



NEWSLETTER

MILTON KEYNES HOCKEY CLUB



Ladies Section Round Up:

1s

The Ladies 1 travelled a lot, visited the New Forest twice and had some tough results. They are now looking forward to next season in a new league which doesn't have an average away game travel time of 2 hours!

2s

The season for the L2s can be summed up in one word: Champions! It wasn't all plain sailing with some hard fought games, but great teamwork and determination meant winning was the main theme. Strong leadership from Kelly and Chrissy kept the team on track with a focus on performance, friendship and fun. Bring on the next league!

3s

The 3s finished a satisfying sixth after a tough previous season in which they were demoted. Thanks to the coaching of Dan, Arthur and Aaron and the captaincy of Emily Watkins, they have developed as a team and as individual players. They beat or drew with all of the teams above them except Oxford 5s who were runaway divisional winners – highlighting their potential as a team. They are looking forward to continue building next season.

4s

The 4s had a great season finishing third and were deservedly promoted to Cherwell Division 3. Highlights included beating league leaders Thame and Witney away. Throughout the season they played with great tenacity and team spirit.

The 4s always welcome new players whether complete beginners, juniors stepping up to seniors for the first time or players returning to hockey after many years. This year 34 people played for the 4s during the season. Huge credit to the joint captains Abbey Woolgar and Sue Pardy for making everyone feel welcome and leading the team by example.

Mens Section Round Up:

1s

After a tough 21/22 season, losing almost half the team and unfortunately getting relegated – the new look Men's 1s (with new full time coach Jace) entered the season hopeful, after a very strong pre-season period. Unfortunately, the team took a little longer to gel than we had expected, and this showed in the first few games of the season. 1 point in the first 4 games was less than ideal. After a late night squad meeting (accompanied with Pizza), it was at this point that the team started to perform, unbeaten in the next 5 games and scoring 16 goals in the process. Injuries continued to hamper progress a little, but the team remained strong to pull out some fantastic performances against teams firmly at the top of the table, showing just how capable we are as a team of performing at this level. The season ended with us in 8th place, but with only 12 points separating 5th and 10th, it showed just how competitive this league is.

2s

It was a difficult season in a tough league for the men's 2nd XI, with availability presenting a challenge throughout the year. Despite this there were some spirited performances, most notably the 3-0 win away to a much higher placed Reading with a bare 11. This season also gave the opportunity for new keeper Ben, and youngsters Kyle, Connor and Micheal to showcase their talents. We will look to build on a number of positive performances this year as we head into the new season.

3s

A league of 2 halves. With MK3 leading the bottom half in a solid 6th place of 12. Hampered by injuries and availability issues the team looked different every week. We managed to get our full line up out enough to win enough games to avoid the pressure of the drop zone.

Top scorer was Cory Jamieson who is now recovering from knee surgery – wishing you a speedy recovery, and player of the Season was Sukh Sangha who had a great first season in the side. A good overall position and a great place to build from for next season.

SAMs

Success for the SAMs this season has been more about helping younger players move into higher teams and less about the league position due to availability struggles. Solid defence from players such as James McConnell, strong play in the midfield from Sten Ponsioen and an aging frontline who have an uncanny ability to miss open goals but score from impossible angles meant the SAMs finished in the bottom half of their league. We had two of our juniors move into the 3s which is a great success and we expect more to do the same next season.

Ronin

Ronin have had a solid mid table finish this season despite forfeiting 4 of the 14 games this year. Out of the 10 games that went ahead, Ronin had a solid record of 4 wins, 2 draws, and 4 losses.

The Junior players have all played exceptionally well and developed massively over the past season with at least half of them ready to move up to the Samurai. The Senior players have also played exceptionally well and been a massive help this year in advising the junior players, especially Roger Young who has also advised on formation and tactics every single game this season

END OF SEASON DINNER AND AWARDS



The membership gathered at the Windmill Hill Golf Club on the 22nd April to celebrate another fabulous season of hockey at MKHC. Drinks, dinner and dancing were enjoyed until the late hours.

A huge thanks to Jo and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make the event a huge success.

