

Men's Club Captain's Report

(Subject to addition of awards' winners after Awards Night)

Review of 2019/20Season

A good season for the Men's section without any spectacular success. Everyone has really enjoyed playing at the Club's new home with the great atmosphere from those watching on from the balcony – until certain members broke a couple of windows and we weren't allowed access to the balcony!

The first team consolidated their position in Division 1 after promotion. The second team were always knocking on the door of the sides in the promotion slots but did not quite get over the line whereas the third team, in the same league, retained their status by the slimmest of margins. The fourth team had been promoted the previous season, almost against their best efforts: and despite their best efforts this season with some very competitive hockey in a higher league, they fell foul of the percentages applied following the early finish to the league season and were relegated. The fifth team were promoted after their relegation last season and continue to be a very important social foundation of the Club.

Perhaps the best development in the season was the re-stating of a sixth (or development) XI which saw a large number of under-14s and some under-16s playing their first Men's hockey in friendlies with some of the old stagers.

First XI (Division 1 – 4th)

Andy Round's team started very well and were amongst the early pace-setters in Division 1 after their promotion from Division 2S as champions last season. Contrasting with last season, the results were not so good after Christmas with too many draws and a few games lost by the odd goal. John Kirton's coaching is having a positive effect: the performances were often really encouraging only to be let down by periods or even moments of poor play. Perhaps also too much reliance on Jack Wheaton's drag flicks from corners. Home draws with Crostyx and Potters Bar, two of the three teams above them, which could have been wins, showed the potential.

Player of the season:

Second XI (4SW – 4th)

Matt Brown and Fred Cooke's team finished fourth after being up with the leaders for large parts of the season. In the end, Blueharts and Letchworth ran away with the two promotion places. Some very strong performances but then some injuries disrupted their performances in the second half of the season. Will definitely be aiming for promotion this season under the leadership of Fred Cooke and George Hindle.

Player of the Season:

Third XI (4SW – 10th)

Duncan Barber's team avoided relegation by a slender margin – effectively the very late goal scored by Matt Brown assisted by Vernon Brown at Vauxhall in early February. Vauxhall were relegated. A somewhat frustrating season where lack of consistent availability meant that we relied too often on the old guard and struggled against some of the younger, fitter sides from the top half of the table. With the schoolboys available and good availability generally, we were a match for most sides in the league and able to beat those at the bottom: but that happened infrequently. Unfortunately, two of

those games were against our own second team when we would rather have put out strong BSHC second and third teams out against other clubs on those days.

Player of the Season:

Fourth XI (5SW – 10th - relegated)

The fourth team were very unfortunate to be relegated from Division 5SW, to which they had been promoted the previous season. They were a good competitive side in that league, winning 23 points (six of their 21 matches being wins and they had five draws). On the percentages used as a result of the early finish to the season, they had 36.51% as against Cheshunt with one point fewer but one game fewer on 36.67%.

Some good young players coming through in the fourth team such as Vinay Menon, James Baird and Olly Cashman who all also performed admirably at times in the third team.

Player of the Season:

Fifth XI (8SW – 3rd – promoted)

The fifths would have hoped to be promoted going into the season after their relegation from 7SW last season and with a largely unchanged team. That came to pass after a relatively shaky start to the season. This was achieved despite the fact that several of the fifth team regulars (Duncan Laws, Andy Cox, Simon Bromham and Tom Wood to name but a few) often were needed and willing to help out the fourth team. As ever it seems, the fifths formed the largest contingent at Tuesday evening club training as well as clocking the longest aggregate man hours in the bar (not scientifically assessed) on Saturdays. Hopefully they can consolidate their place in 7SW next season.

Player of the Season:

Sixth XI (only friendlies)

This team was established through the efforts and enthusiasm of Tim Lucas and enabled several of our under-14s and under-16s to get a first taste of Men's hockey, often playing with their fathers. It also enabled some of our growing playing base to get more hockey than they would otherwise have got. Some really enjoyable games which were always close. To give one example (with apologies to many others who made similar starts): Olly Hartnell took up the game in October and scored in most of his sixth team appearances and then managed to repeat the trick playing for the fourths and even played for the thirds once or twice. We have entered a sixth team into 9SW (the bottom league) for next season.

Player of the Season:

2018/19 awards

Men's Indoor Player:

Men's Top Goal Scorer:

Men's Young Player

Men's Most Improved:

Men's Masters Player:

Men's Clubman:

Team of the Year:

Outlook for 2020/21

The two main targets will be to achieve promotions for the the first team to Premier B and the second team to Division 3SW (whilst keeping the third team in 4SW).

The first team squad is looking, if anything, stronger for next season. If we can get good availability and commitment through the second and third team then we can achieve the goals for those too.

The fourth team will be strong in 6SW, though they might manage to avoid promotion (two seasons ago they slightly mis-judged it and did get promoted).

The fifths will face the challenge of consolidating their position in 7SW this time. Two seasons ago they were narrowly relegated. They should be helped by the fact that we should have an active sixth team with some of our very strong juniors gaining Men's hockey experience and being able to be promoted up to the fifths, the fourths and so on.

Duncan Barber

BSHC Mens Club Captain