



CHESHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

AGM 2017

REPORTS

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Welcome to our 2017 Cheshire AGM.

Thank you for all your support, hard work and successes as players, umpires, coaches, committee members and even spectators. Thank you also to the hardworking Cheshire Executive committee – every one of whom are volunteers – just like yourselves. There are members of the Executive who have been on this committee for a number of years in varying roles, each season there are always several new faces and there will be several more new faces next season too (assuming the AGM elect them). A good committee is a mixture of 'experience' and 'new blood' – which is exactly what we have on the Cheshire Committee. Those who can bring their experience and those who can bring new ideas.

A few 'old' faces will not be with us next season – Elaine Beech, Treasurer and Chris Leyland, Competition Secretary. I would like to thank them both for all their hard work and commitment to Cheshire Hockey over many years. Chris Todd also finishes his three-year term of office as President but continues (if elected) as Deputy President for two years. A proposed change in our Constitution will mean that he will be co-opted to the committee in his role as Vice President (and hopefully subsequently President) of England Hockey so that he may remain on our Committee when his next two years as Cheshire Deputy President ends.

It is at this point that I would like to launch/mention our Cheshire Hockey Association Questionnaire. It is online via Survey Monkey. It is hoped that all members of the Cheshire Hockey family eg those I mentioned above (players, umpires, coaches, committee members, spectators etc) will complete the Survey to help us develop a strategic plan for Cheshire Hockey. Unlike Chris, I don't get to visit clubs as I still play on a Saturday but recently I had great pleasure in attending the Y5/6 Quicksticks competition (Cheshire Winter School Games) held at Crewe and presented the medals at the U10 and U12 Minis held at Chester. The talent I saw at both these events bodes well for the future of Cheshire Hockey.

I now have great pleasure in handing over to Chris Todd who - as President - has the job of chairing the AGM.

Artie Senior

Cheshire HA President's DIARY during the season 2016 / 2017 by Christopher Todd *supporting Cheshire hockey*

It is my hope and intention to see as many Cheshire ladies and men's and youth club teams play throughout the season so that they know that they are being **supported** actively by the Cheshire HA Executive Committee

DATE	ACTION
Sat 03-09-16	England Hockey HOCKFEST at Alderley Edge Hockey Club
Sat 17-09-16	Watching the Cheshire HA Cup match Neston South Wirral versus City of Manchester
Sun 18-09-16	Watching the men's national league match Deeside Ramblers (DRHC) versus Oxtan
Sat 01-10-16	Watching the men's North Division league match Neston South Wirral versus Harrogate
Sun 02-10-16	Watching the men's national league match Bowdon versus DRHC
Sat 08-10-16	Watching women's North Division One league match Chester versus University of Leeds
Sun 09-10-16	Watching men's national league match DRHC versus Durham University
Tues 11-10-16	RCC meeting at EH HQ, Bisham Abbey
Sat 22-10-16	Watching women's North Premier Division match NSW HC versus Fylde
Sun 23-10-16	Watching men's National League North Conference Oxtan HC versus Doncaster
Wed 26-10-16	Watching / supporting the Cheshire Oaks SSP QUICKSTICKS competition at NSW HC
Thurs 27-10-16	Watching / supporting the Cheshire Primary Schools competition hosted by Deeside Ramblers Hockey Club
Sat 29-10-16	Watching / supporting NSW HC men's first team
Sat 05-11-16	Watching Lymm HC women's first team
Sun 06-11-16	Watching / supporting Brooklands HC men's first team
Sat 12-11-16	Watching / supporting NSW HC men's first team
Sun 13-11-16	Watching / supporting Bowdon HC men's first team in an EH cup match
Sat 19-11-16	Watching / supporting NSW HC women's first team
Sun 20-11-16	Watching / supporting Bowdon HC men's first team
Sun 27-11-16	Guest at Brooklands HC men's first team versus East Grinstead for the Brooklands new pitch opening

