

HOCKEY REPORT – AGM 2018

The 2017/2018 hockey season was in part a season of consolidation on the pitch. The Men's 1st XI comfortably managed to stay in Division 1 following two seasons of consecutive promotions. The Men's 2nd XI had, in part, had some great results on the pitch, but suffered from availability, and like any amateur sports club, it is difficult with low numbers to maintain peak performance. The only promotion in the Men's section came from the 4th XI (development squad) as that team continues to grow year on year. The greatest success in the 2017/2018 came from our Ladies. The Ladies 1st and 2nd XI both gained promotion with the 1st XI back in the Premier league. The Ladies 2nd XI, undoubtedly the team of the year, have turned around from previous years and play some sublime hockey and promotion was very much a result of their continued success.

In prior years, numbers at the top end of the section has caused issues. The same cannot be said for the coming season. Numbers are growing which I believe, in part, is due to the success on the pitch attracting new, and returning players alike. Squad numbers in the Men's and Ladies are at a 5-year high and I believe we could see three, or even four promotions from the top teams. We aim high! If such promotions are forthcoming, we will be firmly established as one of the top clubs in the region. We are fortunate this year, and next, to have the leagues being restructured. We believe five teams this year in the Men's 1's league will be promoted to Premier hockey, and should they be promoted, and the Ladies 1's at least maintain their position, for the first time in distant memory, we will have a Men's and Ladies team in the Premier leagues. This in turn will assist in attracting more players.

While numbers are buoyant in the upper teams, we are struggling lower down, especially in the Men's 4's. This team restructured c3 years ago to become a development squad and team members are now of an age where University is knocking on the door which will cause issues. We will do our best to maintain a team however this will more than likely be challenging.

Following a few years of having junior coaching issues, various members have really pulled together and I am happy to say we are starting to look forward with our junior section. This hasn't been easy and some members have gone above and beyond in this regard for which myself, and the section are eternally grateful.

Over the past 5 years in my tenure as Chairman, I have seen the club blossom to where we are now through some challenging times. The position we see ourselves in today is not possible without the continued support from the Club Committee, but mainly from the tireless work our members put in to their club. There are of course too many to mention but a special thanks to all that have assisted the club moving forward as it has.

The hockey section have very exciting times ahead if we continue on the trajectory we are currently on and I look forward to reporting on this next year.