

BRADFORD HOCKEY CLUB AGM REPORTS.

Fixture Secretary: Coaching: Junior Development.

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The 04/05 season has progressed quite well from a Fixtures point until around Christmas when some players, for whatever reason, seemed to make themselves unavailable on an infrequent basis. Team selection became more difficult to establish early in the week so that by the weekend the 4th X1 particularly were often short of players and transport so that away games were cancelled at the last minute and some home games were not able to be played as well.

The decision to withdraw the 4th X1 from the Yorkshire Hockey League during the last few weeks of the season was a bitter blow, and a reflection of the lack of commitment, enthusiasm on the part of players, and an absence of a proactive attitude by the Club generally to increasing player numbers and player strength.

When we dropped the 5th X1 fixtures in the pre League Hockey era, we were determined to resurrect the team at the earliest opportunity. We got close quite a few times but never actually made the push to succeed. I have major concerns that the BHC 4th X1 will not rise from the ashes in the same way, and the Club continue to slip from 3 teams to 2 teams, and so on.

On the pitch the 1st X1 relied on some talented youngsters to show maturity beyond their years and lived life in the fast lane with the younger players enthusiasm driving things forward. The support and determination of the senior players made for a potent force on the pitch, and the team, I feel sure with more luck, fewer injuries, and 'different' umpiring decisions, could have gained promotion back to the top of Yorkshire League Hockey rather than the mid table position they actually achieved. Terry Moorhouse & Martin Barstow drove/guided the Team in more ways than one and they can be pleased with the successes they achieved over the season.

The 2nd X1 somehow were the most stable Team in the Club with selection based around the same 14/15 players nearly all season. Their push for promotion was great to watch, with Richard Harpin hitting the back of the net on a regular basis, however if the goalposts had been a foot bigger he would have scored four times as many goals then he actually put away. The team created an amazing number of scoring opportunities but only infrequently capitalised on that dominance in games. To miss out on promotion by a close margin for a second season was to say the least disappointing. Andy Dowson's move to Switzerland, whilst great for Andy, was a blow for the Team at a crucial point in the season. We all wish him well and look forward to short holiday breaks in the region.

The 3rd X1 had some problems with availability and often had to draw on the 4th X1 to fulfil fixtures. Mick & Nick Hayes did a great job of maintaining a competitive edge to the Team and whilst the Team set no fire alight in a push for promotion, their opposition certainly knew they had been in a competitive Hockey match. Saturday work arrangements often put paid to players ability to travel to away games and sometimes to play at all, this all added to the selection problems faced by the 'Hayes Organisation'.

The 4th X1 led by Colin Whitehead and Scott Jenkins tried manfully to regularly raise a Team but lack of reliable transport and player availability lead to games being cancelled and rearranged too often. Colin's and Scott's enthusiasms took quite a battering and it is understandable that after so many disappointments that they decided, with Club Management approval, to discontinue the 4th X1 fixtures.

There are some more enthusiastic and capable youngsters ready for senior hockey next season, but they will need to be given the right sort of encouragement and support. Regular games, consistent team selection, good advice on the pitch, and senior players prepared to provide transport and experience are all needed if we are to retain them as hockey players never mind reverse this declining situation the Club finds itself in.

Next season will again have two slip date weekends with no designated fixtures, one in late October to coincide with the U15/17 Regional Tournament and the other in mid February. Both dates will also match up with half term so that player availability will not be such a problem.

Thornton Sports Centre, and Simon Turner, Centre Manager, have once again been superb in their support of the Club with the establishing of home games, rearranging of postponed games, Cup matches and training midweek.

The acquisition of two dug outs was a sound move, though Tom Hardill's constructions were very much appreciated, the bought products do make the pitch look that bit more professional and in bad weather are much used.

Toilets near to the pitch, the re-hanging of the pitch dividing net, and suitable wheels to allow the Hockey goals to moved more easily are aspects that we now need jointly to move forward on.

The reliability of the flood lights is an aspect that needs attention and is something the Centre must give urgent priority to through the Summer.

Phil Thomas May 2005.

Coaching:

The Mid week coaching at Thornton followed the previous seasons structure of U12s and developing U16s getting together at 7.00pm, followed at 8.00pm by the more experienced U16s and senior players.

The junior sessions were well attended with even younger faces making an impact, 7/8/9 year olds were beginning to join in. **Stuart Harrison** particularly, **myself** with **Mo Owen, Martin Wright, Andy Moriarty** all helped make the mid week sessions enjoyable if sometimes frustrating.

The later evening session mid week was superbly run and organised by Bev Barstow and not appreciated by the senior players at all.

The U18/16's playing in the senior teams made for enjoyable and worthwhile sessions; it is a shame more of the senior Club members could not have joined in as the benefits for styles of play, individual skill, and team spirit and cohesiveness, would have benefited greatly.

This was shown by the success of the younger players on the representative hockey ladder.

Danny Barstow, James Moorhouse, Kylan Pathmanathan, Ryan Harrison, Gareth Phillpott all contributed to the Yorkshire or North East England team successes.

It is now important that the next group of youngsters are given a similar amount of encouragement and opportunity.

There was a strong determination at the start of the season that selection to senior teams, particularly the 1st X1, would be based on attendance at the midweek Club Coaching session and once again, as in previous years, this was quickly discarded. If selection were based on training attendance we would raise just two teams if we were lucky.

The Sunday morning sessions at Bradford Girls have benefited from having the indoor sports hall available when the weather dictated.

Bev & Martin Barstow, Mo Owen, Andy Moriarty, Paul Bateson & Martin Wright have all contributed to the Sunday morning sessions. **Paul & Andy** have gone on to gain their Level One Coaching Awards and will be able to take on even more involved roles in future knowing they have access to England Hockey backing and Insurance cover.

