



GHC Tour to Polo Club de Barcelona 2017

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Background

This December will be the seventh time GHC participate in this annual youth hockey tournament. Officially known as the *Torneo Internacional de la Inmaculada "Marga Monegal,"* this is the tournament's 31st year; it attracts the top clubs in Spain and many from across Europe. In the past we have seen teams from Italy, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Russia, to name a few. More than eighty teams will be participating across four age groups of boys and girls and the Polo Club are hoping to welcome 1000 players this year.

The [Polo Club](#) has produced 49 Spanish Olympic players and their top ladies and men's teams compete in Spain's top league. In the past they have hosted the Hockey World Championships and the Olympic Qualifiers; they also host one of Europe's top club tournaments every year in January (The Kings Hockey or *Hockey Reyes*). The *Inmaculada* is the youth version of the *Reyes* tournament which has been running for 67 years.

This year GHC are participating with 6 teams – 3 boys teams and 3 girls teams. The tournament starts at 9am on Friday 8 December and finishes at 5pm on Sunday 10 December. Our first matches will not be before 11.30am on Friday.

Please find here below a full description of how the weekend runs.

I hope your player will enjoy the tour.

Online Consent Forms for Players and Parents on Tour

Please complete the **Consent form** in the link you have been sent by email (link also here below): passport information, EHIC, contact details and medical information, (allergies and medication).

Please also complete a form for yourself and your spouse if you are also on tour or accompanying.

If anything changes regarding the medical information before the tour please ensure this is communicated to the [trip organisers](#) and your coach/manager.

[Online Forms for Players and for All Parents Travelling](#)

Cost and Payment

The cost of the tour for players includes:

- Flights
- Transfers between airport and hotel
- Hotel including breakfast
- Meals
- Team registration fee for the tournament
- Insurance

The cost per player is estimated at about £450 but we won't know for sure until the hotel has confirmed. **For players please pay a £250 deposit by 10 November** and the rest upon request. If you are an **adult with one of the pre-paid flight tickets please pay £200** to cover your flights, transfers, group meals and insurance.

We are working hard to try to contain the costs. Thank you for your patience while it is all being finalised.

Deposit for players £250 please (and £200 if you have a pre-paid flight). Please use last name and Barce as a reference.

GUILDFORD HOCKEY CLUB
40-22-26
7265 1637

Conduct

Our main aims for young hockey players participating in this tour are to challenge our top players and teams in their hockey and to give our top players the experience of being a Junior International

(having fun goes without saying). Guildford players are known for their good behaviour on and off the pitch and we expect this same level of conduct during the tour as the players represent the club in this prestigious event.

The players and teams will be autonomous – while we encourage parents to come along and enjoy the experience, all players who come on the tour are on tour with their team and are expected to be engaged with their team during the weekend and to be responsible for their own kit. The Coaches and Managers will direct them. Help from parents will be appreciated as needed but please remember that it is the children/teams who are on tour.

Flights

The group flight is:

- Friday 8 December BA 0472 0615 from London Heathrow Terminal 3
- Sunday 10 December BA 0487 2030 to London Heathrow Terminal 3

Please make sure your son or daughter has the following on **Friday morning 8 Dec:**

- Passport
- EHIC
- A small amount of spending money (for drinks and snacks) in £ and euros

We need to be through security by 5.40am latest and at the gate by 5.55am.

Please meet **no later than 5am in Terminal 3** unless further instruction from your team Coach/Manager.

Baggage

Checked Luggage – [BA Checked Baggage Information weblink](#)

The group booking includes a checked bag for each traveller. Hockey sticks are not allowed in the cabin and therefore must be in checked luggage. The weight limit is 23 kg per bag. A checked bag on BA can be up to 90 x 75 x 43cm (35.5 x 29.5 x 16in), including any bits that stick out, like the handle, pockets and wheels.

In past years, most players stuffed their hockey bags with everything they need for the weekend (most suitcases are not long enough to fit a stick though you may have one that works in case your player's stick bag is not a larger model).

Most stick bags will need to go into the special bag drop which has never caused us problems in the past. Goalie kits normally fit in the weight and size limit just fine.

Balls, First Aid and masks can be quite heavy – Coaches/Managers, you may need to split these up into a few people's bags if it puts your bag over the weight limit.

Hand Luggage Restrictions – [BA Hand Baggage Information weblink](#)

BA allows the following cabin baggage per person:

- 1 handbag/laptop bag (max. 23kg / 51lb and up to 40 x 30 x 15cm / 16 x 12 x 6in)
- 1 additional cabin bag (max. 23kg / 51lb and up to 56 x 45 x 25cm / 22 x 18 x 10in)

Please note that any **toiletries carried in hand luggage must be in plastic bags** as per instructions below. Not doing this will slow us down going through the security check and a player may arrive in Barcelona having had his or her toiletries confiscated (and with unimpressed roommates after a day of hockey!).

