

## GIRLS SECTION - 2018/2019

2018/2019 Season has been a successful one for the Girls Section, but with a lot of potential to do more. Registered membership this season across the GU12-GU18 squads was over 80. But we should aim for much greater growth through strengthening our ties with local schools. This was the first season of using the pitch at WHS and we are taking steps to develop a much broader relationship between hockey at WHS and WHC, as well as looking to develop contacts at Pipers Corner and other local schools.

**Coaching** – midweek training for junior girls from U12 to U16 was led this season by Zoe Shipperley on Tuesday evenings at WHS. The girls thoroughly enjoyed and responded well to Zoe's training sessions. Furthermore, many of the GU16s stayed on to participate in Ladies 3-5s training which followed on the same evening with Zoe. As assistant coaches Zoe had Shona Black for U12s, Andy Pedrette for U14s and Yendall Burne for U16s. The original plan was for the U12 boys and girls to train together, but early in the season Shona's preference was to separate and to use half a pitch each. This may have reduced the GU12s exposure to Zoe, but enabled Shona to focus solely on the girls. The GU14s and GU16s shared a pitch and mixed in for some training drills and were able to play organised games between each other as both groups tended to have around 13 players at each training session. All of the girls' sessions were 60 minutes, which was really too short for team practice as well as skills coaching, so we plan to increase sessions to 90 minutes next season.

**Thank you so much Zoe** and here's to next Season, when we aim again to have Zoe coaching the GU14s and GU16s on the same night as Ladies 3-5s. The latest plan is to have the Ladies 1-2s also training later on the same night, which should be an excellent development for the integration of the girls and senior sections for the club but will require the GU12s to train on a different evening. The current intention is that the GU12s will train in their own session (potentially at the same time as GK practice) at WHS under Shona's lead.

**Feeding the senior Ladies** – Shona Black has led efforts on developing our girls through their inclusion in senior ladies teams. We did not play Badgers development games which we did in 2017/18. Instead, Shona led the new for the season Ladies 5s, which was effectively the entry level team for U14 girls when ready to try out in the senior teams. Our girls helped the Ladies 5's team in their nomination and shortlisting as EH Team of the Year. Several junior girls have progressed into the Ladies 4s, 3s, 2s and 1s. We disbanded the GU18 team this season due to lack of interest from the U18 girls, but we believe this is partly because the vast majority of those GU18s (around 20) are now playing high level Ladies hockey for WHC on Saturdays in any case.

**Volunteers** - We are lucky to have fantastic volunteers both parents and club members who have got involved through the season, but we need more! **Thank you to you all who are already involved.** And welcome to any new volunteers for next season!!

**Recruitment** – Girls numbers were pretty much in line with expectations from the start of the year. In the GU12-GU18s, we had 18 girls join this season, of whom 5 were in the second half of the season, since Christmas. Similar numbers of girls also joined the Mini section aged up to U10s.

**WHS Relationship** – Beyond the discussions with WHS around facilities and potential clubhouse development, we have recently met with the WHS PE department to begin to strengthen our relationship to develop hockey together. We will encourage WHS to initiate a Friends of Hockey scheme similar to that operated at RGS. With this and other fundraising, we believe that WHS could increase their hockey coaching budget around fivefold to enable much higher quality coaching throughout the school. These developments are bound to take time, but there is SO MUCH potential for growing participation together with WHS.

**County Selection** - We had a total of 18 girls selected for AC - County this season. Congratulations to all of you.

**Looking forward** - Well done to everyone for all your efforts last season and here's to a fun and successful 2019/20 season. Planning is well underway. If you have any ideas or suggestions (and especially if you could volunteer to help more next year!), do let me know.

**Andy Pedrette - Girls Section Manager**

## **GIRLS SECTION - AGE GROUP UPDATES**

### **UNDER 12s:**

Shona Black managed and coached the GU12s, assisted principally by Steph Ayres. We had a squad of 25 in the GU12s this season, of whom 9 will move to U14 next season and 16 will continue as GU12s for another year.

