



Yeovil & Sherborne Hockey Club

Men's Club Captain's End of Season Report for 2010/11

To be presented at the 2011 AGM on Tuesday, 4th April 2011

Prepared by Tony Organ, Club Communications/Website Officer and retiring B XI captain.

Despite issues with availability and selection, it has been by and large a very successful season for the Men's half of the club, with two teams gaining promotion and the two others managing to maintain their respective league status. With the demise of the 1sts last season, you would expect the remaining teams to be stronger but this still needed to be turned into results on the pitch.

The rebranded 1sts, under the leadership of Sam Holloway, shared South Division 2 of the Davis Wood Hockey League with two very strong University of Exeter sides and a number of other potentially tricky opponents. Uni E ran away with the league, winning it by 10 clear points, but the Y&S 1sts have the distinction of being the only team to have inflicted a defeat on them and that in their own backyard. The 1sts eventually took the initiative from Uni D by beating them at home with two games to go and clinched the 2nd promotion place with a comfortable home win in the last game of the season. This team in particular has achieved a high degree of cohesiveness and player availability this year which hopefully can be maintained and taken forward into the higher league.

The A team, Captain Calum Gray, also gained promotion, at the first attempt having been relegated last year, by finishing in 2nd place in South East Division 2. They managed a 100% record at home and at Christmas were comfortably topping the table and looking favourites to win their league. However, a couple of unexpected away losses against lowly opposition, including the infamous "Battle of Minehead", meant they finished 4 points behind worthy champions Okehampton. The 2s certainly knew exactly where lay the opposition's net as they amassed 120 goals at an average of nearly 5½ per game. This was matched by a niggardly defence who conceded only 37 goals including a miserly 9 at fortress Gryphon. This vast superiority in goal-difference confirmed that promotion was achieved at Chard A with two games remaining.

My own team, the B side, had a somewhat disjointed and troubled season and seemed to be the main victims of the availability and selection issues, using a total of 44

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players over the 27 selections made. Two home wins in the first two matches meant we briefly, if somewhat flatteringly, topped South East Division 2, the same league as the 2nds, but things went downhill from there and by Christmas we were looking favourites for the drop. However, a mini-revival in the New Year allowed us to amass enough points to achieve safety from relegation with 2 games to go; eventually finishing 9th, one better than last year. Worryingly, the 3rds relied very heavily on their home form, earning 17 of their 21 points at the Gryphon. On a more positive note, a number of youngsters have performed heroically for the team under difficult circumstances, including Greg Wheeler, Pat Turner and Ashley Glover, who now seem like old-timers, and Brodie Bowes, Alex Tam and most recently Johnny Ireland. Many of these have also featured successfully in 2nd team squads.

Having been promoted as the 5ths at the end of last year, their first season in South Eastern District 1 was always going to be difficult for Kern Vicker's C team. Also, being last in the pecking order, they had to play several games with less than a full team having been decimated, often at short notice. However, they stuck gamely to their task and achieved safety with 3 games to go thanks to Teign A obligingly handing them a 5-0 walkover. The middle/bottom half of the 4ths league was particularly close; they eventually finished 7 of 11 but one more point would have moved them up to 5th. Nevertheless, a very solid start to life in South Eastern District 1 but, as with the B team, home form was crucial with only 3 of their final total of 24 points being earned on their travels.

Finally, on behalf of each of the Men's captains, I would like to extend thanks to the following:

- Leah Wilkinson and the other coaches who should take some credit for their significant contribution to a successful season.
- The club umpires, and their organisation by Umpire Co-ordinator Bill Bibby, without whom no home game would be possible. As a club, we are blessed with a set of highly competent and impartial umpires who exhibit none of the idiosyncrasies we sometimes meet on our travels!!
- Fixture Secretary Jon Stride who was obliged to put in a lot of extra effort mid-season to sort out the fallout from matches cancelled due to bad weather

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and floodlight failure in November and December. As far as I am aware, this all went seamlessly.

- To Chairman Keith Walters, Secretary Jo McDermid, Treasurer Libby Walters and the other members of the club 'Engine-room' without whom the club could not exist. The various teams are the visible side of the club but it is the unsung heroes in the background who make it all possible.

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