Sat 10-12-16	Watching Bowdon men's second team play Timperley men's first in in the North League Premier Division
Sat 17-12-16	Supervising the Wirral Schools U14, U16 and U18 county cup finals at NSW HC
Tues 27-12-16	Supporting the Cheshire men's three teams versus Lancashire at Formby HC
Thurs 05-01-17	Representing CHA at the Service of Thanksgiving for Arthur Cheetham (Lancashire and North hockey)
Sat 07-01-17	Supporting the Cheshire teams at the Super Sixes North Division Two Indoor tournament
Tues 10-01-17	RCC meeting at EH HQ
Sat 14-01-17	As EH VP presenting the trophies and medals at the Girls' Schools national indoor finals at Bromsgrove Sch.
Fri 20-01-17	Funeral of John Epps at 12 noon at the United Reform Church, Altrincham, WA15 9NT
Sun 22-01-17	Presenting the medals and trophies at the EH Club Super 6s Boys and Girls indoor finals at Aldersley, WV6 9NW
Wed 25-01-17	Annual Hockey Writers Club Lunch in London Knightsbridge
Sat 28-01-17	Supporting Timperley men's first team at home versus Ben Rhydding in the North Premier League
Mon 30-01-17	Junior Competitions Framework Focus Group meeting at the Nottingham Hockey Centre
Sat 04-02-17	Supporting Bowdon men at home versus Cannock followed by Bowdon-Hightown women
Sun 05-02-17	Supporting Oxton men and Deeside Ramblers men play each other
07,08 & 09-02	TD at Timperley HC for the North West Boys' Schools U16, U19 and U14 Finals
Sun 12-02-17	Supporting Bowdon men at home versus Durham University
Sat 18-02-17	Supporting Alderley Edge men at home versus Formby in the North Premier League
Sun 19-02-17	Supporting Brooklands men at home versus Wimbledon
Sun 26-02-17	Supporting Oxton men at home versus Olton and West Warwickshire
Mon 27-02-17	Funeral, of Andy Beech at St. Mary's Church, Nether Alderley, SK10 4TW
Wed 01-03-17	Assistant TD for the NORTH Boys' Schools U16 and U19 Finals at Leeds Weetwood
Thurs 02-03-17	TD at Timperley HC for the NORTH Boys' Schools U14 Finals
Tues 07-03-17	TD at the annual Inter Services [RN v. Army v. RAF] tournament at Portsmouth
Wed 08-03-17	TD at the annual Inter Services [RN v. Army v. RAF] tournament at Portsmouth
Sat 11-03-17	Supporting Neston South Wirral men
Sun 12-03-17	Supporting Bowdon men at home versus Sheffield Hallam
Sat 18-03-17	Watching the Cheshire cup men's semi-final Deeside Ramblers versus Bowdon
Tues 21-03-17	Representing Cheshire HA at the England Hockey AGM at Bisham Abbey
Sun 26-03-17	Supporting Deeside Ramblers men's first team
Fri 31-03-17	Annual Bowdon Hockey Club Black Tie Dinner
Tues 25-04-17	As the EH Vice Pres. presenting the medals and trophy at lee Valley for the Boys' U14 National Schools Finals
Wed 26-04-17	As the EH Vice President, presenting the medals and trophy at lee Valley for the Boys' U16 National Schools Finals
Thurs 27-03-17	As the EH Vice President, presenting the medals and trophy at lee Valley for the Boys' U18 National Schools Finals
Wed 10-05-17	Cheshire Women's League AGM with Presentations made by CT
Thurs 11-05-17	Deeside Ramblers HC Primary Schools Competition (10am until 3pm)
12 & 13 -05-17	As the EH Vice Pres. presenting the medals and trophy at the In2 hockey national schools U13 & U12 finals at Beeston
15,16&17-05-17	Tournament Director for the annual Army Inter Corps Hockey Tournament at Aldershot
Sat 20-05-17	As the EH Vice President, presenting some Awards at the annual EH Annual Awards Dinner at the ATHENA in Leicester
Sat 10-06-17	England Hockey Women's Masters Over 55s Tournament at Bowdon HC
Sun 11-06-17	As the EH Vice President, presenting medals and trophy at EH Women's Over 55s Masters Tournament at Bowdon HC
Mon 12-06-17	North Hockey Association AGM

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

Accounts summary for 2016/17 is available as a separate document. General comments:

1. Insurance:

The Association has appropriate insurance cover which is reviewed annually. It includes relevant cover for all JDC / JAC activity (West Cheshire/Wirral JAC and East Cheshire JAC). They are included within the generic public liability element of the cover at no cost to them but the JACs reimburse the Association for that part of the premium which is specific to their development activities.

2. Affiliations:

All affiliations were paid on time – again its good to report that more Clubs are now paying by bank transfer - many thanks to Club / Section Treasurers. The number of teams affiliated increased by 6 to 173; overall Cheshire has 7 new ladies squads and 1 less mens' squad . 2 new 'Clubs' affiliated (University of Chester and Birkenhead) (South Cheshire).

3. Donations:

Again, significant donations from the Association were made to support junior hockey development through JDC/JAC activities which are available to players from Cheshire Schools and Affiliated Clubs, so if you send your young players to the Development Centres (East Cheshire, West Cheshire or Greater Manchester) your affiliation fees are contributing to their development and you are benefiting when they return. Donations were also made to Cheshire Schoolgirls and Cheshire Schoolboys.

