Hampstead & Westminster Hockey Club
Communiqué; January 2022
Keeping Vice Presidents and Friends in the know

Welcome

This is a brief dispatch following the recent Newsletter. The story of the Premier Division indoor tournament at Repton and Whitgift Schools, on consecutive weekends at the start of the month, can be told. Also, there are items on officiating, the retirement of Danny Kerry as GB's and England's men's coach, FIH changes to the Rules and a brief word on the Africa Cup of Nations, in which Matt Guise Brown is playing for South Africa. And the Grandmasters opened the second part of their season at Reading.

Indoor Hockey

Preparation has been hampered for most clubs owing to difficulties securing indoor facility access attributable to the pandemic. "They are becoming few and far between. Those halls that have been available are being justifiably cautious about people coming in owing to the pandemic and finding facilities has been hard for clubs. It all means that it's a relatively level playing field for most."

Repton School
8 January 2022

Repton 5 Brooklands 1
Hampstead 8 Wimbledon 6
Reading 1 Surbiton 12
Holcombe 6 East Grinstead 7
Sevenoaks 5 Repton 4
Brooklands 2 Hampstead 7
Wimbledon 7 Reading 1
Surbiton 10 Holcombe 1
East Grinstead 3 Sevenoaks 2

9 January 2022
Hampstead 6 Reading 1
Holcombe 1 Sevenoaks 3
Brooklands 3 Wimbledon 12
Surbiton 8 East Grinstead 0
Repton 1 Hampstead 5
Reading 1 Holcombe 6
Sevenoaks 7 Brooklands 4
Wimbledon 5 Surbiton 3
East Grinstead 6 Repton 1

Whitgift School
15 January 2022
Sevenoaks 4 Wimbledon 4
East Grinstead 2 Hampstead 7
Holcombe 7 Brooklands 4
Surbiton 3 Repton 2
Reading 2 Sevenoaks 4
Wimbledon 7 East Grinstead 6
Hampstead 3 Holcombe 4
Brooklands 4 Surbiton 14
Repton 5 Reading 2

16 January 2022
Holcombe 3 Wimbledon 3
East Grinstead 7 Reading 3
Sevenoaks 3 Surbiton 4
Repton 4 Holcombe 3
Brooklands 5 East Grinstead 11
Hampstead 2 Sevenoaks 1
Wimbledon 2 Repton 1
Reading 5 Brooklands 8
Surbiton 7 Hampstead 6

Hampstead were second up at Repton School on the first Saturday morning in a key match in the Premier Division against Wimbledon. They went 1-0 up in the first minute after James Sutcliffe converted a short corner. Accomplished indoor hockey proponent Ed Horler pulled a goal back and then scored a second from a corner for a Wimbledon lead at the end of the first quarter. Teague Marcano made it 2-2 in the 18th minute with a short corner goal for Hampstead and the score remained this way to half time. In the third quarter, Wimbledon scored from another corner for a 3-2 lead that was short lived, as Kei Kaeppeler scored for Hampstead in open play to bring the game back to 3-3. James Oates added another before the end of the third quarter at 4-3.

In an action packed fourth quarter, Wimbledon equalised in the 32nd minute. Teague scored his second three minutes later in open play but in the same minute Wimbledon's goal levelled the scores once more, now at 5-5. Two goals then followed for Hampstead in the 37th minute, following a yellow card awarded against Wimbledon's Ben Francis in the 36th minute. In the 38th minute, Ed Horler scored his fourth for Wimbledon, from a corner to bring the score to 7-6. As Wimbledon chased another goal to equalise, GB's Liam Ansell was also shown a yellow card and that all allowed Will Calnan to slot home Hampstead's eighth in the 39th minute and it remained 8-6 to the finish.

In the second game, it was less frenetic against Brooklands. Hampstead could not open the scoring until three minutes into the second quarter. Teague Marcano scored in open play and a minute later made it 2-0. Three further goals were scored by Rupert Shipperley, skipper Marc Edwards and a third for Teague Marcano. The sides swapped goals in the third quarter, with Kei Kaeppeler getting on the score sheet. Teague scored his fourth of the game with a penalty stroke in the 33rd minute but Hampstead conceded a second, with two minutes to go, when Leo Watton scored for Brooklands, to end the game 2-7.

