

North Masters Season 2017-18

Report for the North Hockey Association AGM to be held 12/6/18

Regional Performance

The highlight of the North Masters year is the round of regional competitions held in late spring/early summer, which this year have been held in fantastic summer weather finishing on the weekend of 2/3 June. A summary of North results is provided in the table below.

| Team | W | D | L | GF | GA | Posn | Comments |
|-------------|---|---|---|----|----|------|---|
| Ladies O-40 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 5/5 | Despite finishing last the team improved markedly, with great communication, mutual support and team spirit |
| Ladies O-45 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4/5 | Played some great hockey and could easily have finished 2nd if had beaten W and not lost to E (both very marginal games) |
| Ladies O-50 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 5/5 | Results don't do justice to great team spirit, with new players fitting in well. Need more coached practice sessions. Champions at the social! |
| Ladies O-55 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 4/5 | Played really well and would have won more games with bigger squad (only had 11 players). Excellent team spirit and good, sporting competition |
| Ladies O-60 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3/5 | Much improved thanks to more training/practice sessions together, & nearly beat the South. Squad depleted by injuries & fielded 3 O-65 players. |
| Mens O-40 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 4/5 | Disappointed not to see Wales, Scotland & UKAF as in the past; tournament otherwise very competitive and enjoyable |
| Mens O-45 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 3/7 | Again some disappointment not to see Wales, Scotland & UKAF. Narrow defeats to South & West cost us top position in the table. |
| Mens O-50 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 2/6 | Close, competitive games; felt we should have beaten South & Midlands - too many draws! |
| Mens O-55 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1/5 | Fantastic to win having been 5th last year. Strong squad & team spirit, marred only by the final game (lost to S & some discipline/umpiring issues) |
| Mens O-60 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3/5 | Highly competitive; great to beat the South! Need a manager/coach at pitchside to run bench and provide tactical input. |
| Mens O-65 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4/5 | Strong performance in all games. Do we lack belief that we can beat other regional teams? |
| Mens O-70 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 2/5 | Great finish to the season. Lost only to South (virtually all members of the England squad) and won silver. |

Particular congratulations are due to the Mens' O-55 who ran out as champions, and to their O-50 and O-70 counterparts who finished as runners up.

Not revealed by these statistics is the substantial increase in participation and some real strengthening of team performances, particularly for the older squads of both sexes. The O-55 and O-60 Ladies' squads were sadly limited in numbers, but in all other squads there was strong competition for places.

We will always struggle in the North against the southern regions where top players graduate to club O-40's and O-50's hockey, meaning there is always a large pool of top players feeding through into the regional teams. We have to rely more on word of mouth; increasing awareness of Masters opportunities will be a major focus for next season.

Organisation

After much discussion with the Mens O-65 team in particular we are now trying to implement some simple "governance principles" across the North teams:

- Team managers & selectors will volunteer to step down after the Regionals
- All registered players will have the opportunity to volunteer as selectors, and will be balloted if there are too many volunteers or they are too weighted to one area
- Each squad will aim to have at least one selector who is not playing at that age group
- The selectors will agree team management roles among themselves.

After many years of great service organising regular get-togethers for the over-60 mens' age groups, Roger Lomas has stood down from this role. Having taken over from him I now know just how much effort he put into this – and he was doing it before Google forms existed!

Particular thanks from all in North Masters are due not only to the individual squad managers & captains, but also to Roger Lomas for his work with the O-60 age groups, to Bill Barton for organising regular coached sessions for men in the 40-59 age bracket, and to Josie Warburton, Jacky Murray and Allie Gallagher for organising the ladies masters across the whole age spectrum.

It's always difficult getting volunteers to organise the younger age group squads as so many people are still playing at a good level and have young families and work commitments. I'm therefore delighted that, in anticipation of the introduction of an O-35 mens' regional competition next year we already have a geographically diverse group of selectors in place and a volunteer coach!

Priorities for 2018/19

- Getting the new O-35 squads and management in place
- Promoting Masters more effectively at club level
 - Getting a programme of open events sorted out early for the various groups (Ladies, Men U-60, Men O-60)
 - Sorting out the/a Masters web site (which has never worked properly and is currently completely inaccessible as the links to it are broken)
- Introducing Coach/Manager roles across the squads – where adopted this has been very beneficial.

Tony Taig

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