*Security update - The Department for Transport has announced that EU passengers may carry a limited quantity of liquids i.e. gels, lotions, pastes, liquid cosmetics, foams and foodstuffs in their hand baggage when going through airport security checkpoints. All liquids must be in **individual containers not greater than 100ml capacity and must be placed in one transparent, re-sealable (such as ziplock) bag (only one bag per passenger), no larger than 20cm x 20cm in size.***

Travelling Kit

Players please travel in your kit (and try not to spill anything on it on the plane). It will be easier for coaches/helpers to identify players while we travel through airports if we are all in GHC kit – and it will look very smart:

- GHC white Adidas playing shirt
- GHC Adidas Hoodie/sweatshirt
- GHC Adidas tracksuit bottoms
- Trainers

Restrict casual wear to a minimum as the only time they will wear this is for the Saturday evening dinner – the rest of the time players will be in playing or training kit. Players need 3 pairs of GHC socks, probably 6 pairs of underwear and spare socks for off pitch play. Players need to look after their bodies/kit on tour – there is no relying on a parent to wash the kit so spares of the essentials are essential! If we need to organise a laundry one evening, we will.

Away shirts will be provided.

Please get as much of the [new GHC kit](#) as you can so we all look our best on tour – it will be well worth it.

I think [Caroline Rees](#) is organising a **Hawkinsport kit sale for Friday 1 December at GHC** so if you would like to order items and collect them that evening you can save on postage.

Packing List

Please remember that part of the tour is about seeing what it is like to be an International Hockey player and this starts with looking after themselves including, importantly, changing to fresh clothes between matches and drying off wet or sweaty clothes and shoes between matches and days.

- **GHC Adidas hoodie/sweatshirt** – to be worn on flight
- **GHC Adidas Tracksuit bottoms** – to be worn on flight
- **GHC white playing shirt** – to be worn on flight
- **Trainers** – to be worn on flight
- 1, max 2 sticks
- Mouthguard
- Shin pads
- Hockey shoes x 1pr
- Water bottle - EMPTY!! for the purposes of getting it through airport security
- Cricket box (short corner defenders)
- 3 pairs GHC socks
- 1 pair of under shin pad socks (breathable)
- 6 x Underwear
- Spare socks for training / in between matches
- White shorts x 2 (boys – **GHC Adidas ones please**); Navy skort or skirt x 2 (girls)
- Waterproof top/warm jacket (it can get cold late afternoon/evening),
- Lightweight towel to put in stick bag in case of rain (hasn't rained for the past five tours)
- Vaseline for knees
- Medical kit (as required: special allergic plasters, antiseptic cream, medicines as needed)
- Casual shoes x 1 pair (optional)
- Pyjamas
- Saturday evening casual clothes
- Toiletries
- Alarm clock (phone if you would like but please note it is the player's responsibility to keep track of their own property – there are safes in the rooms)

Coaches/Managers will bring:

- Facemasks for defenders
- First aid kit
- Away Team shirts

Transfer to and from hotel

A large coach has been organised for those arriving on the pre-paid BA flight (players, coaches, helpers). There will be space for accompanying parents but you MUST complete the online form (GHC weblink) so we know you are travelling and will/may require transfer. If we need to add additional vehicles we may need to collect from those who have not been charged for this.

It is most important that you complete the accompanying parents form so we can plan.

[GHC weblink to online forms](#)

Hotel

We intend to stay at the [Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I](#) as we have for the past six tours. The hotel is adjacent to the Polo Club; it is not the cheapest of hotels but allows for easy transfer of players and kit between our accommodation and the tournament venue – this means a cost savings on transport and is a huge benefit in terms of convenience and safety. The Polo Club is surrounded by fencing and there are walking paths between pitches and around the club (site map below).

Players will be staying in rooms of two or three with teammates (still negotiating with the hotel on this as they have changed their accommodation from previous years). Room allocation will be communicated by team managers.

For adults accompanying the tour (coaches/helpers or not), you will need to book and pay your own hotel room at the negotiated GHC rate. A link will be sent once the hotel sends it through to us. Please do not book yet – there are plenty of rooms and they are still working out the best rate for us.

The hotel has been acquired by Fairmont and was renovated over the past two years. The prices have gone up - we have done our best to negotiate as all coaches unanimously wanted to stay there for convenience/safety – the hotel and club are adjacent. The strength of the euro against the pound doesn't help but if anyone who is accompanying would like a more affordable option, the [Hotel Senator](#) is around the corner.



Meals

A seriously complete breakfast buffet is included in the room price. Other meals are in the process of being finalised but will generally be as per the table below.

We normally have time for lunch on arrival at the hotel before the first matches but this will depend on the match schedule which we will only receive a week before the tournament starts.

Please pack some **healthy food** for the **Friday morning travel** (or pocket money to buy something after security at Heathrow). Some healthy snacks for the weekend will also be good.

There are food stalls at the tournament including churros, chips, burgers and noodles. The U14s and 16s will have a BBQ and disco on the Friday evening (Spanish timing and our kids will be knackered after a long day).

