

Report from the Bud Pig underwater hockey tournament, April 2025



It all began at Zurich HB.

In the early morning one day before the tournament, we met by at the station and soon after boarded the train. Destination: České Budějovice. We kept busy talking, drinking as early as 10 am (it was happy hour somewhere after all), and playing games.

Time started truly flying by when Chris organized a referee crash course in the bike carrier wagon. Thankfully it was empty so we could take up all the space. We tiptoed around and passed an empty beer bottle as a puck, reenacting underwater maneuvers. Three of us played refs, following the action, spotting the fouls we were performing and gesturing the correct signals to indicate them. Now and then pretending not to watch us too closely, a confused conductor would pass us by. I learned more about theory, strategy and rules within those short moments than in the last half a year since I started playing. I was also delighted to (pretend to) foul to my heart's content. At the end of the trip, I started feeling a little more confident about having to ref the next day for my very first time.



As it was my first international tournament and I was freshly recovered after an injury, I was quite nervous how a full day of games would go. But more than that, I was excited, mixed with apprehensive, about my first refing experience. Would I do it well? Would I spot a foul and remember the correct way to sign it out?

The levels of teams we played against were as diverse as their nationalities: Czech, Hungarian, Polish, German, Dutch, Slovenian, Canadian. They all had creative names and loud war cries, which announced them before the commencement of a game. My favorites were the Dolphin Express, who “choo-chooed!” their way into the pool. They later became the winners of the whole tournament.

We played well, our confidence and strategy improving with every round. We participated in eight games. The most we lost were 5 points and the most we won were 3, ranking us 11th out of 13. The game I refed was a peaceful one. It was my first time watching women’s teams play and to my satisfaction I detected two fouls.



The long day concluded with a big dinner, award ceremony and an 80s-90s themed party. Despite being exhausted, we danced our feet and the night away.

The next day we embarked on a day trip to Pilsen. Its beer history lured us into its brewery, while its beautiful architecture enticed us into its historical center. Late into the night we played hide-and-seek within its medieval walls. Some of us ran around in search of the others who sent us clues of where they were. After an eventful day and exhilarating night, it was finally time to leave Czechia and embark on the train back home.



It all ended at Zurich HB. Full of great memories and thankful hearts, we said our goodbyes and went separate ways. Only to be reunited at the next training.

Text and photos by Zofia Jackson

Anzeige

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Icons: swimmer, flame, fork and knife, sun, volleyball