4. Other:

All Clubs' North affiliation fees were collected and passed to North HA on behalf of the Clubs, on time.

2016/17 Accounts:

- the CHA Committee commends the 2016/17 accounts to you for approval (see accounts summary), and
- it be noted that the CHA Committee recommends no increase in Club affiliation fees for 2017/18. If agreed, these therefore remain at:

Fee per club – £25

Fee per team - £42

Please note that North HA affiliation fees are currently at £14.00 per team – they are expected to remain the same but NHA will decide this at its AGM on 12/6/17.

Elaine Beech

WOMEN'S MATCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Cheshire is running a Senior Womens Squad but was unable to run an U21 Womens Squad in 2016/17.

Senior Squad:

At the end of the 2015/16 season the senior squad, coached by Sam Ransley and Ash Hardaker took part in a number of training sessions and a training match v Lancashire prior to competing in the North Counties Tournament in 21st and 22nd May 2016 at Wakefield Hockey Club. The squad finished 3rd behind winners Yorkshire and runners-up Lancashire, winning 3 games (v Durham 1-0, v Isle of Man 3-2 and Lincolnshire 2-0) and losing 2 games (v Yorkshire 1-3 and v Lancashire 0-5). This represented a significant improvement on recent years and was down to the hard work put in by players and coaches – They were all very proud to play for their County and they represented Cheshire superbly.

Squad players were:

Theresa Crookall (GK), Amy Heywood (GK), Sarah Morrell (GK), Mel Smith (Capt.), Louise Barber, Kelly Baxter, Jennie Brown, Keira Fleming, Louise Hargreaves, Lisa Hartley-Woodrow, Chelsea Hodgson, Abi Johnston, Sammie Jones, Sarah Lyons, Grace Melvin, Becky Loonan, Hannah Newall, Alex Pepper, Sian Williamson.

To date this season the squad is again taking part in weekly coaching sessions in preparation for this season's North Counties Tournament which takes place on the week-end of 20th and 21st May at Wakefield Hockey Club. Good luck to the squad.

Elaine Beech

MEN'S MATCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Senior County Squads

The results for the traditional "Boxing Day" fixtures played on 27th December, 2016 versus Lancashire at Formby Hockey Club.

First up were the 40's who once again fielded a strong squad. Taking early control and deservedly taking the lead. However Lancs fought back well and there was only one goal in it at half time with Cheshire leading 2- 1. Second half saw Cheshire gain the upper hand and added three further goals, running out comfortable winners with a final score of 5 - 2. The defence were solidly led by captain James Gallagher, despite having to leave to field for treatment to a head injury, and Tim Alexander and Richard Wesencraft always looking threatening up front.

Next on were the 50's who fought very hard for their 2 - 1 victory.

Cheshire started nervously and did not look happy on the ball, and were pressed back for long periods of the first half and were lucky to go into the interval only 1 nil down. The second half started brighter and Cheshire began to play with

more confidence and began to create chances. A turning point in this match came when from a break away the Lancs striker hit the post, had it have gone in I don't think Cheshire would have come back. But with good squad rotation, the legs for Cheshire appeared fresher than Lancs, and pressure began to mount and two goals were scored late on against a tiring Lancs team. Paul Williams in the Cheshire goal played well. This was his second game of the day as he had played for the 40's as well.

List of players for each squad attached below

Cheshire Over 40s

Paul Williams (Chester), Greg Booker (Neston South Wirral), Neil Titford (Triton), James Gallagher (Capt./ Didsbury), Tim Alexander (Crewe), Ed Johnson (Alderley Edge), Phil Benton (Alderley Edge), John Martin (Bowdon), Kenny Gardiner (Neston South Wirral), David Millard-Smith (Deeside Ramblers), Jonathan Davies (Sandbach), Richard Wesencreft (Harrogate), Julian Sykes (Brooklands)

Cheshire Over 50s

Paul Williams (Chester), Colin Taylor (Timperley), Nigel Baker-Brian (Alderley Edge), Steve Cheshire (Deeside Ramblers), John Stackhouse (Capt. / Winnington Park), Jim Peters (Bowdon), Rob Bowden (Winnington Park), Mark Jones (Deeside Ramblers), Hedley Pollard (Deeside Ramblers), Bill Barton (Leeds), John Kewley (Lymm), Mark Whalley (Winnington Park), Gareth Pask (Crewe), Ady Holah (Knutsford)

John Stackhouse

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S COMPETITION SECRETARY'S REPORT

Cheshire Men's Cup/Plate and Cheshire Women's Cup 2016/17

This season the number of teams entered in the competition in total (27), 12 Clubs in the Men's Cup, 6 Clubs in the Men's Plate and 9 Clubs in the Women's Cup

The Men's Plate:

Clubs playing on arranged dates as per previous seasons, no problems regarding playing the rounds including the Finals

The Women's Cup:

In previous seasons, fixed playing dates have been a serious problem, the 2016-17 Competition it was decided to give the Women a free hand regarding the dates and it looks like it worked up to a point; once again we have a team going through to the Final having played no rounds at all Brooklands Poynton.