Illustrative:

	U12	U14	U16	Parents
Lunch Friday	Lunch at hotel (TBC)			Possible to eat with players
Dinner Friday	U12 dinner hotel	Barbecue and Disco at Polo Club at 22.00		Dinner at Polo Club at 22.00 TBC
Lunch Saturday	Team Lunches at Centenary Hall (Polo Club) including Coaches and Helpers			Own arrangements
Saturday Afternoon	Afternoon snack at Polo Club from 17.00			
Dinner Saturday	Dinner buffet at Hotel for whole GHC group - timing tbc			
Lunch Sunday	Polo Club			

Insurance

Hockey is a contact sport and a hockey tour requires a special level of cover (not covered by normal travel insurance). Players, coaches and anyone who may go on a pitch will be covered on a hockey tour insurance policy. All others will be responsible for their own travel insurance.

And, of course, we will treat our opponents, umpires, and club and hotel staff with great respect.

The Hockey

Well done to your player for being selected. Our top teams do well in local competitions and we find this tournament each year to be a stretch for our teams and a good start to preparation for the business end of the season back home.

Spanish hockey is much more physical than what we are used to and sometimes the rules (or the application of them) seem different. Coaches, please remind/explain. A few things that have caught us out in the past include:

- Using the stick to pass the ball to a teammate so he can take the free hit – the oppo player (and umpire) assumed that this was the free hit being taken but our team thought they were passing the ball in order to *start* the free hit (kick or push the ball with a hand to be sure there can be no mis-interpretation of when the free hit is being taken); the oppo player intercepted and scored from this in the final :-/
- Stick over shoulder wasn't allowed in our games previous prior to two seasons ago but was in Spain (should be ok now that we all do it regularly); another instance of our guys thinking something should have been blown but the oppo got on with it and scored :-/
- Expect a few pushes and a bit more than shoulder to shoulder (more for the boys than the girls)
- And don't be surprised if the oppo coach insists on standing on the pitch during the match while coaching (including in the D while we were attacking); probably something more for the U12s than the older groups – take in the cultural differences ;-)
- The Polo Club provides the umpires – some are young players and some are more experienced (including our friend Alex who umpired the Barcelona Olympics – even the final I think). It can be frustrating to not agree with decisions or not understand why something was blown or not blown – but they are in charge and will use cards as we found out two years ago when our captain and next best player were sent behind the goal (!) on yellow cards (with one then promoted to red when he said 'thank you'). Please be respectful at all times even if you disagree with a decision – and that goes for players and spectators alike (we still won that match against the home side!).

A schedule of play will be produced by the Polo Club – we will probably only receive this a week ahead of the tournament and this will be communicated to all. In past years Guildford parents and players have supported all Guildford teams as much as possible – there will be non-stop hockey on offer during the three days and the teams really appreciate the club-wide support.

Coaches, beware that despite coming from furthest away, the Polo Club like to put us in the opening matches against their A sides on the Friday afternoon. I gather it is an honour to open the tournament against the home teams. We should be flattered (but need to get the players turned around from being travellers into hockey players as effectively as possible).

Current Political Situation in Catalonia

We are, of course, keeping close track of the political situation in Catalonia. The UK Government [Foreign travel advice](#) includes mention of the possibility for large gatherings and for travellers in range of these to be careful/aware. But there is currently no advice against travelling to the region and we do not expect there to be on 8-10 December.

The Polo Club is surrounded by high walls and has a security gate in front for access. The hotel also has security in front and our access to the Polo club is direct from the hotel to the Club. There is no reason to believe that any demonstrations would take place in the neighbourhood near the hotel/club – it is a university area which is very quiet on that weekend as uni is on break for the Christmas holidays. The Nou Camp is nearby but will also be empty that weekend. There is no large public space near where we will be.

There is a vote scheduled for 21 December so we would expect any disturbances to take place well after we have departed (though for sure we will keep an eye on the situation).

Past Tours and Questions

In the past we have done an information session for parents and players. I would be very happy to meet with U12s at BW on a Friday evening – we could meet briefly before training if that works for people. 6.30 on either Friday 17 or 24 November...

I am happy to be at the club and Charterhouse on Friday evenings and at the club on Sundays to speak with any parents who have questions about the tour. Also feel free to [email](#) or phone me **07507 559090**. A glimpse of past tours:

[Barcelona 2016 Tour Report](#)

[Barcelona 2015 Tour Report](#)

[Barcelona 2014 Tour Report](#)

[Barcelona 2013 Tour Report](#)

Contact Information during the tour

It is pleasing to have so many GHC officers and parents accompanying. For those who are not able to come along, please contact me with any issues you have during the tour. I will be watching as many matches as possible and will be in close contact with the coaches and managers.

Please follow twitter if you have an account – or even the twitter feed on the GHC website to see how it's all going. We may be able to set up some What's App groups if people are keen to follow the progress.

Contact details:

Melinda
+447507559090
melinda.rock@btconnect.com

Christophe (DBS checked for GHC and has been with us on tour many times and can be contacted in case for whatever reason my phone may not receive your call)
+447792932882

England Hockey have been informed of our tour once again this year and are happy with the arrangements in place for safeguarding and well-being during the tour. You will know that [Michelle Fussell](#) is our Club Welfare Officer. She has given guidance and advice on international tours; this is the sixth time we are running this tour.

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[Real Polo Club de Barcelona](#)

Looking forward to the tour,

Melinda