



GUILDFORD HOCKEY CLUB

AFFILIATED TO SURREY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AND ENGLAND HOCKEY
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AGM 2022 – Women's Section Report – 2021/22

Wow what a year we've had on the Astro! All our women's teams have had incredible performances, but I must start with a huge well done to the Women's 1s who have been promoted into the National League for the first time in the club's history. That's a huge achievement!!

But they were not alone in their promotion. Our women have excelled in the new EH league structure with all 7 squads finishing in the top half of their table and 4 squads getting promoted (W1, W4, W5, W7), against tough competition. This puts W4 into the same league as W3, and W7 into the same league as W6 – that should be fun! Of course, hockey is a team sport through and through and the close relationship running throughout the section has been an enabler in supporting these promotions.

While our Women's 1s are able to support the rest of the section with bar work, coaching and umpiring, the lower club have been so flexible this season, playing up into higher squads, often at short notice to make sure all squads have enough players (and usually even subs on the bench) to fulfil almost all their matches.

This season we created a dedicated junior squad, the Women's 3s. For the juniors this was a place for U18 hockey to be played which wasn't otherwise on offer, and for the adults it helped stabilise the remaining squads with a better adult-junior balance. School fixture clashes and lower than expected availability for matches across the whole section made this tough from a management perspective, but Tom Crees did a fantastic job with the team, evidenced by the number of girls who passed quickly through his squad into W2 and W1 by the end of the season. Tom will be taking on a different role at the club next season but will be very much missed as W3 Coach.

At the other end of the Women's section Maggs, Nicky and Ross have continued to welcome new players into both B2H and W7s, made up of new juniors making their first steps into adult hockey and those who haven't picked up a stick for 5+ years. It feels like I have had requests to join these 2 groups every week throughout the season, and I've heard such good things about how everyone has settled in. If you're reading this as a non-player or know of someone looking to re-take up the sport, I can't recommend this highly enough.

As well as the Saturday league fixtures, we've also had O45 and W1 entries into the EH Cup. The Women's 1s unfortunately did not make it to a third consecutive final, but the WO45s won the National title in another first for the club! Beyond this we have players from the section representing England and Wales in their age group categories. These achievements are so inspirational, particularly to those just starting their hockey journey. We wish you all success!

The coaches have been a dream to work with this season. It's not easy getting 7 teams out every week, making sure everyone gets the right amount and level of hockey despite last minute school commitments and the ongoing covid issues pulling people in all directions. Some of you may not know that we have a monthly selection meeting throughout the season, but on top of that the coaches have their own chats on and off the pitch to make sure everyone is getting the right opportunities and support in their development. And they even have time to develop amazing training sessions every week. Big thank you to you all for your energy, commitment, and positivity.

And helping make their lives easier are the captains who have excelled in navigating GMS, Teamo and the new league structure and rules. There is a huge amount you also do behind the scenes that is all so much appreciated, thank you!

I need to make special mention to Mike Fitter. Fitting so many matches onto 4+ pitches on Saturdays, while ensuring a fair balance between early and late games for each squad, making sure all the times are allowable by the various league rules and that the oppo don't have too early a start, managing the fixture combinations to facilitate umpiring, as well as offering improved pitch times when any cancellations come in is no easy task, and I can't tell you how impressed I have been by Mike's wizardry. On top of that Mike has found time to play, and umpire, and organise amazing tournaments dedicated to the lower club (with the same thorough planning as Saturday pitch bookings). Thanks Mike!

If you've read this far it means you must have a keen interest in the women's section – whether you are a player, parent, or take an interest from the side-lines, there are many ways you can help support the section grow from strength to strength - if you have any time to offer, even in what might seem the smallest of ways please do get in touch to discuss. For those who already do so, thank you, we appreciate every contribution.

With so many promotions we have a tough season waiting for us so enjoy the time off and get ready for some hard work ahead.

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