

2019 EUROPEAN TOUCH CHALLENGE TROPHY ELCHE

Ian O'Malley 26.11.2019

The **Swiss Men's Open** (MO) side participated at the three-day **European Touch Challenge Trophy 2019** tournament held in Elche, Spain October 30th-November 1st.

This tournament was an excellent experience for the Swiss Mens Open. One big positive was that the team included players from seven different clubs around Switzerland – Geezers (Zurich), Lakers (Lausanne), Bern, Basel, Baden, Luzern, Zug, all playing together. These players – some playing together for the first time – bonded extremely well as a team and the spirit in the group was really positive with players working selflessly for each other, going that extra bit for the team in every game.

This was in many ways a development tournament for this team and, as can be seen from the results, it was challenging in this regard. The standard of play at the tournament was extremely high with Switzerland coming up against the best Mens Open teams in Europe. The mark of a team is how it responds to adversity and defeats and learns from them. The development of the squad during the tournament was huge. You could see the clear progress in the team.

Switzerland faced the top three nations in Europe in Mens Open on the first day. One of the values of this tournament could be seen straightaway in that the fact that the team faced, and had to learn to cope with three very distinct styles of attack. England ran a very wide/wide attack, Ireland drove hard and direct through the middle off drives and France set up plays off their middle set ups.

Our players were exposed to this high-level attack and had to adjust quickly and under pressure. The values of these experiences can't be underestimated and will stand to these players as they compete at European level over the coming seasons. One of the positives of all three of these games is that we were an attacking threat and scored tries against every team.

On the second and third day, we were extremely competitive against the next team above us, Germany. We scored tries, and defended some of their set plays very well, showing some clear progression from the first day. Against Spain, we got a couple of well-deserved wins and against them we got to develop and expand different patterns of attack.

During the tournament as a whole, we finetuned our driving and subbing patterns and improve our defensive systems. We also got to see the top teams and players in Europe up close and see how what we are doing compares to them.

As a group, on and off the pitch, we managed ourselves and worked together to put things in place that we can take forward to future tournaments. The Swiss team was complimented by several observers for our spirit on the pitch, for the fact that we never let up until the last moment of every game. We were also respectful of officials and opposition and all round gave a really good account of ourselves in the red shirt. Alongside the Swiss Womens Open team, we were proud to represent all the Swiss Touch community in Spain.

The next step on our journey is to keep the good aspects of this tournament and keep moving upwards. Rather than just being competitive against teams like Germany, to beat them. Rather than being able to score against the top teams and defend against them sometimes, to be properly competitive. And then to beat them. And then to beat them again. We have a lot of hard, hard work to do to get to that level. The spirit, enthusiasm and potential we showed under the blue skies of Elche were all extremely positive signs on this path.

Hopp Swiss!

Ian O'Malley






2019 EUROPEAN TOUCH CHALLENGE TROPHY ELCHE

Ian O'Malley 26.11.2019

Results were as follows.

POOL GAMES DAY 1				
	Switzerland	5 - 15	England	
	Switzerland	7 - 14	Ireland	
	Switzerland	4 - 14	France	

POOL GAMES DAY 2				
	Switzerland	10 - 5	Spain	
	Switzerland	7 - 11	Germany	
	Switzerland	5 - 12	Germany	

POOL GAMES DAY 3				
	Switzerland	5 - 6	Spain	
	Switzerland	12 - 6	Spain	