry Elite before them, they struggled in the last minute, where Shropshire found the net on several more occasions than the Falcons. Warriors go through beating Falcons, 81-90.

The final game of the day saw Bournville Bears take on Redditch Rapids. Giving as good as they got both teams went from end to end scoring baskets. A closely guarded game by both sides. It was Bournville Bears who took the win, as Redditch didn't catch up with this particular ball game. (Bournville 66 - 59 Redditch).

Every player and their teams showed they deserved to be in the semi-finals as everyone showed spirit, determination and hard work, not just in these games, but across the season. Congratulations to all the teams for making the Semi-Finals what it was.

The atmosphere was vibrant and the ambience electric as the teams played and the crowd supported.

On top of the normal basketball noise, we were very fortunate to, for the first time, have a game announcer and commentator. This made the experience even more electric. Thank you to 'Ginge' Phipps for sharing his passion and talent for the day.

A lot of support and thanks from the parents to the YBL about the event itself, 'great venue,' 'very well organised,' 'the talent of these kids...' The well oiled machine wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for the great work the table officials, referees and the YBL Officers do to make sure these events run as smoothly as our Semi-Finals have this year.

Thank you all for attending and we'll see you on the YBL Championship Finals on May 18.

WORCESTER BEARS
 VS

COB ROCKETS WHITE
 09:00 UNDER 11

BOURNVILLE BEARS
 VS

WARWICKSHIRE HAWKS
 10:00 UNDER 13

WORCESTER BEARS
 VS

YARDLEY DEFENDERS
 12:00 UNDER 15

SHROPSHIRE WARRIORS
 VS

BOURNVILLE BEARS
 14:00 UNDER 17

LASERS
 VS

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON
 16:00 PREM WOMEN

WBA D-SQUAD
 VS

FRANKLEY FALCONS
 18:00 U19 MEN

TROJANS
 VS

WALSALL 99ERS
 20:00 DEV MEN