With the first game on Sunday, starting at 9.00am, Hampstead faced promoted Reading. Hampstead scored in the first minute once more, with Kei Kaeppeler widest awake. Joe Sharp added a second in the ninth minute. Three short corner conversions by Marc Edwards, Teague Marcano and Kei for his second of the game, made the score 5-0. In the final quarter, Teague scored with a penalty stroke and a minute later, Reading scored and it remained 6-1 to the final whistle.

The final game at Repton was against the hosts. Kei Kaeppeler scored in the first and second quarters and in added time at the end of the second, James Sutcliffe made it 3-0. Will Calnan added a fourth from open play in the third quarter. Repton pulled one back with four minutes on the clock but that same minute Marc Edwards scored the fifth from a penalty corner.

At Whitgift in the second weekend, a much-changed Hampstead team, missing six owing largely to international calls, took on East Grinstead in the second game of the day. Kwan Browne stepped up to play. Teague Marcano opened the scoring after ten minutes with a short corner goal. Ross of EG equalised eight minutes later.

Kwan returns to the action at Whitgift School

Photo: Debbie Christopher

In the second quarter, there was no score until the final minute when James Sutcliffe put Hampstead 2-1 ahead from open play. The match was effectively settled in the third quarter, with a three-goal blitz in three minutes, with goals from Teague, Sam French and James Sutcliffe,

to lead 5-1 after 25 minutes. Teague added a further short corner goal at the end of the quarter. In the final ten minutes, Kyle White, who had been a guest player for Hampstead in past indoor tournaments, scored for EG with five minutes remaining, only for Sam French to grab his second goal a minute later. The final score was 7-2 to Hampstead.

At tea time, Hampstead faced Holcombe. They went into an early 2-0 lead, with goals from Teague and Joe Hillyer in the second and fourth minutes. Holcombe brought it back to 2-2 at half time, equalising with a penalty stroke as the buzzer sounded. The third quarter was goalless. With the umpiring gods against Hampstead, in the fourth quarter Holcombe then scored in the 33rd and 35th minutes. Teague scored Hampstead's third in the final minute but there was no time for an equaliser. It ended in a frustrating first loss in the competition.

On Sunday, Hampstead had to wait until 2.00pm for its first game, against Sevenoaks, lying fourth in the table, who had narrowly lost to Surbiton 3-4 earlier in the day. This developed in to a hard fought match, in which only three goals were scored. Joe Sharp put Hampstead ahead in the fourth minute and that score remained at half time. In the third quarter, Josh Kelly added a second and was then shown a green card for what was described as a lazy tackle. Sevenoaks scored right at the end of the quarter but there were no further goals in the final ten minutes.

The last game of the competition was at 5.00pm against Surbiton, who led the division. They went 3-0 ahead after 14 minutes but Teague Marcano pulled one back in the 17th minute and it remained that way at the half time break. Hampstead then scored four unanswered goals to lead 3-5, with six minutes left. Things then became frantic. Surbiton scored twice in the 35th minute to bring the score to 5-5. In the 36th minute, they scored to lead 6-5 but Teague scored straightaway for 6-6. A minute later, Jonny Gall scored for Surbiton. Somehow the last three minutes were goalless and the final score was 7-6 to Surbiton.

Teague is taken out…

Photo: Debbie Christopher

The final standings were

Surbiton	7	0	1	21pts
Hampstead	6	0	2	18
Wimbledon	5	2	1	17
East Grinstead	5	0	3	15

who all advance to the final nights at the Copperbox in the Olympic Park on Sunday, 30 January 2022.

Reading and Brooklands were relegated and will be replaced next January by promoted Old Georgians and the University of Exeter.

Teague Marcano was third in the goal scoring rankings with 15, with Ed Horler of Wimbledon four goals ahead and Jamie Golden of Surbiton taking the honours, with 20 goals. Four of Teague's goals were penalty stroke conversions: those awarded to Hampstead were the most in the division. With international calls and a much-changed line up on the second weekend (something equally affecting Surbiton and Wimbledon), the Hampstead contingent will be delighted to appear at Finals Night again.