The Men's Cup:

The first round games went ahead as planned but after that it all went downhill, partly because of the weather condition (Frozen pitches for the Quarter Finals) which resulted in a number of Byes later also the National League guy's had problems and once again played their rounds mid-week

Finalists:

Plate:	Lymm v Triton
Women's Cup:	Brooklands Poynton v Alderley Edge
Men's Cup:	Brooklands v Bowdon

Congratulations to:

Lymm Hockey Club	Winners of the Cheshire Plate	2-1
Alderley Edge Hockey Club	Winners of the Cheshire Women's Shield	0-7
Bowdon Hockey Club	Winners of the Cheshire Men's Shield	3-4

Can I take this opportunity to thank Timperley Hockey Club for hosting the Finals and Timperley members for playing their part in what turned out to be a wonderful day, from the weather to the 300 plus spectators enjoying a very good Finals day

I don't think Cheshire have had such a thrilling men's Final in a long time with Brooklands and Bowdon going head to head first and second half, Bowdon taking the lead in the 66th minute to win

My thanks also:

Tony Shutt for appointing Umpires and Match Officials

Match Officials: Plate: Nick Burnett Women's Cup: Lisa Loonan Men's Cup: Peter McInulty

Umpires: Plate: Si Cobley and Nick Kearsy Women's Cup: Sophie Parker and Lou Robinson

Men's Cup: Matt Harrison and Ed Westbrook

Chris Todd President of Cheshire Hockey Association presenting the Shields to the Winners and Runners up:

Chris Leyland

DISCIPLINARY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

2016/17	Red Cards and MMOs				Total
	Cat A	Cat B	Cat C	Cat D	
Cheshire	5	4		1	10
North Wales		1	1		2
2015/16	Red Cards and MMOs			Disrepute	Total
	Cat A	Cat B	Cat C		
Cheshire	8	6	0	2	16
North Wales	1	1	0		2
2014/15	Red Cards and MMOs			Disrepute	Total
	Cat A	Cat B	Cat C		
Cheshire	10	9	0	1	20
North Wales	1	1	0	0	2

This season saw far fewer offences than the previous two but it is concerning that half of the offences were for violence offences including one of violence to an umpire.

Four of the twelve offences occurred in March and some of these have led to suspensions that are split with part of the suspension being held over until the start of next season.

This season saw the introduction of Category D offences into the England Hockey regulations, that is a Red Card given to a player for a 2nd but repeated minor yellow card offence. This leads to the player being suspended for the remainder of the match but no automatic 16-day suspension. These should still be reported to the relevant Disciplinary Administrator. There were no reported disrepute offences.

Peter McInulty

INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT

Various news Items (when requested) have been posted on the Cheshire Web site throughout the year

Clubs need to do their housekeeping on the website i.e.

- Ensure access passwords are passed to the correct officers for 2017/2018 season
- Ensure all contact details of officers and Captains are up to date
- Check venue details, club colours etc.
- Complete any match feedback in a timely manner

Cheshire HA also now has a Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/CheshireHockeyAssociation/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

England Hockey has appointed SportLoMo as its provider of its Competitions Management System, and ending a 16 year partnership with Fixtures Live.

The Competition Management System will consolidate and drive all elements and stages of the England Hockey competition programme including entries, registration, management, delivery and results. It will also be embedded within our social media platforms to provide an engaging experience for our players, officials, competition deliverers and fans.

The system will be introduced for the 2017-18 season.

Regional and County leagues who use the Fixtures Live platform may of course remain with them although opportunities to work with the new Competition Management System will exist too.

Chris Reece

NWHUA REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

At the Cheshire Cup Men and Women plus the Plate finals at Timperley Hockey Club NWHUA appointed 6 umpires. NWHUA are still running level one courses throughout the year with plenty of people attending but the number of those wishing to go further to final assessment is still very low. There are still umpires who did the old type of course but never got assessed, mainly because the time limit ran out; they can now go through the final assessment without having to re-sit the level one course, all they need do is contact the NWHUA and we will arrange for a suitable date for their assessment

Tony Shutt

CHESHIRE WOMEN'S LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

This season we had 22 Cheshire clubs and a further 6 who affiliated to other counties. 66 teams divided into 4 Divisions of 12 and 2 divisions of 9.

The League season started off in September with the annual 11-A-Side Tournament. This season it was held at Wilmslow.