Well done to everyone who received an award – see below for the full list:

L1s Player of the Season: **Louise Davies**

L1s Top Scorer: **Emily Hill**

L1s Captain's Player: **Hannah Cuthbert.**

L2s Player of the Season: **Kate Bannister**

L2s Top Scorer: **Siobhan Hennessy**

L2s Captain's Player: **Lia Rothman**

L3s Player of the Season: **Sonia Fraser**

L3s Top Scorer: **Susan Watkins**

L3s Captain's Player: **Jo Wells**

L4s Player of the Season: **Abby Woolgar**

L4s Top Scorer: **Sarah Chapman**

L4s Captain's Player: **Pippa**

Fair Play Award: **Alex Harmon.**

Young Player: **Megan McConnell**

Most Improved: **Katie Harris**

Club Top Scorer: **Siobhan Hennessy**

Club Player: **Emily Watkins**

Fair Play Award: Matt Bates

League Winners: **Ladies 2s**

Young Player: **Kyle De Bruin**

Most Improved: **Kyle De Bruin**

Club Top Scorer: **Jonny Wyatt**

Club Player: **Nick Murdoch**

CLUB PERSON OF THE YEAR: **JACE WILKES**

M1 Player of the Season: **Nick Murdoch**

M1 Top Scorer: **Jonny Wyatt**

M1 Captain's Player: **Elliot Knight**

M2 Player of the Season: **Toby King**

M2 Top Scorer: **Dave Breuilly**

M2 Captain's Player: **Ryan Gawley**

M3 Player of the Season: **Sukh Sangha**

M3 Top Scorer: **Corey Jamieson**

M3 Captain's Player: **Mike Anderson**

M4 Player of the Season: **Corey Constable**

M4 Top Scorer: **Tim Atkins**

M4 Captain's Player: **Zac Woolgar**

M5 Player of the Season: **Nathan Davis**

M5 Captain's Player: **Henry Smith**

COACHING 2023/24

We are pleased to confirm that Jace Wilkes will continue to coach the Men's 1st XI having successfully cemented the team's position as a South Premier Div 2 team.

Coaching for the Ladies 1s and 2s has been progressing and there is now a clear plan for 2023/24 which involves a dedicated LI coach supported by a mentor who will guide the coaching across the lower end of the club for both Ladies and Men's teams.

We should be in a position to provide more details at the AGM once final arrangements are confirmed.

There are several members of the Men's teams who have stepped up to support the coaching and who are completing the coaching course across the summer to further improve the depth of coaching at the club for future years. The club is committed to supporting the development of our coaches and our budding umpires. If you are interested in being involved in either coaching or umpiring, please let any member of the committee know.

WOTG FACILITIES UPDATE

Beth, Paul and Nick met with the MKDons SET with England Hockey present on 15th May. The focus of the conversation centred around three elements:

1.The flood lights continue to be a challenge; having established that the council were going to take responsibility to fix them, having received several quotes for the work we understand that the cost is beyond any council budget to conduct the work.

England Hockey have offered to support the process by having a quote for the work by the Hockey Association's preferred supplier, who can offer preferential rates for sites used for Hockey. This will site assessment is expected to be conducted in early June. From this point onwards we will know more about the likely outcome and the plan to resolve the lighting issue.

2.Access to changing rooms and toilets has been discussed and we have asked that the MKDons SET make a minimum of 1 set of changing rooms available per pitch. We can then, if required stagger our games to ensure all teams have access to changing pre and post matches.

3.Finally access to the kitchen area and main seating in the club house. The final two games of the 2022/23 season were played without us being able to provide teas to our oppositions which is against our league regulations. Moving forward we are looking to have access to the club house post match. One of the barriers to MKHC having access was available staff from MKDons SET and MKDons. The proposed solution to this is that MKHC takes out insurance and becomes an official key holder. Cost depending, we will look to take on this responsibility so that we are able to open and close the facility to meet our booking times.

As a committee we shall continue to keep the club membership updated on progress on these core areas of the facility at Woughton on the Green.

