

# **GHA AGM**

## **Schools Competitions Report - 2019/20**

### **SUMMARY**

The tournaments generally ran well this season with on-the-day help from a small but committed group (thank you Shaun & Ian!). The girls tournaments tend to be more popular than the boys which is a result of more girls playing hockey at school in the County. Rather than list out competition winners & runners up that can be found in Committee Meeting reports, I thought I would detail the highs & lows of the season and highlight and some specific points.

### **HIGHS & LOWS**

It was great to see Hatherop Castle join in the schools tournaments this season. And there was also an opportunity with the both the boys & girls tournaments to play at new locations including Cheltenham Ladies College and Rendcomb. The former were particularly helpful in facilitating a last minute venue change for our two largest tournaments. I have also received some lovely feedback from the schools saying how much the children enjoy the tournaments.

On the low side, it has been extremely difficult to source umpires particularly for the younger tournaments and so we have had to ask schools to provide an umpire themselves. This is not always easy for schools (particularly state schools) to accommodate and often schools turn up with only one member of staff. This can cause issues if a child is injured during the course of a game.

Schools self-selecting into which tier they enter has also resulted in some negative feedback from schools. When schools are repeatedly winning several age categories, other schools feel that they should be made to move up a band. The counter argument is that if these schools move up they will be smashed by the stronger competition in the higher tier and the result will be less hockey played. Until England Hockey change the rules I can only continue to remind schools that it is up to each establishment to choose.

### **POINTS TO CONSIDER**

Within our county, we have a number of teams that have been successful and made it to the National Finals stages. For some schools this is a regular event (Dean Close) and they are in a fortunate position financially for this not to raise any issues. For the more recent successes (KLB), the joy of getting through to Nationals comes with an added financial burden. I have asked for some feedback from KLB:

- The entry fee alone was £140!
- In addition, teams are expected to have TWO full kits with each player having the same number on each. This is not something that state schools have! KLB did a lots of fundraising and the children subsidised a new kit so that they had two & were able to keep one as a souvenir.
- Transport - The cost of taking a coach up for the day was £900.
- No food was provided and whilst people could bring their own, this was an added expense.
- There was no team certificate or medal for getting through to the Nationals which the school felt was a shame.

Moving forwards I think as a Committee we should be looking at how we can help. Perhaps schools that are successful at this level could be invited to "apply" for a grant to help with overall costs or even just travel costs. Any awards that would be made could be determined by financial need but the application process would be open to all schools.

Lisa Lundie  
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