Unfortunately, the bad weather again this season caused many games to be cancelled but eventually all games were played by the last slip date of the season and were completed before Easter. Thanks to Lucy Hargreaves who had to manually input any rearranged results.

League winners for season 2015-2016:

Division 1 Triton 1
Division 3 Wilmslow 2
Division 5 Crewe 2

Division 2 Rhyl 1
Division 4 Warrington 2
Division 6 Whitchurch 2

Triton 1, winner of the Cheshire League, are promoted to South West Division 2 and we assume that (at the time of writing) Bowdon 3 will be demoted to Division 1 of the Cheshire League.

Finally, thank you to all the members of the League Committee who volunteer to give up their time so willingly to ensure the smooth running of the League. The Cheshire League continues to be one of the best in the Country.

Artie Senior

BARRINGTON SPORTS NORTH WEST LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Division	Champions	Runner Up
1		
2		Neston SW 2s
3 South	Deeside Ramblers 3s	Alderley Edge 3s*
4 South	Wilmslow 2s	Stockport Bramhall 1s
5 South	Runcorn 1s	Knutsford 2s
6 South		Timperley 4s
7 South West		
7 South East	Wilmslow 3s	Brooklands MU 6s
8 South West	Birkenhead 1s	Uni of Chester 1s
8 South East	Crewe Vagrants 3s	Bowdon 7s

The weather was relatively kind to the league this season, a couple of weekends had some matches lost to frozen pitches and a few pitches struggled to cope with excess rain but the majority of matches were completed by the scheduled end of the season.

In the previous couple of seasons, we have seen 3 teams promoted to the North League, the relegations from the National League and North Division One led to the relegation of 4 teams from the North, this had the added effect that we weren't able to promote the runners up from the 3rd tier divisions.

With only two requests to join the league received this year, the committee took the decision to remove Division 6 North South and distribute the teams amongst the three other lowest divisions. This had the effect that currently all divisions have 12 teams.

The league sought the views of the clubs over the way that the league is run and the difference between participation and competition. We have used that feedback and met again with representatives of the counties to work on some changes to the league rules. These will be distributed to the clubs prior to the Leagues Summer Meeting which will take place on June 27th at Lymm.

Peter McNulty

CHESHIRE SCHOOLGIRLS AND YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

The numbers entering competitions is consistent as in previous years, although the standard in Cheshire and subsequent successes at National Schools level seems to be greater and more successful. Although we do not get to hear 'official' successes from JDC to JRPC level unless we ask the schoolgirls themselves I get the feeling Cheshire are well represented from discussions with other PE teachers in the County.

Indoor facilities are limited further to Bishop Heber, Lymm High School and King's Chester with the number of schools wanting to try indoor hockey falling. However the Association continue to run the competitions at U14, U16 and U19 as those schools that frequently enter enjoy it. Schools have not entered the National Championships Indoor, probably down to a lack of training facilities. King's is having refurbishments to the indoor facilities next academic year, so the access to indoor facilities will be less – this may impact on the tournaments for the next academic year unless we pay for hiring Christleton or Northgate for example.

Outdoor facilities in the area are on the whole improving (with the additional pitches at Grange and Bishop Heber hosting tournaments spreading the workload for host schools). The plan to include all schools in hosting that have full size, suitable standard pitches has worked this year with competitions being run across Cheshire East and Cheshire West pitches. All finals

continued to be played at County Offices (at a cost to the association) as there are 2 pitches side by side. However, this facility will not be available next season as one of the pitches is getting 3G artificial grass status. This financially will save the association money as we will use school facilities instead, however the 'traditional' double pitch finals will have to operate slightly differently, at two school venues. This is something to be discussed at the Association AGM.

Pleasingly the number of schools entering the National Schools In2Hockey U13 championships is increasing which in future years may have an impact on increasing numbers in other age groups. The Grange School won the National Finals last season, which is a huge achievement for Cheshire and one that I could not report on last season as the finals are in May. At the time of writing, they have progressed through to the later stages of the competition this year also.

I did say last year that this was my final year as Secretary of the Association having taken on this role for the past 11 years, however at the point of writing no one has stepped in again to take on the role of organising the girls' schoolgirls' hockey again. At this year's AGM I will be looking to rotate the roles within all participating schools as I am struggling to keep on top of the role and increasing responsibilities within school. Again, this will be discussed at the Association AGM.

Successful Schools this year:

Indoor Hockey:	U19 King's Chester	U16 Bishop Heber	U14 Grange
Outdoor Hockey:	U19 King's Chester	U16 Queen's	U14 Grange

National Schools Cheshire representatives:

U19 King's Chester & Lymm represented Cheshire in the NW semi-finals.
U16 Queen's & Grange represented Cheshire in the NW semi-finals.
U14 Grange & Wilmslow represented Cheshire in the NW semi-finals.
U13 Grange & Queen's qualified. Grange Won NW regionals and went through to North Final. Grange are through to National Finals in May.