Teague secures a feature in England Hockey's flyer for the finals.

Indoor Hockey as it was

Read Geoff Wilmot's report of Bradford 40 years ago…. https://hwhockey.co.uk/blog-post-417.html

Training Camp

Congratulations to men's 1st XI players, James Oates and Matt Ramshaw, who were selected for the Great Britain training camp in Spain. They joined Rupert Shipperley and Will Calnan, along with Jacob Draper, who was at the Club last season but is now playing in Belgium.

The men are based in San Fernando, where they will be training and due to be playing matches uncapped matches against the Netherlands and Spain. With head coach recruitment commencing imminently (see further, below) interim head coach Zak Jones leads the squad.

The new group is admittedly younger and have all grown up together playing junior hockey and at club and country levels and are reported to enjoy training together. With a new coach to be appointed, this represents a significant opportunity for the younger players to step up. We hope the Hampstead boys do just that!

Following some positive Covid tests among players and support staff, unfortunately the women's team were not able to travel as planned.

Officiating; Part 1

At the Indoor championships there was lots of action and personnel at the official table on the half way line. What is this all about? In a recent article in the *Hockey Paper*, David Ellcock helped with an explanation of the different roles.

The tournament director is the leading official, usually referred to as the TD. At the Premier Division tournament there were two, Steve Catton and Barry Anderson. They are given overall control of the tournament. They liaise with the event organisers to procure that everything is in place throughout the tournament.

They appoint the technical officials to each game and work with the umpire manager to appoint the umpires. They also have responsibility for making sure that disciplinary issues are dealt with during the tournament: they have power to suspend players and team officials from games, where appropriate.

They make sure that all teams have registered their players correctly, confirm the teams' kit colours and determine what colours the teams will wear for each game.

Three other types of technical official support the Directors. The *umpire manager* is responsible for looking after the umpires. This includes appointing umpires, reserve umpires and, increasingly, video umpires, to games, usually in close cooperation with the Directors

They also coach and assess the umpires during the tournament, providing them with feedback and a final report at its conclusion. They will also deal with any umpiring- or rules-related queries from team managers and coaches.

The *technical officer* is the TD's second-in-command. They assist the TD with much of the administration related to an event, often providing drafts of colour schedules and technical appointments for the TD to approve. They also work pitch side during matches, performing many of the tasks that a match official (technical delegate, in *old speak*) undertakes during a league game, such as controlling substitutions, managing the benches and timing suspensions. They work very closely with the umpires.

A number of *judges* are also appointed to an event. They undertake a range of tasks supporting the TD and TO. During matches, two judges will be on duty at the technical table. One will be managing the game clock, an increasingly demanding role with the frequent stoppages during games for PCs, PSs and goals.

The Timing Judge watches the umpires closely during a game, stopping and starting the timing accurately, particularly at *time outs*. The Scoring Judge manages the match report form, noting goal scorers, substitutions and disciplinary cards. This is usually done online now (and was at Repton and Whitgift Schools, via the Altius rt platform) providing live access to the report forms, where speed and accuracy are vital.

Officiating; Part 2

With mention of umpires, we called upon Tim Forte, once the Hampstead goalkeeper in the early National League days, including the *play offs* at Milton Keynes. Having given up playing, Tim turned to umpiring with SCHUA.

These days, he is more involved with proper criminality, as a barrister in chambers at 3 Temple Gardens, where he specialises in large, complex and serious crime and particularly in what is termed heavyweight violence, fraud, drugs, terrorism and firearms offending. He is sought after in cases involving *EncroChat*, telecoms and computer evidence, including probe and telephone intercept evidence and substantial telecoms data, applying his computer and technological skills.

Tim came to renewed prominence hockey-wise with the recent reorganisation of English hockey and the establishment of the new regions, for which officials were required. Time for a few questions….