As a Club we need to make it clear that the very positive aspects of the Coaching structure that **Stuart Harrison** has put in place with the U16s must be continued into the senior teams. For example the U16/17s appear to give each other 'hospital passes' but in fact are playing to routines and tactics that have been honed midweek and practised regularly, not by just walking onto the pitch once a week on a Saturday afternoon.

Stuart has again done an absolutely tremendous job with the U16/17s; we need to keep these lads within the Club if we are move forwards.

Last seasons AGM Report I made the comment:

An approach to ALL Club Members is needed to find out where they would like to see themselves playing next season...which team? Where they would like to see the Club going in the future?...Promotion? Stay the same? Stagnate? Have fewer or more teams? Amalgamate with the University?

We don't seem to have progressed very far.

It could be suggested that in some areas we regressed rather than progressed.

There is a lot to consider, and there is a lot of enthusiasm amongst the younger players that we need to keep developing, bringing that enthusiasm on to the older players to realise the Clubs potential and promise for the future.

Phil Thomas May 2005.

Junior Development.

The Coaching Team have worked very hard to continue the Clubs Youth Development Policy.

Bev. and Martin Barstow have once again been the back bone of Sunday morning coaching. Moving Bradford Girls GS has given us both indoor and outdoor opportunities.

Stuart Harrison seems to have waved a magic wand over the U17/16/15 group of lads and created teams that support each other superbly. This group includes some very talented players, but is largely a group of lads who want to play better Hockey together and who are prepared to work at improving together.

I have been at BGGs on Sundays when not taking the U12 or U14 lads of to Youth League games. Having **Martin Wright** helping with the U12/14s at League sessions has been a great asset; he taken the teams off to competitions whilst I have been out of commission. **Andy Moriarty** has made an invaluable contribution by regularly supporting the younger teams by umpiring all over the County on Sunday mornings and keeping the players interest and enthusiasm growing as well as getting involved with coaching.

Terry Moorhouse as 'Kit Man' he has turned the Junior Teams out in very smartly dressed equipment. If they don't play the part they certainly look the part. His involvement with the 1st X1 and coaching the Girls U14 Teams have been great to see.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED THIS SEASON.

The Club entered the Yorkshire Youth League at U16/14/12 and achieved a fair measure of success.

The **U12** playing in a League of 4 Divisions ended the season roughly where they started but new younger faces show considerable promise for next season.

The **U14s** were a mix of boys/girls and a spread of ages. The competitiveness & determination of the likes of the brothers Payne, Mike & Matt & Jenny Brennan, need to rub off on some of the team to engender the spirit of competition and desire to win rather than just taking part.

The **U16s** who are a group of promising talented players, who have worked hard to improve their ability, did the Club proud again this season. The comments I received as Youth League Organiser about our U16s were a joy to hear and a credit to the guidance and direction given by Stuart Harrison.

Representative Hockey has been already mentioned but both **Danny Barstow & James Moorhouse** have now received National recognition for their skills with the whistle and have been invited to Officiate at Games, Competitions & Tournaments all over the UK and Abroad this season. CONGRATULATIONS.

Andy Moriarty having gained his Coaching Award has got involved quickly and over the weekend of 14th May has taken an U14 and U9 teams down to Highfields, Nottingham, for the Youth Hockey Festival. The Festival was for Clubs who have gained the Clubs Mark Clubs 1st Award, something that we eventually gained towards the end of the season.

Junior Presentation Evening is planned for the Tyke on Sunday 22nd May
Phil Thomas May 2005.

I must take the opportunity to praise and thank PAUL BATESON for his untiring enthusiasm and involvement in the Club's Organisation and running this season.

Club Secretary has been made into a 'Art Form' by Paul, and no role or responsibility has been too much for him to take on or get involved with particularly this last season.

Selection Clearing House, Transport Manager & mini bus driver, shirt provider, ball acquirer, play anywhere and usually too often, cash collector and standing order supplier, and regular goal scorer & misser, never mind the usual roles of the Club Secretary.

The Club could do with more members with Paul's involvement and enthusiasm. PAUL.....THANK YOU.

AND FINALLY.

I have decided that after coaching for the last 25 years, and in total 27 years, at the Club I will not be actively involved in coaching next season.

Having now got close to a successful outcome on my right hip, after having to stop playing 17 years ago through arthritis, I think the Club is now in position to move forward with the current group of Coaches without me getting in the way.

With new coaching faces getting involved and qualified the future looks bright and challenging.

I want to make sure that this time I do not push things too hard and the need to be there, helping, fetching, carrying and encouraging is beginning to wear thin. A break may well get my enthusiasm back particularly if I can have a lengthy period free from pain.

Its been 25 years of pleasure & great enjoyment, Bankfoot, Richard Dunn, Scholemoor, City Technology College, Bradford Univ., Thornton & Bradford GS have all benefited from my shouts & outbursts.

From Mike Soothill, Paul Woodhead & Satnam Singh (Khela) as 6th formers in the early 70's through to the current crop via 5 or 6 National Age Group Finals, numerous North & Yorkshire titles at U21,18,16,14,13,11, plus the representative selection successes, I hope I taken the Bradford Hockey Club name forward positively and with pride.

Thank you to everyone who has helped and encouraged me to continue.

After the early days of being on my own, Richard Ashton, Max Amesbury and Bev Barstow particularly have been long term coaching partners with the likes of Gary Hadcroft, Martin Barstow, Stuart Harrison and lately Mo Owen, Martin Wright, Paul Bateson & Andy Moriarty making contributions I have enjoyed both theirs and the players company and enthusiasm.

Phil Thomas.