Thanks to the Cheshire Hockey Association for their grant towards our activities.

Claire Sumner – Secretary

CHESHIRE SCHOOLBOYS' REPORT

Another busy and successful season in the County and Regional stages of various competitions.

The **Wirral** competitions ran in the first term and culminated in Finals played at Neston South Wirral HC in December, the results were:

U14: CaldayGrange 18 Neston HS 0
U16: CaldayGrange 5 St Anselms0
U19: St Anselms 1 Wirral GS 1 (St Anselms win 4-3 on penalties)

The **Cheshire** competitions also ran in the first term to identify finalists, the Finals being played at Brooklands HC in March 2017. Thanks are due to the Committee for funding medals and trophies for the first time. The results were:

U14: Altrincham GS 1 King's Chester 0
U16: Altrincham GS 1 King's Macclesfield 0
U19: King's Chester 2 Sandbach 1

The **Cheshire & Wirral** combined round of the U13 In2Hockey Schools Championship was again held at King's Chester in March, with 16 teams from 13 different schools. The results were:

Final: Cheadle Hulme 2 Calday Grange 0
Altrincham GS and King's Chester were joint 3rd.

Moving to the **North West stages**, the Cheshire/Wirral representatives again performed well at Timperley HC in February, with the following notable outcomes:

U14 Final:	Altrincham GS 2	Calday Grange 0
U16 Final:	Altrincham GS 4	Calday Grange 0

In the **North of England stage**, the main success was Altrincham GS winning the U16 event and qualifying for the National Finals to be held at Lee Valley in April. Calday Grange were runners up in the U14 North event, they went on to lose 1-0 to Repton in the play off prior to the National Finals. In the U13 In2Hockey, both Cheadle Hulme and Calday Grange qualified for the National Finals, Cheadle Hulme winning the North title with a victory over their Wirral rivals. King's Chester also won the North of England U11 title in Leeds on the same day. U13 runners up were Calday Grange and U11 Champions are King's Chester.

In the **National U18 knockout** event, Calday Grange were most successful in the Cup, reaching the last 16 before losing to the impressive Oakham School. In the National Plate, King's Chester repeated their 2016 feat of winning the North and Midlands Region with notable victories over Uppingham School and Trent College. They now face Millfield School in the semi finals at Lee Valley in late April.

Indoors, Altrincham GS (U16) and King's Chester (U18) both made it to the National Finals at Whitgift, Croydon, in January, having won through the NW and North championships.

Chris Ashcroft

EAST CHESHIRE JAC REPORT

The JDC programme started in September 2016 with in excess of 400 invitations being sent out during July – September to new and existing players with just over 300 player acceptances.

Reasons for declining included: other sporting commitments, exams, did not want to come, already with other JDCs and some did not reply at all.

The format of providing only one JDC venue per group was adopted again and proved successful particularly at Sandbach with the larger groups, in excess of 60 girls at each of U13 and U14 groups. They were trained and assessed over the 6 sessions using dedicated assessors to review the players leaving the coaches free to concentrate on the delivery of the sessions. At the older age groups where returning numbers become smaller and new nominations are relatively small having only one JDC ensures that the players receive consistent quality training as the coaches lift standards and prepare the players for the transition into the JAC.

Outfield training took place at Sandbach Boys School was the venue for U13/U14 boys and girls with the older U15/U16/U17 players training at Kings School Macclesfield with the training taking place on Sundays.

The goalkeeper training took place at Sandbach Boys School on a Friday evening where we alternated the training, U13/14s one week and U15/16/17s the other.

We provided 10 hours of JDC training for all players (outfield and GKs) with some groups running integrated games which helped the coaches' complete JDC assessments.

The dedicated goalkeeper coaching has again proved successful despite some issues with the venue. Our thanks to Jon Marshall and Ant Birchall for providing excellent coaching once again. In order to provide more dedicated coaching for the GKs all the GKs were taken through to JAC with the proviso that they had to earn a place at JAC tournaments while benefitting from more dedicated GK training.

We also integrated more outfield players within the JAC sessions to provide game based scenarios and provide more variety with the sessions. This has gone down well with both the keepers & outfield players.