When enquiring about your officiating roles within England Hockey's new London region, you asked which one of four did we have in mind and then challenged us to identify the acronyms. We assume DCP refers to the Disrepute and Complaints Panel (of which you are chair[man]). If so, what is its remit, please? We assume it is to consider players' actions and not those of officials!
Oh, it's "everybody" involved in the sport of hockey in England. All players, officials, clubs, coaches, managers and even, in the right circumstances, spectators are bound by the England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour

Can you provide details of some Agenda items to illustrate what the Panel covers?
Anyone alleged to be in breach of the EH Code of Ethics and Behaviour may be subject to a Disrepute Complaint. Such a complaint is lodged with England Hockey and then, as Chair, I confirm whether the Regulatory requirements are met and there is a case to answer. Thereafter, a Panel is convened (myself and two "wing members" from a list of willing people) to consider the evidence, hold an oral hearing if required, and pass judgment and sanction as appropriate. In addition, we are first port of appeal from an Area Disciplinary Administrator' decisions on Red Cards and MMOs etc.

What is the function of the OWG aka Officiating Working Group?
Since the Governance Review was implemented by EH after an overwhelming vote in favour at the AGM last year, hockey in England is now split into eight geographic Areas – London, South East, South Central, Midlands, East, West, North and North East / Yorkshire. In addition, as far as Officiating is concerned, we add to that NPUA and TAP (Technical Officials).

The England Hockey Officiating Club (EHO), and not HOC-E as I wanted to call it, is responsible for all Officials in Hockey in England – Officials are umpires, umpire support and technical officials – so all eight Areas as well as NPUA and TAP – making the ten Branches of EHO.

Each Branch has a Chair, who will take the lead in administering Officiating in their branch. In addition, each Chair will be the Branch's representative on OWG which is, in effect, the Managing Committee of the EHO.

Can you provide details of some Agenda items to illustrate what the Group covers?
We aim to support officiating across the country and to seek to achieve uniformity of process. In addition, we seek, between us, to consider the best way of developing each type of official to the best of their potential. We have instituted working groups to look at development materials and events for officials. Also, we have organised periodic meetings for our various leads in each of our Branches (Appointing, Development, Club Liaison etc) to ensure exchange of ideas and achieving of best practice etc.

What (briefly) is involved with your chairmanship of EHO?
This is largely the same thing as the Chairing of OWG, the two go hand in hand and will in reality involve the chairing of the AGM, delivering a report on the activities and achievements of EHO over the preceding year.

We assume this is distinct from NPUA (National Programme Umpiring Association) and that it operates separately?
NPUA is its own beast but it and its members are all members of EHO, and their Chair or his representative has an equal position and say on the OWG. There are slightly different

considerations for NPUA, and indeed TAP, to the eight geographical areas but we are all together in one "Club" working for a uniform and consistent approach to Officiating in England.

And to what extent (bar the narrower geographic area of influence) does chairmanship of Officiating (for London) differ?
This is a more immediate, less strategic role, much more akin to leading other Umpiring Associations over time (like MHUA or SCHUA). With direct contact to London Members and overseeing the work of our Appointing and Development leads, amongst others.

How frequently do these bodies meet and do meetings take place remotely at the current time?
I am preparing for an OWG meeting this week, via Zoom, not only because of COVID but largely because we are a national body and meeting every six to eight weeks in person is unrealistic. In London, our Committee "meets" sporadically, both over Zoom and *ad hoc* in person, for example at Southgate HC some weeks ago. We tend to communicate over Slack and email, having meetings between relevant personnel as the need arises. We certainly would like, in London, to meet in person more often, once COVID abates somewhat.

Do you still have time to umpire games yourself?
Not as much as I would like, but that is as much a product of a manic work situation, the massive case backlog in the Criminal Justice System, as my other roles.

In which leagues do you officiate?
I umpire in London Premier Division, and in other Divisions if it can assist and am also a "Regional Reserve" umpiring for NPUA in Conference East – so watch out H&W2s…, the women's 3s have already had the pleasure…

Are you precluded (or do you preclude yourself) from umpiring games involving H&W?
Nope – see above, much as H&W will always be my club and has a really special place in my heart for all the wonderful years of playing with great teammates (well some of them), I can be trusted to be impartial and umpire fairly (well that's what I think!!).

Do you think the standard of play has improved with greater organisation applied to umpiring?
Not yet, but I think we are in the very early stages of the reorganisation of governance. I am hopeful, or even confident, that once everything beds down, we will see the standard of play improve, as well as the quality of officiating, which we are putting every effort into developing.

