

OCTOPUSH



The under 16s, who sadly weren't all available to be photographed, are Brendan Greer, Emily Hett, Alicia Warner, Karl Higham, Joe Moss, David Laybourne, Danny Higham, Ethan Maillard, Scott Evans and Jack Yule. Also pictured, Phil Thompson.

Xarifa go fourth

AT the exciting BOA Junior National Championships at the weekend, Manchester's only underwater hockey junior club took on teams from all over Great Britain.

Dukinfield's Xarifa Under 16s team were able to hold onto fourth place, very close to the medal positions. The team's best players have another year at this level and with their experience they could come out on top in 2009.

As was the case last year, they were able to prove they were one of the best teams in the country, consolidating their 4th place.

Brendan Greer (15), one of Xarifa's most experienced play-

ers, broke a bone in his hand in a cycling accident only days before the competition, so was unable to play.

Had the team been at full strength they would have gained medals. A total of 23 teams from as far afield as the Orkney Islands and Plymouth competed.

The Olympic pool at Loughborough University was the venue. After next year some of the team may move on to play at under 19 level with the potential to play for the GB under 19 squad at the World Championships, European Championships or other international events.

A Xarifa under 13s team was

taken to the competition for the first time. The under 13s were very inexperienced and not used to tournaments, but managed to win a couple of games and keep themselves off the bottom position.

The sport is growing among children in the UK and many schools and leisure centres are looking to introduce the sport.

The organisers have talked about running an under 11's section in future competitions.

Junior coach Phil Thompson said: "If the under 16s practise and stay together, next year they could be bringing back the trophy to Manchester."