The JAC squad selection was delayed until mid-December. This was due to the transitional issues with the new EH Player Pathway, which meant that there was insufficient clarity over which players would be returning to JACs from JRPCs, and what the protocol would be for players joining the new Performance Centres in January. This therefore made some of the 'available' dates for JAC in December unviable, resulting in some pressures over the available dates between January and April.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the number of RPC players that chose to attend the JAC in addition to the RPC we have run with some squads in excess of 20 players which had put additional pressure on our coaching resources. We provided 14 hours of JAC training across seven training sessions for u13 and u14 boys and girls, and 18 hours training across six training sessions for u15, u16 and u17 boys and girls. Due to the number of players in u16 and u17 groups, these sessions were generally combined.

Some of the issues that faced us were:

🏠 No GKs for U16 and u17 girls – one of the U15 girls played up their tournaments.

🏠 Practice games were organised for the boys squads this season – the boys played against Greater Manchester, but it was not possible to arrange games for the girls, given the availability of opponents and clashes with the EH centralised calendar.

🏠 The JAC Tournaments saw the teams travelling to Altrincham GGS, Blackpool Stanley Park, Brooklands HC, Sedbergh School Cumbria, Chester HC, Wilmslow HC, Neston Hockey Club, King's School Macclesfield and Northern HC Crosby. Thanks to all those who worked so hard to organise the Tournaments and all those parents, coaches and the members of the umpiring associations who umpired across all the tournaments.

🏠 East Cheshire has been able to provide full squads to most age groups, but have required to be flexible with u17s, by drafting in some younger players of a higher standard, or joining-up with other regional JACs.

🏠 The availability of suitably qualified coaches continues to be an issue which has created logistical issues that have been addressed but, moving forward, there is a need to consider where future coaches will come from.

🏠 The availability of umpires at tournaments has been a recurring issue; despite the agreed principle that each JAC should provide one umpire at each game, this has not been the case and, fortunately, sufficient numbers of parents (albeit not always qualified) have volunteered to officiate at each tournament. However, this is more through luck rather than judgement, and we shouldn't rely on parents to provide this resource and should consider how we ensure there are sufficient umpires in future tournaments to help address any concerns over impartiality.

🏠 Positive feedback has been received from parents and players in terms of the overall coaching, organisation, communication and treatment of injured players. A recurring theme of comments relates to the issue of assessment and progression

🏠 Following the persistent unruly behaviour of another JAC coach at a recent tournament, a formal complaint was made, but this has not been responded to as yet. This is important, as it undermines our ability to require spectators and parents to adhere to the EH Code of Behaviour.

The Player Pathway

The biggest single issue continues to be the introduction of changes with the new Player Pathway. The main concerns are:

1. The delay in EH's selection of players for the Performance Centre (and those returning from JRPC) prevented JACs from commencing prior to Christmas and compressed the JAC training window, given that tournament dates were generally fixed. It also created significant pressures from an administrative perspective.

2. The lack of definitive position from EH in relation to whether PC players should also continue with JAC has led to an inconsistent approach across JACs. East Cheshire's position was to let parents/players to self-determine, based on their own assessment regarding the risk of over-training. Greater Manchester's position appears to have been to require PC players continue with JAC. This raises a number of concerns, including the unbalanced squads competing at tournaments, and the ability of players at the fringe of county squads who may have been unable to benefit from JAC training as a result of places being taken by PC players.

3. Since PC training (and the first round of PC tournaments) has overlapped with JAC training and tournaments, it has led to many parents and players to question the progression route from JAC to PC. Until very recently this has remained unclear with limited clear information from EH. This has created a vacuum in which players, parents, club coaches and others have speculated as to the process, which has resulted in rumours and misinformation. For example, some have stated that they understand that clubs can nominate players for PC rather than JACs.

4. This position has been exacerbated by the lack of assessors at JAC tournaments, with the exception of u14 tournaments. The message being received by players and parents for all other age groups is that the PC is a 'closed

shop'. Whilst JAC coaches have been advised that they can nominate exceptional players for a PC trial, there is a lack of transparency over this process and its fluidity: how many players can be considered?; how can nominated players be compared with others?; what is the player capacity of PCs to do this?; will some PC players be deselected and, if so, how will this be communicated and implemented?

5. Whilst the EH ambition is to “develop an over-supply of exceptional players”, there is a need to balance the need to develop enthusiastic young players who may fall at the margins, and to ensure there is a platform to compare them both in match-play situations and from a training perspective (technical skills, stamina, speed, coachability, etc.), particularly when taking into account the fact that players develop at different rates.

6. Whilst a communication from EH has now been received regarding player progression for other age groups, the emphasis is again on existing PC training squads. It is up to coaches to nominate players for consideration at PC level who are deemed 'exceptional/outstanding'.

7. It also appears that players born in 2000 are no longer eligible for consideration for PC; in previous years u17 JAC players could be selected for u18 JRPC, but there does not appear to be an equivalent. This leaves open the question as to whether having an u17 JAC squad serves any purpose as part of the EH Player Pathway.