What is the biggest challenge currently facing umpires?
Enticing players amongst others to take up the whistle. The advent of astroturf and floodlighting and better fitness and health, as well as the popularity of Vets / Masters hockey, has undoubtedly led to many players extending the playing careers, where before they would have promptly and swiftly taken up a whistle at the first creak of a knee. We have to come up with creative solutions to entice players into umpiring in conjunction with their playing careers, as well as incentivising youngsters to pick up a Fox 40 and enjoy everything that officiating has to offer. Watch this space…

International Coaching

The announcement that Danny Kerry had retired as coach to the Great Britain and England's men sides arrived too late for inclusion in the last Newsletter. He is regarded as the most successful hockey coach in British history after Olympic medal success with the women's side and has ended a 17-year career on the international stage.

A search is underway for a permanent head coach for the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle. After GB men had finished fifth in Tokyo, Kerry admitted that it was up to GB Hockey whether he would carry on for the Paris 2024 cycle. It had appeared that he would, when the GB trials took place with him at the helm and England set to prepare for a busy calendar of events in 2022.

As coach of the women's teams for more than a decade, across two spells, Kerry helped them win a gold medal in the Rio games in 2016, having also won bronze at London 2012. England women's first ever podium finish with a bronze medal at the 2010 World Cup led to his *breakthrough moment,* with victory at the 2015 EuroHockey Championship and taking up a performance director's role. In 2017, he suffered a heart attack before returning to lead the women's programme.

He left that after England suffered a poor home performance at the 2018 women's World Cup and then took over as men's coach that September. The same winning formula with the men's side proved elusive, with a fourth place at the 2018 World Cup, outside the medals at the EuroHockey and in fifth place at the Tokyo Olympics, which left Great Britain seventh in the world rankings.

Speculation over his successor led to a review by the *Hockey Paper* with the following conclusions.

Zak Jones

Welshman Jones (once a player with Hampstead in the Premier Division) was appointed as assistant coach to the England and GB men in July 2020 following his tenure at the helm of Wales. Taking them from the EuroHockey lower echelons to the A Division, he led Wales to sixth place in 2019, as they retained their status for the first time in two decades. He has enjoyed similar success with Buckingham women over the years, too, with the side a top four contender in the top flight and defending indoor champions this year.

Jon Bleby

Bleby, who won 37 GB caps, has been at the helm of the England and GB under-21 side at Bisham Abbey since 2013 and has overseen several Sultan of Johor Cup title wins, notably in 2018, when Great Britain defeated India. After eight years with the under-21s and now as EDP head coach, a step up to coach the men's senior side would be seen as a natural progression.

Kwan Browne

Kwan, the former Trinidadian international, was appointed as GB and England assistant men's coach in September 2019. It followed several years assisting with England under-21 and working with the GB EDP following its inception in late 2017. Kwan is currently Hampstead & Westminster HC men's player/coach and was appointed head of hockey at Mill Hill School last year.

Barry Middleton

Regarded as one of GB's finest players, Middleton ended his international career after the 2018 men's World Cup, finishing with 432 caps and netting 119 goals over a 16-year career. He is currently working with the GB EDP squad as assistant coach and is director of hockey at Holcombe HC, where he also still plays. Would be seen as a long shot for the job but knows the intricacies of Bisham Abbey and, with Olympic year only two years away, is highly-regarded by players.

Could GB look abroad?

With most coaches now in place for the Paris 2024 cycle, possible contenders seem thin on the ground if GB Hockey are going global in their recruitment.

Danny Kerry with Will Calnan

Game Management System

David Lloyd Williams of Southgate HC is a leading light on the use of data in hockey and has had a significant part to play in the development of England Hockey's Game Management System (GMS) briefly mentioned in the last newsletter.

He has recently commented upon it in the face of criticisms that its delivery has been delayed and, for example, that club members cannot easily find information about their club or its teams, whether for fixtures or results that were more readily available on *FixturesLive* (in which he also had a substantial involvement).

He says that GMS is not just about the administrative side of the game. He reckons that "some wonderful things will be achieved with the data. Stats galore: top scorers per team, club, division, league, Area, nationally, by season, gender, age. And beyond scorers: appearances, clean sheets – top this, top that. These will doubtless be the basis of annual awards".

