

BRADFORD HOCKEY CLUB

BRADFORD HOCKEY CLUB AGM REPORTS 2008

Fixture Secretary

The 2007/2008 season was completed successfully though with more than our usual share of problems.

The end of season League positions put the 1st X1 and 2nd X1 under pressure of demotion, they rely on Play Off decisions at National League level to confirm their League positions for next season. The 3rd X1 after early season promise of pushing for promotion ended the season mid table.

Four League games were to be rearranged due to University problems; exams and early late season, 9 games were rearranged due to postponements because of snow or frost, 6 of those were home games.

And then there was Dinnington v BHC 1st X1! Dinnington were unable to play on original date due to lack of players, we should have made more of it and claimed the points, but didn't and agreed to play the game at the end of season, by which time Dinnington had decided to disband, they agreed to concede the game but still wanted to play. BHC lost, in the circumstances of the day recording a different result would have led to serious recriminations that BHC would not wish to be part of. A lesson to learn and a mistake we won't make again.

Two friendly games Harrogate after Christmas were not played due to lack of support from Harrogate, though the Higgins Celebration with Halifax was played though without the usual level of commitment due to many players working and the very poor weather conditions. The role of friendly fixtures and the level of support from players, even though over the years I have tried to make them more local fixtures, have not created the previous level of interest and support. I look back on visits to the likes of Furness (Middlesborough), Brooklands, Cheetham Hill, (Cheshire) Liverpool Sefton, Nottingham etc with considerable pride and much enjoyment.

For whatever reason some senior and junior players continue to not make themselves available on a frequent basis. Team selection remains difficult to establish early in the week so that by the weekend there is conflict between Team Organisers/Captains about who plays where and why teams are short of players. We must remember that a midweek decision is needed if we are unable to raise teams so that a Wednesday evening cancellation is made to avoid fines and penalties.

I do feel that the Selection Committee should be reinstated at the start of next season, not just to make sure Teams are fully selected, but also that promotion and demotion of players who are performing well, those who attend training, or who should be taken to task for not being available, or poor attitude, are taken into consideration when selecting sides.

There are some enthusiastic, capable youngsters particularly in the current U13/12/11 group being brought up through the Coaching System. We need to make sure they are 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, if we are to retain them as hockey players never mind reverse this declining situation the Club finds itself in.

We need to remember that players Under13 on 1st January in any season are in future not able to play any League/Senior Hockey in that season.(LTAD implementation).

Next season BHC has expressed a desire to put a "Badgers Team" in the YHL, where there will be no promotion but a League for only teams made up of 3/4 senior players, who should all be CRB checked and probably coach qualified, with 7/8 inexperienced up to U16s and can include U13s. The senior players involved can play for the Badgers Team and the Senior Team on a Saturday.

Taking on board the suggestions I made last year:

The Club in an effort to increase playing numbers and on pitch success needs to:

1. Continue to make moves to amalgamate with the University; I have done my pushing perhaps someone else may have more success!!
2. Current BHC Members need to recognise their responsibilities as Members of the Club and be regularly available. Too many including some young players are too unreliable to be good Club Members; the reward & opportunity of playing in a higher team should be earned & not given to unreliable players.
3. Early selection must be established and players confirmed as early in the week as possible, so that by Wednesday evening, at the latest, everyone knows who is playing where & when. The reinstating of the Selection Committee would go some way to achieving this. An effort was made last season to structure selection more effectively but commitment to make it work seemed to fall off too quickly.
4. There is concern that emails, text messages, and messages left on answer machines need to be responded to by everyone involved in Club activities so that availability and selection can be confirmed.



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Next season, will again probably have two slip date weekends with no designated fixtures. Both dates should also match up with half term so that player availability will not be such a problem.

The Yorkshire Fixture Secretaries Meeting is planned for Wednesday 4th June; I am not around for that Meeting so I hope that another Club Member can attend so that BHC is not fined and that friendly fixtures can be completed where necessary.

It is likely that some League games versus University teams will again be re-arranged where they are early or late term dates. All three BHC teams may have this problem.

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

Pitch wise:

A number of issues with the pitch have been or are being resolved though there are others that are still dragging on !! The role of the School in our "partnership" is not impressive and they are very much cast in the role what they can get out of the partnership rather than what they can contribute.

The holes made in the carpet by the dugouts blowing across the pitch have been patched by the Grounds man.

The new drain to be put alongside the school side of the pitch intended to make sure contaminated surface water does not get onto the pitch and clog the surface up, has not been completed successfully.

The adjusting of the gully drain on the road near the vehicle/emergency/disabled access to the pitches has been completed by Brad Met, though the raising of the curb stones has not been completed.

The poor reliability of the floodlights continues to cause real concern. The original lighting fitments were of inferior quality, something that should have been dealt with by the Site Quality Control/Project Manager, negotiations are ongoing about replacing all the light fitments at a cost of £15,000 per stanchion.

The use of the Soccer City facilities as home Clubhouse, changing and socialising, has been a positive move allowing a core Club spirit to return with players now able to return to the pitch after their game to encourage the following game. However the lack of decent equipment for preparing food has posed problems that have needed some creative thinking on Members part. From a Clubhouse/Meeting venue the facility is not really suitable and we need to revisit the Clubhouse/Social base once more.

On a final Note looking to the future: Bev Barstow and I have met with Ronnie Todd, Project Manager, for Bradford College Sports Academies that include the development of the Odsal Sports Village. The plan includes indoor and outdoor facilities including 3 astro turf pitches to cover a range of sports. We pointed out that in view of current funding we, local hockey, were unable to generate support funding but have put him in touch with Hockey associated funding groups that may be supportive, UK Sport, Sport England and England Hockey. We both feel that this plan has the best chance of success as it is education driven rather than commercially driven as was the case with previous plans involving the likes of Bradford Bulls etc.

Once again:

The Club owes Paul Bateson a great debt of gratitude for his enthusiasm and desire to ensure the good name of Bradford Hockey Club is maintained within both the Community and the wider Hockey fraternity. Many Club Members have come to expect Paul to cover every problem and get things sorted. We must spread that work load, Club Members must realise that we are all part of Bradford Hockey Club and we all need to contribute towards its future success. I can well understand Paul's desire to relinquish some of the responsibilities he has taken on board.

THANK YOU PAUL FOR ALL YOUR EFFORTS AS CLUB SECRETARY and all the other roles you have taken on board.

Phil Thomas. May 2008



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