The GU12s enjoyed another good season, despite a slightly slow start. We confidently fielded 2 teams in the Chiltern League, where there's a Premier Division and then 6 Divisions below that. Our "A" team started out in Division 2, and our young development side in Division 4. The Chiltern League is a great place for the girls to be, with each league consisting of 4 teams. There are 3 series of events, with each series having 2 rounds. After each series, one team is promoted and one relegated, which means that the teams generally find their level. Our "A" team managed to get promoted up to Division 1, which is quite an achievement, and our development side went down into Division 5, where they were much more comfortable and competitive, and gave a jolly good account of themselves. The girls have made good progress this year, turn-out at training has always been good, and the signs for next year are very promising.

We ran an "in house" Christmas Tournament which was very well supported by the girls, by their parents and by some of our senior players in the Club, who acted as player coaches for the 4 teams. It's always lovely to see our senior guys turning out to help the next generation – it looked like they were impressed to see some of the talent we have coming through, and perhaps getting a little nervous!

We sent 2 teams to the Bucks Cup at Marlow in early March. Both teams met some stiff opposition and it was a particularly tough day for the development side. It was a big ask for them, playing some of the best, well-drilled teams in the County, but they battled hard and this sort of experience will stand them in very good stead going forward. Despite the results on the day, we were very proud of all of the girls.

We also sent a team to the Rover Easter Festival at Cokethorpe School, which was a huge success and a great way for us to bring our season to a close. We played some terrific hockey, won our group and advanced to the semis. Unfortunately, we were knocked out at that stage in the shuttles. Shuttles at this age is a challenge, especially when we hadn't done any at training! We went through to the 3rd/4th play-off game and met the same fate there! But the girls were terrific all day, playing some good, solid, team hockey, and it shows how far they have come this year, particularly since the turn of the year. The future is bright!

A huge thanks for all the support that this group of girls has enjoyed this season. We couldn't do it without you: **Shona Black, Zoe Shipperley, Steph Ayres, Sander de Groot, Isabelle Hansen, Josh Olcot, Lucy Young.**

Prize winners for the season went to:

### **GU12s A Team:**

Coach's Player: Ruby Welsh

Most Improved: Ellie Faulkner

Players' Player: Ruby Neil-Dwyer

### **GU12s Dev Team:**

Coach's Player: Aanya Bhardwaj

Most Improved: Rosie Ayres

Players' Player: Isabella Blake

## **UNDER 14s:**

We had a squad of 21 in the GU14s this season, of whom 9 will move to U16 next season and 12 will continue as GU14s for another year. With 9 players joining from last year's GU12s, we will probably start next season with around the same size squad as this year.

We had a squad of 21 in the GU14s this season, of whom 9 will move to U16 next season and 12 will continue as GU14s for another year. With 9 players joining from last year's GU12s, we will probably start next season with around the same size squad as this year. Several of the girls were relatively new to hockey this year and we tried to give girls match time as soon as we felt they were ready to play competitively. As is often the case, it is a difficult balance to give a large number of players match time whilst not disrupting the team too much and risking losing morale if losses are too resounding!

The GU14s were initially entered into a Home Counties A League and also EH Cup Tier 2. After a torrid first half of the season, with heavy losses to Wallingford and A&C in the HC league and to Reading, Marlow and Maidenhead in the EH Cup, we decided to move the GU14s down into a Development division of the HC league, whilst remaining in the same EH Cup group.

The change helped the girls regain some confidence. At the same time, the benefits of Zoe's coaching and the encouragement of the manager **Helen Foster, coach Andy Pedrette and parents, including Dawn Midwinter and Alison McPhillips**, helped the girls improve their play dramatically.

After Christmas, the girls won Development league games against Reading, Marlow, A&C and South Berks, only losing narrowly to Maidenhead. And this new found confidence and improved play also made the girls more competitive in the later games in the EH Cup, most notably in a very narrow loss to Marlow in a mid-week re-arranged game where the girls superb performance may have had something to do with Zoe's presence to see then in a match for the first time!

Huge efforts from all of the girls, with massive improvements over the season. Congratulations to everyone and let's keep it going next season.

**Particular mention to Maya Dunkin**, who stepped up very maturely into the GU16 team to fill a desperate GK gap in that age group **and to Ruby Qureshi** who did a fine job as GK in the GU14s this season, especially as Ruby is in the younger half of the age group and so, hopefully, will have an even better GU14 season next year!

**Massive thank you to Helen Foster** for managing the GU14s this season. Helen is likely to take a well-earned break next season, but we hope to tempt her back to manage the GU16s in 2020/21!

