



Director of Hockey Report

Thank you to everyone for their contributions to the AGM so far.

To the hockey, and in what has been a very strange season and yet it almost feels like we've done more hockey than normal!! As Ruth mentioned in her summary the season has bounced in and out of lockdowns and we have tried to maximise every moment outside of the lockdowns as best as we could with Camps, additional trainings, internal matches, mix-ins etc. Thank you to everyone for their patience and adaptability to short-term changes, committing to the playing windows and now being available over the summer to play hockey over other sports and social events!

In the lockdowns the online hockey was a remarkable success and the technical skill improvements remotely were exceptional – well done! I really enjoyed the sense of community we were able to develop through the training, coaching and dreaded 3km Blasts!!

This seems so long ago, but “normal season” never really got going sadly due to the Covid pandemic. Although we gave it a good go!

Senior Section

The Women's 1st team set the pace in their league, convincingly winning all five matches. The Men's 1st team made a good start, before a couple of tough matches over October half-term, but finished with an empathic victory before the season was curtailed. The Women's 2nd team never got a chance to start sadly, albeit did very well in the couple of friendlies they played.

For 2021/22 England Hockey have restructured the leagues. The Women's 1st team have received the smallest of promotions, despite a 7 month dialogue with Kent Hockey Association and England Hockey trying to work in the best interests of everyone in the local hockey community. We will play in Invicta Division 2. Arguably 3-4 leagues below were we could compete. The Women's 2nd team will play in Invicta Division 6. Arguably 4-5 leagues below were we could compete. Our Men's 1st team will play in Invicta Division 4 which is also a tiny promotion and should allow us to continue to develop the boy's hockey alongside the men.

Junior Section

Our juniors started the season exceptionally well. The U18 Girls had an absolutely cracking win against Sevenoaks in September, as well as a win against Canterbury which gave us a

glimpse in the team for 2021/22. The U16A Girls were superb against Guildford and Epsom. The Epsom match being one of the finest team performances I have witnessed in age group hockey. It was unreal! The U16B Girls have had some excellent matches too with only one goal splitting the win or loss – great performances in all matches. The U14 Girls were superb at both A & B level. The U14A were excellent in beating Sevenoaks in their only pre-lockdown match and the U14B beat other Kent sides A-teams which was great and testament to our model of helping everyone to achieve their potential.

And then the season stopped...

Summer Hockey

But we're back on it now, and a load of training, the KP Summer League and mix-ins later, and the England Hockey Championships have started. This has been wonderful for all our teams. They have given us some enjoyment, some purpose to our training and a nice reminder about how good we are!

The U16 Girls have been excellent once again. The U16A & B squads have been able to rotate through the U18 team & the U16A team to produce more scintillating hockey. Four wins from four matches so far. Having played against the girls in a Summer League match I now know more than ever how good the girls are! The girls are through to the National Semi-Finals on Saturday afternoon – 3pm start – we hope you will come down to Radnor and support them!

The U14A Girls have also had a very positive return to competitive matches. Also having won four out of four matches, the girls continue to improve every week and in their last two U14 matches against Sevenoaks and Surbiton they were truly outstanding and completely smashed it!! The girls face Cambridge on Sunday, Away.

The U18 Girls lost in the first round against Canterbury, however bounced back superbly against Bromley & Beckenham. Sadly, losing to Trojans ended their Plate campaign.

The U14 Boys also lost in the first round of the Cup, which has given them the gift of the EH Plate! Wins against Sevenoaks, Surbiton and Norwich and the boys are into the Semi-Finals against Marlow on Sunday – away. The KP Summer League was the making of the boys and they've been on the up ever since. All the best to the boys for Sunday.

On the senior side, our Women's 1st team had a wonderful match with East Grinstead 1s; once again showing the progress of our young hockey players. Having a crowd there was a really positive reminder of pre-Covid days where we could get out and support one another. I really hope that these days are not too far away. The defeat put us into the Plate and after a win against Havant (three leagues above us) we are into the Semi-Finals in 10 days' time! The Men's 1st team had to withdraw due to clashes with the U14 Boys and Mixed. The Mixed had a tough draw in Round 1 in both the Cup and then the Plate so sadly that campaign is over for this season now.

Finally I just want to mention a few people for some individual "Well Dones" this season. Many congratulations to everyone that has been training at Performance Centre level this

season – we hope you have enjoyed it, learnt a lot and are excited for where your hockey is heading.

A well done to Amelie, Annabel & Elloise for making it through to the final stages of the England U16 & U18 squads. I understand that Elloise has just been called up to attend further assessment at England U18 in July – congratulations Elloise!

Well Done to Olivia for being selected for the England U16 Training Squad and a massive WELL DONE to Lottie and Anna for being selected for the England U16 Match Day squad and to Elen for being selected into the Wales U18 & U19 Match Day squad – we wish you all the best in the next few weeks. Many congratulations to you all!

Moving in to the summer there is still so much going on as we conclude the final few weeks of the season: DC, PC trials, the U12 & U14 Girls Tour to play in the Repton Cup in July & holiday camps! There is a month off from hockey in mid-July -> mid-August – just enough time to recharge the batteries and do it all again!