"Everyone will get a personal page with their lifetime's participation history and achievements: playing, umpiring and coaching appearances. Other sports have shown how much juniors in particular love this".

He admits that work is needed to determine the best ways of using the vast trove but already there are volunteer data specialists eager to "dive in".

"Club umpires – the *Cinderellas* of our domestic game – will see their contribution recognised at last". For him, "this is what GMS is all about. It's not merely a league system – it's about making our sport more engaging"

"The collection of data from the old league systems has started – all are generously helping. Data will be backfilled into GMS where we can but this will take time. GMS is a data platform – data in, data out. The possibilities for web site widgets, apps, and technologies to come are limited only by time, funding and everyone's imaginations. The potential for sponsorship has also been in our minds all along".

"We'll find better ways of working with the commercial systems, so that they use official data at last. The cultural shift has started".

Africa Cup of Nations

Matt Guise-Brown has been selected for South Africa's squad for the African Hockey Cup of Nations taking place in Accra, Ghana from 17-23 January 2022. The team that finishes top of the tournament will qualify for the World Cup in India in January 2023.

For South Africa, this represents an opportunity to build on the momentum established at the Tokyo Olympic Games, where a victory over Germany thrust South Africa into world top 10 for the first time.

In the first match against Namibia, Matt scored a hat trick, with goals in the 35th, 47th and 49th minutes in an emphatic 13-0 win, after leading 4-0 at half time.

Late News

The FIH has announced changes to the Rules. The Rules are issued by the FIH Rules Committee (made up of Rules experts from the five Continental Federations) under the authority of the FIH.

They are updated normally every two years in the January, following the Olympic Games or FIH Hockey World Cups. This allows an 18-month run in to the next global tournament for all players, coaches, supporters and officials to become familiar with any changes and adapt accordingly.

As the Tokyo Olympic Games were postponed, the updated scheduled for January 2021 was equally postponed by a year. The FIH have said that due to the short turnaround to the 2022 FIH Hockey Women's World Cup in July 2022, the amendments to the Rules in this version are relatively minor in order to minimise the adaptations required by players, coaches and officials.

What are the changes in the new Rules and why have they been made?

Removal of Penalty Corner protective equipment - Rule 4.2 has been changed to allow for defending players using Penalty Corner protective equipment to continue to play the ball outside the circle after an interception during the taking of a penalty corner.

Players can now continue to run with the ball while keeping their protective equipment on but they must remove it immediately at the first opportunity to do so and always inside the 23m area. No player using PC protective equipment can play the ball outside the 23m area at any time.

This has been introduced to protect player's safety: the focus can be on the ball and the play and not on removing protective equipment during pressurised defensive play. The change was trialled in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup in Bhubaneswar in December 2021 and was widely supported by coaches, players and officials.

Aerial balls - Rule 9.10 was changed to allow for the playing of aerials. The previous text did not cover for the possibility for players safely to intercept the falling ball, now seen as both legitimate and positive to the development of the game. This change followed discussions before, during and after the Tokyo Olympic Games. Aerials will continue to be closely monitored by all stakeholders to maintain player safety.

Other Rule changes are essentially cosmetic and clarifications of existing Rules.

When do these Rules come into effect?
The Rules of Hockey apply to all levels of the game and are effective from 1 January 2022 at international level. National Associations have discretion to decide the date of implementation at a national level, based on the domestic seasons.

Typically, rule changes are not introduced into domestic leagues mid-season but the FIH hopes that with the simplification of the removal of protective penalty corner equipment rule, this might be adopted immediately in many domestic leagues even if they are currently half way through. The FIH maintains that it makes this aspect of the game safer, easier to understand for players and easier for umpires to officiate.

Grandmasters Hockey

Reading 2 Hampstead & Westminster 2

Chris Somes-Charlton reports….
An inauspicious start to the day when hockey guru Marc Fernandez stumbled at the first hurdle, unable to face the train and preferring instead to drive in the slow lane to Reading. I had intended that we would spend the journey talking tactics; instead I headed outward in captainly isolation.