Prize winners for the season went to:

### **GU14 Team:**

Coach's Player: Sophie Midwinter

Most Improved: Rosie Horrod

Players' Player: Freya Foster-Moss

Special Recognition: Katie McPhillips

### **UNDER 16s:**

The 2018/2019 season was a story of improvement based on an excellent team spirit. It took a while, but the results came after the turn of the year. The team's hockey in 2019 was so much better than 2018!

Yendall Burne managed and coached the GU16 matches, unfortunately without a parent manager to assist him. **Huge thanks to Yendall** for a Trojan effort in difficult circumstances, with a very small squad. The great improvement in the team's play and results over the two halves of last season emphasised the efforts of Yendall and Zoe in developing these girls.

The GU16 squad of around 16 regular players is close to the minimum required to run a single team, given a few likely absences each week. Next season, 7 of these girls should continue as GU16s for another year, to be joined by 9 players from last year's GU14s. So we will probably start next season again with a very small squad of only around 16 players. We could certainly do with a few more players at GU16 level, so keep recruiting in current school years 9-10, if you can!

The GU16s competed in a Home Counties A League which was always going to be a steep challenge, including strong teams from Reading, Oxford, A&C. The league was set up to have four games, but demanded that all the fixtures be complete by 3 February. As a result, the GU16s only played two games, losing heavily to Reading and A&C, whilst Buckingham dropped out and our Oxford game could not be rearranged after ice caused its postponement.

The GU16s also competed in the EH Cup Tier 2, which provided some good challenges for the girls. Before Christmas, we took beatings from Reading (1-6) and Maidenhead (0-4), but went on to beat Slough (5-1) all the way showing a growing team spirit and playing better hockey each game. In 2019, results took an upward turn as we held an unbeaten Maidenhead to a draw (1-1), and then beat Slough more heavily than the 1-0 score reflects. The finale came when the GU16s beat Reading Reelers (4-2) in the last game. This was a fitting end for a group that had grown stronger together. It is noteworthy that results against Reading Reelers went from very bad to winning and that the girls did not lose a game in 2019.

The commitment of the girls was shown by normally fielding a team of 12-15 from the very small squad. Following a mid-season reorganisation meeting of the girls section, Maya Dunkin stepped up from the GU14s to play in goal for the GU16s, where the girls welcomed her very warmly.

Yendall is moving on from coaching this age group now. His summary is that this group of girls have come a long way together, from U14 through to this season in U16. They have had some heavy losses along the way but have grown stronger as a group. Their camaraderie has been excellent and very rewarding to see. A highlight was during the drawn game against Maidenhead where several players assessed the situation and made on-field adaptations to cope with the threat of specific opposition players. This showed great maturity, in their understanding of the game and the match situation.

Congratulations to all involved.

Prize winners for the season went to:

**GU16 Team:**

Coach's Player: Angelina Goosen

Most Improved: Daniela Grice

Players' Player: Emily Hearne

**UNDER 18s:**

Although the GU18 team was disbanded this season, we had around 20 girls from the U18 age group playing regularly in WHC senior Ladies teams this season.

We are looking at viability of a GU18 team for 2019/20, but it is currently looking unlikely.

**UNDER 18s Indoor:**

Players from U18G and U16G joined together to make up a team to enter the Indoor League hosted by Wycombe Hockey Club and held at Wycombe High School. Teams taking part also came from A&C HC, Beaconsfield High, Sir William Borlase and Great Marlow School. The matches were held on a Monday evening in the Sports Hall between September and November.

Several of the U16 players were new to the team but quickly integrated themselves having played indoor at school. The girls were able to establish an effective formation allowing them to hold their ground against some of the more experienced teams. The U18G gave a good show – some players having to double up by playing for their school which made organising teams interesting!

The finals were played on 26 November with the final positions as follows:-

- 1 A&C U18G
- 2 Wycombe Senior
- 3 Beaconsfield High
- 4 Wycombe U18G
- 5 Sir William Borlase
- 6 A&C U16G
- 7 Great Marlow

Special thanks go to Kirk Adams who was there for most matches talking tactics and managing the girls. Thank you Kirk !

Prize Winners for the season went to:

**GU18 Indoor Team:**

Coach's Player: Charlie Adams

Player's Player: Lucy Young