YOUR FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

It is important that we continue to capture all feedback and complaints from the membership about the facilities. Please can all correspondence be sent to: **MKHCvicechair@gmail.com**.

AGM NOTICE

The Club AGM will take place at The Windmill Hill Golf Club on the **15th June at 7.30pm**, please arrive from 7pm. This is your chance to have a voice on the future of our Club so please make every effort to attend. It's a good excuse for a mid-week beer with your mates too!

COMMITTEE ROLES

If you are passionate about hockey in Milton Keynes and have time and energy to contribute then please consider volunteering for a role on our Club Committee. The following vacancies are available;

- Welfare Officer (could be non-playing member)
- Social Secretary (could be done as an individual or group role)
- Mens Director of Hockey
- Mens Club Captain
- Fundraising/Sponsorship Secretary (could be non-playing member)
- Junior Co-ordinator (could be non-playing)

We are also looking for Captains for the Mens 2s and 3s.

We would LOVE to have you join us! If you are interested in learning more, please contact any committee member. There are comprehensive job descriptions available for the committee roles.

THANK YOU DOUG AND TIMMO

We are sad to announce that stalwart committee members Doug and Timmo have decided to step back from their committee duties after years of amazing service to the Club.

Timmo has been a member of MKHC for almost 17 years but has played hockey since he was 22. So far he has retired 3 times from his hockey career so we are always waiting for his comeback on the pitch! He has been our Junior Coordinator for many years, getting involved when his son Mitch joined the Club (Mitch has since gone on to play for England Colleges). MKHC is enormously grateful for all Timmo's hard work and dedication to the juniors and we hope he enjoys spending his winter Sunday mornings relaxing instead of hanging out at WOTG! Thank you for everything Timmo. A more detailed tribute will be included in the next newsletter.

See the last two pages of the newsletter for Jace's tribute to Doug's service to the Club.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION 23/24

Everyone will be aware of the ongoing 'Cost of Living Crisis'. Unfortunately, our Club is not immune to rising costs and despite efforts to limit the impact for members (particularly from Hutch), the time has come to review the price of a Club Subscription. An example of this is pitch hire which has increased significantly. A proposal will be put to the membership at the AGM.

Upcoming Dates for the Diary:

Please hold these dates for the new season kick-off events:

- 8/9th August 2023 - Training Starts
- 2nd September 2023 - Club Day at WOTG

We wish you all a wonderful summer. The next newsletter will be published in ahead of the new season in August. Interim news and updates will be posted on the website.

DOUG THE LEGEND...BY JACE



Doug's Milton Keynes Hockey career is very difficult to sum up in a short article in a newsletter, and in line with that to do his time and support of the club justice is almost impossible, so understand as you read through the below, this only touches the surface of how much he has given behind the scenes over many years to our club, and whether or not you realise it, you have much to thank him for.

In his formative years at school in Bedford and University, Doug was a sporty lad....

He was a dogged left-handed opening bat with a scoring V almost as wide from point to first slip, never a huge scorer, his was limpet like to try and get out.

Also a competent fly/scrum half in the first XV at school, spraying the ball around on the rugby pitch whether through hands or from the boot.

But most importantly for our club, he played hockey....

Doug was a rapid forward, classically trained in the role of a grass playing right wing.

Receive a bouncing bomb out of defence on the wing, turn your defender, attack the base line into the D with a lovely curved run, and deliver the ball to centre forward waiting on the P spot for goals and glory!

Thankfully for us, Doug chose hockey as the main sport of his adult life.

After a false start joining Northampton when he first moved to Newport Pagnell after a poor first impression on the phone, it didn't take long for Doug to realise that, actually Milton Keynes was the club for him.

As a player his speed over the first 3 yards, stylish first touch and turns served him well, couple that with a killer strike of his back foot, and plenty of goals were delivered for our club.

It was not just Milton Keynes that he played for, he also played in his corporate team, and continued to play in his old boys team at school, returning annually to give the current school 1XI team a bloody good hiding, because we can't have those cheeky upstarts thinking they are too good now can we!

