

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Junior Festivals Organiser report for GHA Committee Meeting on Thursday 20th January 2022.

As a result of the new Junior Competitions initiative by England Hockey GHA decided to try to expand the Clubs Festivals offering for 2021 – 22. In addition to the U8 mixed, U10 and U12 girls and boys Festivals, pitch bookings were made for U12 A Team Festivals and also U14 7-aside girls and boys Festivals. However, it quickly became clear that there was already so much U14 11-aside hockey with the West Leagues, the Avon Junior Hockey League and the EH knock-out cup that there was insufficient interest to run U14s. So the only additional elements were the U12 A Teams girls and boys Festivals.

In the period from October to December there were 3 Festivals for each age and gender group. The total entries were as follows:

U8 Mixed	U10 Girls	U10 Boys	U12 Girls	U12 Boys	U12 A Girls	U12 A Boys
34	41	23	43	29	16	12

Overall a total of 198 teams entered. As can be seen from these numbers the U12 A Teams festivals were not as popular as the other events, but this is not surprising as it has tended to be just the larger Clubs and at most 2 teams in one gender.

Invoices for a total of £4,950.00 have been sent out although payment has still to be received from some of the Clubs,.

Support for the Festivals in January has been excellent and the entries for the In2Hockey U10 and U12 girls and boys have been received including from Westbury & United Banks who do not usually attend the GHA events.

I have attended a couple of the West Junior Competitions Committee meetings and the feedback from the new Junior Competitions Framework for U14 and older age groups that has been piloted this season has been mixed. There has clearly been a lot of competitive hockey, but equally many Clubs have struggled to fulfil fixtures with the combination of travelling and Covid. It will be interesting to see what is the overall feeling at the end of the season once the national supra league has finished. It is certainly the case that those teams who did not qualify from the T1 league for the national supra league found the prospects beyond Christmas less than attractive.

Lastly, my appeal for Clubs to start to consider volunteers to take over from me as Junior Festival and In2Hockey organiser for U8s, U10s and U12s when I step back at the end of the 2024 – 25 season has been met with a deafening silence! Not that I am surprised.

Ian Harvey