

# Rockwall Tridents North Texas Water Polo Champs Times Two

Contributed by Jim Hummingbird  
For the sixth grade and under Trident team, this was a special repeat of what they were able to accomplish last year, in the DFW Area Age Group Water Polo Championships.

This year's team saw how much pressure there is to win when you're the favorite. Having the number one seed allowed them to play Plano/Allen in the first round. In what most felt would be just a tune-up turned into a battle as the Tridents were trailing 1-3 after the first quarter. That's when Alex Rodriguez took off and scored four unanswered goals to lift the Tridents to a 6-4 halftime lead, eventually pulling away for a 12-7 win to put them in the finals.

Rodriguez finished the game with six goals, Katie Hyland scored a season high three, Mitchell Eldridge had two and Arturo Wong added one.

The finals game proved to be just as exciting as Southlake clearly had its mind on revenge. The game went back and forth through three quarters before Alex Rodriguez nailed a half court shot as the buzzer went off to end the third period, breaking an 11-11 tie.

Southlake never recovered as the sixth grade and under Tridents brought home the championship trophy with a 20-16 win. Mitchell Eldridge led the scoring with 11 goals, Rodriguez added five, Wong scored two with Cody Price and Hyland adding one each. Saxon Foster was goalie for both games. Rodriguez was awarded the Offense MVP for the sixth grade and under division.

The eighth grade and under team, due to a first round bye, had to wait for the preliminary rounds to fin-

ish before they would know their opponent. They lost the tie-breaker to St. Marks eighth grade team for the number one seed as both teams entered the tournament 3-0-1. The number two seed forced them to play the highest ranked team to advance out of the preliminaries, the St. Marks' seventh grade boys team.

Evan Scown was not going to allow an upset as he scored the first and last goals of the game in route to a 14-8 victory. Scown led in scoring with seven goals, Justin Tokuz two, Mateo Hernandez two, Joe Flores one and Jordan Hummingbird one.

This win sent them into the finals against the St. Marks eighth grade boy's team. In the first game of the year, the Tridents tied this team, shocking the Texas Youth Water Polo community because St. Marks is the reigning Texas State Champions.

The championship game was the best place to break this tie. The game was all it was expected to be as Rockwall fought hard to lead at halftime 5-4. The Tridents put on one of the best defensive performances in the second half to secure a 10-9 upset, winning the eighth grade and under division. Raena Eldridge led the scoring with three, Scown with two, Mitchell Eldridge

with two, Summer Scown with one, Eric Pansick scored one and Mateo Hernandez put in one. Goalies were Eric Pansick, Justin Tokuz and Mateo Hernandez. Scown was presented the Offense MVP, making this his second in a row as he won the same award last year.

This was a very special year for the Tridents. Both teams finished undefeated and were crowned

champions of the North Texas area. Coach Andres Rodriguez was quick to praise the effort the kids put out and reminded the parents his assistant coach, Tom Applegate remains undefeated in his short water polo coaching career. "To come in and play like this against the defending state champions shows how hard these kids worked this year. They were not going to be denied"

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Rockwall Tridents eighth grade and under team are (back row left to right) Claire Walters, Justin Tokuz, Eric Pansick, Mateo Hernandez, Coach Tom Applegate, (front row) Reace Foster, Joe Flores, Jordan Hummingbird, Elisio Villarreal, Mitchell Eldridge, Summer Scown, Alex Rodriguez, Raena Eldridge, Evan Scown and Coach Andres Rodriguez.



Rockwall Tridents sixth grade and under team are (back row left to right) Mitchell Eldridge, Saxon Foster, Coach Tom Applegate, (middle row) Cody Price, Alex Rodriguez, Katie Hyland, Arturo Wong, (front Row) Carlos Zurutuza, Julen Zurutuza, Ariela Villarreal, Teague Saxon, Coach Andres Rodriguez.

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His professional interests reflect the broad field of Family Practice including pediatrics, women's health, geriatrics, and sports medicine. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf, watching football and basketball, traveling, and spending time with his friends.

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