In the event, Marc rocked up with minutes to spare and we managed only the briefest of team briefings. This team would be bi-axial, with Philip and Raki the twin pivots. Meanwhile, Reading's centre forward looked youthful and handy with his stick, so we stuck Limpet Mick on him. And that was that.,

Reading HC's elders were well-organised and well-drilled and they moved the ball around with confidence. Not to be outdone, H & W's GMs concentrated on our own game, making the most of our bi-axial formation to recycle the ball and switch direction. With a marked right wing tendency, *Chief Tosser* (as the President was [allegedly] once known) built a regular series of attacks, starting with Raki, then DGB and up to Patrick in the vanguard of destiny. A moment of fear gripped the team, however, when Raki lurched forward with unusual vigour, only to pull up suddenly, gripping his hamstring. Thankfully, he was uninjured, but Raki is a man who all too frequently fails to go the full distance.

The best chances of the first half fell to us, but fortune deserted me. Reading were not so generous, and they had already inflicted punishment before the half time bell tolled, deflecting the ball off the back of their forward's stick and into guest Luke aka Loon's net.

Reading's decency in lending us Luke, a rather younger fitter keeper than our usual superannuated pink-clad model, has to be acknowledged. He repelled a string of attacks and a flurry of short corners.

Despite this pressure, our valiant GMs continued to throw caution to the wind, with Patrick racing into the breach in a succession of forward thrusts. In one such burst inside the attacking circle and realising that the Reading keeper had closed off his angles, he adroitly nudged the ball across to the centre and into the path of the in-sweeping Marc, who notched up his first of 2022.

Emboldened by the goal, the GMs ratcheted up their hopes and belief in the possibility of a famous victory, launching further searching attacks. One such move saw the Tosser supply an excellent pass to Marc in our opponents' circle and he slipped in his second of 2022 as might a cad drop a Rohypnol pill into an innocent girl's glass. Not that gentle Marc would do that to a woman; an old hockey foe is a different matter.

Alas, we only got to glimpse victory through the bottom of our beer glasses. With minutes remaining, Reading were awarded a controversial short corner on appeal. In the melee which followed their initial shot, Philip cleared the ball just after it had crossed the goal-line. Again, Reading appealed and their umpire gave them the goal, bringing them level. The game ended moments later, bringing to a close what had been a most encouraging and enjoyable start to 2022.

The team that was: Luke aka Loon (a Reading keeper & a Handbagger to boot), Philip Sudell, David Garforth-Bles, Mick Cocks, Raki Patel, Tim Bamford, Richard Sykes, Rowan Patterson, Nigel Fletcher, Patrick Morrisey, Marc Fernandez & Chris Somes-Charlton.

Yesteryear

70 Years Ago

8 January 1952
From *The Times*

The first half of the season which ended last week has not been too unkind in the matter of the weather, although there have been a few days when grounds were unplayable.

The rules of the game have not been altered to any appreciable extent this season, but the enlargement of the circle, provisionally tried last year, is now embodied in the rules. Recently

there has been some discussion among players and officials on another question - the abolition of the roll-in in favour of a free hit. There is little to be said for it, unless the stick rule is interpreted very strictly. This rule is the bugbear of present-day hockey and in every game it is rare to see one or two cases of sticks penalised, even though forwards and backs break the law either in shooting or taking free hits.

There appears to be one remedy only, and that is for the rule to state that the stick shall not be raised above the " head " in place of " shoulder " and then for umpires to interpret the rule to the letter. The use of the Indian type of stick with a smaller and more curved blade is gradually being adopted by many leading players, and those who use it certainly seem to be improving their play.

Club hockey, with the exception of Southgate, has not been too consistent so far. Hounslow, Tulse Hill and Old Kingstonians have shown inconsistent form and the same can be said of Teddington and the Hawks. These may be said to be the big six among southern clubs, though they have been beaten by other sides who may be expected to have their own views on the subject. At any rate it is good to see a levelling up in club games and it is most gratifying to see that clubs such as Richmond, Bromley, Wimbledon Dulwich and Spencer, who make a point of fostering young talent, through schoolboys' games, are building up good sides as their records this season prove.