8. The EH Centralised Calendar for 2017-18 has been published, which indicates that JACs will commence in September. It is unclear what the form of delivery of JDCs will be, given that the summer holiday period immediately precedes this and in the absence of suitable guidance and support from the NGB our admins and lead coaches will shortly be considering how best to plan and manage this.

In summary, there is a need for a much clearer and earlier articulation as to how the new Player Pathway works in the current transitional year and in future years. This is needed not just to facilitate the planning of JDC and JAC cycles (by unpaid volunteers will full-time jobs normally), but to ensure that those players and parents most engaged with hockey (and inspired by the exploits of 2016), have a clear understanding of the process.

The East Cheshire season finishes on Saturday 6th May 2017 at Congleton Town Hall for the Awards Evening to celebrate the player's achievements with guest speaker Sian French, Wales International player and local resident.

Andy Birchall and Jez Goodman
East Cheshire Hockey Administrators

WEST CHESHIRE WIRRAL JAC REPORT

2016/17 saw significant change as firstly, Tom McCurdy and Matt Newall took on ever increasing work commitments which meant that they were unable to continue coaching our boys. In the past, they have both coached both younger and older groups, sometimes taking groups on both Fridays and Sundays, so our huge thanks and appreciation for their involvement and support have been passed to them, along with our best wishes for the future.

The success of Oxton in reaching the National League and the congested Centralised Calendar meant that our Caldys base was not available on most Sundays and with no suitable coaches to replace Tom and Matt we were unable to run JDC or JAC for u16 and u17 boys.

Ethan Price stepped up from Assistant coach to be Lead Coach for u13 boys, bringing local Beavers and badgers rivals together into a competitive group for their first experience of representative hockey.

A group of just twelve u13s from last year mushroomed into a group of nearly 40 at JDC, seriously stretching already thin resources, with Joe Hillyer drawing on all his National league playing experience to lead this group with Matt Francis providing GK expertise to mould these players into a formidable force in their tournaments and possibly having a strong representation when Performance centre squads are announced.

Illness meant that Delyth Sharples was unable to build on the excellent foundations that she and David James had begun with last year's u13 Girls. Beth Alvey moved across from last year's u15 girls and like Joe brings significant National League playing experience to encourage excellent progress in training and strong performances in their tournaments, also suggesting that WCW could be very well represented at Performance Centre.

Healthy numbers at JDC gave Lead Coach Pat Wells and assistant Bob Pugh a selection headache when reducing these numbers for JAC, which bodes well for the overall development of youth hockey across the area as, hopefully, with a further year of playing Hockey under their belt these players will return to JDC in September.

Kate Newman and Lianne Preston continued to develop our u15 girls for whom the transition from 7 a side to 11 a side tournaments proved to be successful.

Emma Nokes joined us, bringing significant JRPC and Futures Cup experience to our coaching team and leading both U16 girls and u17 girls to success in winning their respective tournaments.

However, this JAC cycle was marred by confusion and poor communication from England Hockey regarding the introduction of the new Performance Centres in Manchester and Fylde and also the transition arrangements for our current crop of players into next seasons Performance Centres, particularly for our u17s who having begun their JAC cycle have no progression in to England Hockey Performance Centres.

Given the timing of these new arrangements, players selected in to next season's u15 and u17 Performance Centres will have no representative Hockey between 23rd April and when the new cycle begins in September.

Our congratulations go to the following WCW players who were selected to Manchester Performance Centre in January 2017 ~ Freddie Bush, Joe Craig, Charlie-John Jones, Tom Lewis, Harry Roscoe and Franny Davidson at u15s with Haydn Bright, Ben Cowan, Will Harvey, Cameron Marshall, Paul Price, Tom Russell, Gabriel Tenner, Emily Cartwright, Fiona Edge, Isabel Gardiner, Annie Johnson, Millie Jones, Maisie MacDonald, Georgia Price and Amber Smith at U17s. Once again, WCW hosted match days at Chester Hockey Club for both u13s and u14s so it is a huge shame that one of the pitches will be dug up over the Summer and replaced by a 3G football pitch which means that our event on 23rd April was the last of these large tournaments to be held at Chester.

Please may I use this audience to pass on my thanks to the U13 and U14 JAC community for their support on the respective match dates held at Chester Hockey Club and making these days so successful, despite the horrendous weather on 5th March and 2nd April.

As ever, please may I express my thanks to the West Cheshire & Wirral coaching team and enthusiastic parents who have transported and supported all age groups throughout the season.

Finally, WCW JAC express our thanks to Cheshire Hockey Association for their continued financial support.

Paul Williams
West Cheshire & Wirral
Junior Hockey Academy