

Trio make a splash with Team GB

Three Greater Manchester girls have been selected to play for GB U19s' Underwater Hockey team.

Abbie Thompson from Dukinfield, is a member of the Manchester B-Team and her father has been coaching the junior club for 10 years.

Honor Sangster from Marple, is a member of the Trafford underwater hockey team.

Zoe Higham from Dane Bank, Denton, also plays for the Manchester B Team.

The girls trained as junior players with Xarifa UWH and have been going to BOA GB training sessions throughout the last 12 months.

They now train at the Xarifa adult session at Wright Robinson school and the Manchester squad training at the Aquatics Centre.

The BOA (British Octopush Association) squad is coached by Jo Pitchforth from Batley in Yorkshire.

Jo is also part of the successful Yorkshire Ladies team that won the recent Ladies National Championships.

The final selections for the squad of 12 were made from the remaining 22 girls.

All three girls are excited about playing for GB at international competitions.

The first of these will be the World Age Group Championships to be held in Spain in August.

Their first opportunity to play together as a team was in the Manchester Octopush Tournament last weekend. The teenagers gained valuable playing experience, but no medals, against very experienced adult competition.

Five junior players have previously been selected in the 10 years that Xarifa UWH has been running the junior club.

"Underwater hockey keeps teenagers swimming", said Phil Thompson, the proud parent of Abbie. "And we have a good record of getting them to this level."

● Xarifa UWH have been awarded a Sport England grant to run a beginners' course in Manchester, starting in May.

Anyone interested in the course should email: uwh@btinternet.com

● The Xarifa UWH Junior Team trains at Dukinfield Pool.



GB CALL-UP: (from left) Honor Sangster, 16, Zoe Higham, 15 and Abbie Thompson, 17.