

Masters Report

Current Season

The only current planned North Masters activity is among the men aged 60 and over. Instead of our usual 4 North-wide “gatherings” in the corners of the North region we are organising within sub-regions (Yorkshire/Lincs, Cheshire/Lancs and Northumberland/Cumbria/Co Durham). The aim is to get some friendly social hockey started without people having to travel too far. There is a lot of support for this initiative as a lot of older players are not comfortable about playing in their clubs, often in development teams, alongside youngsters who are mixing regularly in schools, colleges, night clubs etc.

There is good North representation in ongoing England LX activity and in trials for England squads at all age groups.

The ladies are waiting to see how the Mens’ 60+ sub-regional approach works out, particularly in light of the current emerging “second wave”, before restarting activity.

The younger mens’ age groups typically don’t have any pre-Christmas activity and start organising in the New Year in time to select teams for the Regional Tournaments. Planning for these is going ahead as normal, with dates/venues currently being finalised under Roger Lomas’ leadership.

Season 2021/22

There was a lot of concern about splitting the North into 2 regions among Masters players. The ladies, and some of the mens’ age groups, would really struggle to raise 2 teams (the Ladies’ O-60s struggled to raise one team back in 2019). It’s also very difficult finding people to take on organising the squads.

While strongly supportive of the long-term aim of increasing opportunities for participation in regional Masters activity, I have been assured by England Hockey that for the foreseeable future we will be allowed to continue entering a single “North” team in regional competitions (though this may need to be badged as NW or NE for governance purposes). I have consulted among the age groups for men and women and we are currently proposing to continue organising Masters hockey at “All North” level. As and when we can for each gender and age group we will select both a NW and a NE team to participate in regional competitions and thus move stepwise towards organising NW and NE separately.

That’s our current thinking – we may need to review and reconsider after this very strange season.

Tony Taig

Masters Coordinator