

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Junior Festivals Organiser report for GHA 2023 – 24 AGM on Wednesday 22nd May 2024.

Once again this 2023 – 24 season there were Clubs Festivals for U8 mixed, U10 girls and boys, U12 girls and boys and U12 A Teams girls and boys. These were generally well supported as can be seen from the table below. The total entries were as follows:

U8 Mixed	U10 Girls	U10 Boys	U12 Girls	U12 Boys	U12 A Girls	U12 A Boys
67	72	43	71	41	35	21

Overall a total of 350 teams entered across 26 Festivals which was excellent and the weather was kind with only one weekend of cancellations. All payments have been received and at the moment there is a surplus because not all the pitch invoices have been submitted!

Lessons learned for this season:

- The number of U8 Mixed teams now participating is too many for the single pitch at Bournside and so either Dean Close or Cheltenham Ladies College will have to be the venue next season. At the moment U8 Mixed runs on the same day as U10s which use Dean Close and CLC so this will have to change and as the A Teams Festivals only use CLC the obvious solution is to have the U8 Mixed at Dean Close on these dates.
- Whilst Festivals provide the obvious opportunity for young umpires to start their careers, they do need support and guidance and this is something which should be looked at next season.
- Adherence to the governance requirements has proven difficult. Balancing the desire to have as many children playing as possible, whilst at the same time ensuring teams stay within the rules and regulations is challenging. Self-discipline by the clubs is a key element, but also strong management of the venues is important. This is something that would ideally be improved upon next season.

The In2Hockey U10 and U12 girls and boys went ahead as planned with myself supported by Cirencester running the U12s on 25th February and the U10s being run on 10th March by Sara Thompson of Lansdown Hockey Club as I was away. This latter event used the scheduling and result recording software app developed by Sarah Doughty, very successfully as I understand it. My thanks to Sara Thompson and Sarah Doughty.

In the U12s event of 25th February the results were as follows:

U12 Girls – Champions: Lansdown HC, runners up Lydney HC.

U12 Boys – Champions: Cheltenham Junior A team, runners up Cheltenham Junior B team; but Lansdown who came third went through with Cheltenham Junior to West. Cheltenham Junior were subsequently winners of the West U12 boys competition and Lansdown were runners up in the U12 girls.

In the U10s event of 10th March the results were as follows:

U10 Girls – Champions: Lansdown HC, runners up Cirencester HC.

U12 Boys – Champions: Cheltenham Junior, runners up Lansdown.

Cirencester U10 girls were runners up in the West U10 girls competition.

Several requests have been made to all GHA Junior contacts and at the U12 girls In2Hockey event regarding replacements for both myself as Clubs organiser and Lisa Lundie as schools organiser. The request was for Clubs to canvas their members to see if there might be a volunteer or several who could take on the roles. There has been no response to this and so it looks as if the choice will have to be between Hockey Fever or the Clubs and Schools themselves organising the events. A proposal from Hockey Fever follows for Clubs to decide whether they believe this can be supported financially or if they wish to take on the task of running the Festivals.

I have attended some of the West Junior Competitions Committee meetings over the season and a few key points are included below:

- Anne Baker (Isca and Devon) has taken over as Chair.
- League fixtures have once again this season been impacted by postponements and there have been discussions around what might be done to improve fixture fulfilment. There was no clear conclusion other than to recognise that travelling is a significant factor.
- In the West girls schools competitions; Balcarras came second in the U16 Tier 3 and in the U18 Tier 3 the winner was Pate's Grammar School.
- No teams from Gloucestershire Clubs qualified for the Clubs Supraleague U14s.
- Both Clubs and Schools Indoor became direct entry to West organised rounds.
- Indoor Clubs – Wotton-Under-Edge came first in both West boys U18 and U16 and finished first and fifth in the respective EH competitions.
- Indoor Schools – Dean Close won West girls U18s (then EH third), KLB won West boys U16 (then EH seventh) and Dean Close West U18 (then EH seventh).
- New social media accounts set up!

Jackie Stanley put us in contact with a Schools Games Organiser Tara Godby of Move-More in Cheltenham who was covering Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. She had set up some Quicksticks events for 11th and 18th March for primary schools, to take place at Pate's Grammar School. A discussion with her led to the understanding that she was working for Move-More a charity based in Cheltenham and her activities were funded by the Youth Sports Trust who had contracted Move-More to deliver Schools Games in Gloucestershire. Unfortunately no one from GHA was available to support the events and subsequent attempts to contact her failed. It does not seem likely that Move-More is an option for the future organisation of GHA activities.

I was unable to attend the most recent West Junior Competitions meeting that covered the principles of planning the competitions and there have been no Minutes.

Lastly, if Hockey Fever do become the means by which the Festivals, Clubs In2Hockey and schools competitions are delivered then there will need to be an oversight role. It would seem sensible that whoever takes this on would then also represent GHA on the West Junior Competitions Committee and at the moment I have volunteered to continue in that position (Junior Hockey Chair). However, the discussion on the Hockey Fever proposal may produce a different view.

Ian Harvey
30th April 2024