Thank you's!

Thank you to all the parents managers for your time, commitment and help on a match day in particular. My Clubhouse saves us all a lot of time and admin, so it's the willingness to come onto the bench and help me that I am most grateful for. Thank you.

The Young Leaders programme continues to be a great success. We hope we will have our first graduates of the Knole Park Coaching Award and England Hockey Leadership Award in the next few months. Thank you to all those that have given up their time, often social or sleeping time, to come and help the younger members. Like you, when you were that age, they will be forever grateful to you, as I am.

I would like to thank everyone that has helped me to deliver the hockey this season: LJ, Ruth and Sarah in the Minis, Adam and Martha with the U14 Girls, Ruth with the U16 & U18 Girls, Steve & Matt with the U14 Boys & Ruth, Sarah and Martha with the indoor programme. I couldn't do it without you and it has been great to see how much you have involved yourself in what are largely groups without your children in. Thank you also to those that have stepped out of their comfort zone to umpire. Whilst I actually enjoy umpiring, I'm led to believe that this isn't a shared opinion by all, so thank you!

Thank you to all the committee for making the hockey happen in the background too. It's been a tough one, but next year will be awesome! (Although I did say that last year too!!)

I would like to add a personal thanks to Ruth. The time you give to Knole Park is incredible – I genuinely have no idea how you fit everything in to each day, and especially now we've stolen most of your evenings from you too! Always a smiling and positive force – your impact is felt in every area of the club. Thank you.

EH Performance Pathway

We felt that the AGM would be a good time to briefly explain the changes that England Hockey are making to the Performance Pathway too and ask any questions and your potential support.

Fundamentally not a huge amount is changing, except England Hockey want the clubs to deliver more of the performance hockey in England rather than having independent centres like the Tonbridge PC. This means that we will, with the memberships support, be applying to become a Talent Centre over the next few months.

The “Talent Centre” is essentially a quality assurance label for England Hockey to know that what is being delivered in clubs is safe, high quality and in line with the England Hockey objectives. This is primarily for those in Years 7 – 10. We feel we tick all these objectives through our current delivery, so we hope to be successful with this application.

The next stage is more complicated, and this is the replacement for the current PC. The “Talent Academy” will be a similar model to the PC, except there will be more contact time as the delivery will be through club sessions, with some specific set-aside TA sessions. The TA sessions will take place around the country in a similarly geographically set-out locations to the PC. An easy example is to say that we are the Knole Park Talent Academy for 25x U18 Girls. From our club, 20x KP Girls qualify by right of being the best players in the country in this area. There would then be 5x U18 Girls who would join us from other local clubs for the Talent Academy session. We would then have our own separate club session where we might focus on team things and/or have more of our club selected. I, or the Knole Park coach, would then be your TA coach.

It is our ambition to apply to become the Talent Academy in this area for 2022/23 season. We tick a majority of the boxes that are required for us to become a TA and it'll be a case of having the full support of the membership, the local community and working with England Hockey to develop our coaching and training programme to the levels that they require. The Talent Academy will be for those in Years 10-13 – Boys & Girls.

If we do not become a TA, our members in that age and level band would need to attend a weekly, fortnightly training at an alternative club to access TA quality training and coaching. You would not need to “leave KP”, nor would you not be able to play for us. It would be just like having an extra team: e.g. “Tonbridge Talent Academy” who would play “Guildford Talent Academy”. None of this is in place until 2022/23, however some of the competitions are changing and therefore it does emphasise the importance of the next 7-10 days and the 2021/22 season in terms of Knole Park representative teams. For example we think the U18 Nationals will be disappearing from 2022/23 onwards....

Summary

Beyond the excitement of the matches it is the training – the indoor and outdoor – that is Knole Park’s passion. We work exceptionally hard to try to provide the highest quality training in the country.

Will we ever get there?

We’re not sure it matters so long as we’re all trying to get better and we can enjoy the journey along the way. As you may know or are learning, great training makes the game so much more enjoyable, the matches more rewarding and the personal journey’s so much more high achieving.

Indoor – the secret in the background! Indoor continues to remain a huge passion of Knole Park and offering year round indoor is something that isn't offered anywhere else in the Country as far as I am aware. It is so enjoyable, so competitive and so good all players of all ages and abilities to learn and improve – well done to all that have signed up and committed to the indoor programme – what a difference it makes to your hockey!

So to finish, thank you for joining us on this magnificent hockey journey!

It truly is remarkable that just two years ago we started HC Knole Park and we have achieved so much as individuals and as teams, despite the pandemic too!

I always said from Day 1 that “I didn't want anyone to miss out on anything through joining KP”. And we haven't; we qualified for everything, we've won matches, tournaments, we have phenomenal training and practice match opportunities and actually it has been so much more brilliant than perhaps any of us could have imagined.

I was reminiscing with an old friend recently about junior hockey from my day and I would just encourage everyone to make the most of every minute of your junior hockey. It really is an incredible time to play! Thank you once again to everyone that makes Knole Park happen! See you soon!