Among many of his achievements, one that stands out was as skipper of a struggling 2XI in the early noughties, he took a recently relegated side to league glory and promotion back to regional hockey with a massive 46 points.

It was done with a mix of coaxing one more season out wonderful players hunting retirement, and picking of juniors coming up through the ranks. Once league victory was secured, much fun was had and many heads were sprayed orange for the end of season celebration, Oceana was rocked to its very core in an evening that started with a round of champagne and went downhill from there... the Bucks cup the day after was not the best day, with numerous fuzzy heads, and a nice collection of cards!

Now the least that is said about the following season the better when half the side retired, and the travelling doubled!

When his twin sons came of age it seemed only fair for Doug to get involved and support junior coaching (a little nudge and a wink to all you hockey parents with kids out there!)

This was his first step on a coaching path he followed for the rest of his time playing hockey in support of both club and county through many years.

He delivery of junior club sessions often started with some wild and wacky warm ups, the like of which have only occasionally been seen since he stepped down as a club junior coach, they included trips to space, and days in the life of the American West.

During his time with our juniors there was county cup success for the junior boys, and he steadfastly guided the MK juniors and coordination for the section majority of ten years, there are many members of the club at large who have benefited from Doug time supporting our Junior section.

is coaching development took him on many coaching courses as he got qualified to deliver the sessions he was already a seasoned master at.

Now this was before the days where most of the courses were online, so involved quite a bit of driving around the south region going as far north as Loughborough, parts of Birmingham, and then Reading and beyond for both evening, and multi day courses.

A notable positive memory, among many, for Doug was when the question of age came up during a level 3 course, between him and his "coaching buddy" at the time (who is more than a couple of years younger than Doug) A lovely lady also on the course, suggested not only was Doug younger than his "coaching buddy", but by at least 5 years, which made a very happy Doug, and a more than a little bit grumpy "coaching buddy"

With qualifications in hand, and by now plenty of coaching experience behind him, county hockey for his boys came calling, so Doug followed them in, as why stand on the side lines supporting when you can get yourself involved?!

Over the next 5 years, he continued to support his boys through the county sides, and then Doug stuck with the U17 boy side, for numerous years after until COVID signalled the end of his lead coaching tenure, but it was long enough to have the opportunity to have both of his sons go full circle and spend time acting as his assistant coach with the Boys U17 squad.

He performed the role of lead coach of the boys in his normal style, forth rightness, grace and a bit of cheeky humour, facing very little parental intervention. Respected by all the boys lucky enough to have spent time with him, and some of his assistants too!

Before the natural end to Doug's county coaching, he was a prominent, well known, and well liked figure in the Bucks County structure, both for delivery of high-quality sessions, but also in support of the Bucks hockey committee, and a font of advice for the executive team.

Not one to stand in the background, or sit in the cheap seats as his name appearing twice on the clubman of the year award trophy would suggest, Doug performed multiple roles within the Milton Keynes Hockey club committee for many years, constantly since 2002 in fact. Those roles included being skipper more than once, and most recently Club Captain for the men's section, a role which he performed for 6 years. Club Captain for those that don't know is a very active role during the season over seeing selection, making sure everyone is getting a game, and that we are fulfilling all the games we are committed to. It also involves running and coordination player conduct and discipline, one of the least fun things in the running of a club, but equally a very important one.

We have got all this way, and not mentioned our annual summer festival as it was, most of us know him as the Head honcho of the Brummie mincers for over ten years, but you may not know he was an important member of the team of Milton Keynes club members helping to make sure the event ran smoothly, whether that helping was throwing off site very naughty teams, setting up and manning the decks in the marquee, or clambering on the roof of the club house to make sure the power was working, the event would not have been the same without him. He can still be spotted out and about around Willen lake in his bright pink shirt on his bike "keeping fit", any excuse for a beer!

As Doug hangs up his stick at the end of the 2022-23 season for what might be the last time, he will be sorely missed as a regular around the club umpiring, coaching or playing, and it is with great thanks we wish him well in the future, and hope that he will not be stranger and come back and see us.

Thank You Doug