With the Olympic Games only a few months away funds have to be raised to send a British side to take part but so far no really concrete proposal has come to hand. The suggestion that each club player throughout the country be asked to contribute 1/- on a Saturday in February may well be the answer, but up to the present no move appears to have been made in this direction. Perhaps the Hockey Association could be persuaded to make an official announcement on the subject.

60 Years Ago

2 January 1962

A cricket ball came to the rescue of the Southern Counties tournament at Worthing yesterday. After players and corporation workmen had cleared three inches of snow off two pitches the ball still could not be seen properly. The umpires experimented with coloured balls before it was decided that a red cricket ball was the most effective.

FIRST OF KIND

For some years the penalty bully has been considered an unsatisfactory rule. For one thing too high a proportion of bullies have been saved by the defending player. Now, as an experimental rule to be tried in first-class hockey for the remainder of the season, a free shot may be taken by any member of the attacking side from a spot eight yards out in front of goal. This relates much more closely to the procedure in Association football. The ball may be scooped, flicked or pushed and Jones showed on Saturday, when Kimber badly obstructed Corby, how this new penalty shot should be taken.

50 Years Ago

29 January 1972

For the FIH, the eagerly awaited day of decision has arrived. Advised by their technical committee, they will announce in Brussels today the names of the 16 teams to play in the Olympic tournament in Munich.

So far, only five teams, Pakistan, Australia, India, West Germany and Argentina, are assured of places. Whether Britain will be among the 11 remaining teams is a matter for speculation. As vacancies are to be filled continent wise on the basis of results achieved in international matches, one of Britain's best recommendations is a 1-1 draw last October at Bristol against

Australia, winners of the silver medal in Mexico (1968). Consideration might, however, be given to Britain's improved performances on the recent tour of India, where victories by the home side were restricted to one-goal margins in three of the four international matches.

17 January 1972
LONDON LEAGUE
Cheam 4 Wimbledon 0; Dulwich 3 Hampstead 3; Old Kingstonians 1 Bromley 1; Oxford University 0 Blackheath 0; Purley 0 Beckenham 5; Richmond 0 Cambridge University 2; Southgate 2 Teddington 1.

24 January 1972
CLUB MATCHES
Hampstead 1 Reigate 2

40 Years Ago

4 January 1982
If England beat Malaysia tomorrow in the World Cup tournament, they have a chance of finishing fourth in their group of six teams, a position lower than was expected at the start. On the basis of recent international results they had a right to a higher place.

It is always easy to find excuses for British sporting failures abroad. The England team were beaten by stronger opposition but they have also been laid low by the weather and a schedule which required them to play two days successively at the hottest time of the day (2.30pm). The collapse of Malcolm Wilson with heat exhaustion after the match against the Soviet Union on Saturday was a shattering experience for the England team. He received attention from two doctors and was taken to hospital.

Although he recovered, he was unfit to play on the next day and his appearance in the remaining matches is unlikely. It is risky on trips of this nature not to have a team doctor in addition to a physiotherapist, a position adequately filled by Barry Maddox in the England team.

An official of one of the European teams said that it was ridiculous to make teams that were coming from scenes of snow and ice, play matches on a hot afternoon.

30 January 1982
The Hockey Association announced yesterday that the public inquiry into the setting up of a national hockey centre at Chiswick had been completed and that the Secretary of State had promised to expedite a decision within the next three months. It is believed, however, that the project has the support of the Greater London Council and that the Borough of Hounslow, who had earlier rejected the plans, are now more favourably disposed to them.

The competitions committee of the HA decided yesterday that the indoor club championship qualifying matches which fell through at Bristol on Sunday because of adverse playing conditions, will now be played at Maidenhead on 30 January. The matches at Bristol were called off because the playing surface was affected by condensation. A start was actually made but when the players began to flounder like novices on an ice rink the game was stopped in order to avoid the risk of injury.

After last Sunday's matches at other venues, Slough, St Albans, Pelicans, South Notts, Stone and Bristol qualified for the final rounds to be played at Crystal Palace on 25 February. A proposal has been made that teams who do not display numbers on their shirts should either be fined £35 or face disqualification.

Next Newsletter? Hopefully at the end of the current season….