

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

The past year has been an eventful and progressive period for our Adult League Hockey activities. This report provides an overview of the key events, challenges and future directions for our leagues.

From hard-earned promotions won in pulsating title races to battling hard to avoid relegation the 2023/24 league season was one to remember for hockey's committed participants in London.

Key Events

The London Hockey League continues to provide a competitive and enjoyable environment for players of all skill levels. Our leagues comprises multiple divisions, ensuring that there is a suitable level of competition for everyone involved.

The closeness of the competitions this season was such that the winners and promotion spots in 14 of the 29 London divisions were decided only in the last two rounds of fixtures! One can imagine that scenes of jubilation played out across London as the hockey season reached its dramatic conclusion.

Men's League – Division Winners and Runners-Up


**LONDON
HOCKEY**

**Men
2023-24**

Division	Division Winner	Runner-Up
Premier	<u>West Herts M1</u>	Southgate M2
1	Epsom M1	Teddington M2
2N	Southgate M3	Croxtyx M1
2S	Old Cranleigh M2	Tulse Hill & Dulwich M2
3N	Indian Gymkhana M2	Spencer M4
3S	Epsom M2	Spencer M5
4E	Tulse Hill & Dulwich M4	Spencer M6
4NW	Hampstead & Westminster Thirsts	Richmond Griffins
4SW	Barnes M3	Epsom M3
5E	King's & Allyn's M2	Tulse Hill & Dulwich M5
5NW	Old Merchant Taylors M3	Winchmore Hill & Enfield M1
5SW	Barnes M4	Epsom Mustangs
6E	Wapping M8	Tulse Hill & Dulwich M6
6NW	West Hampstead M8	Ealing M1
6SW	Wimbledon M6	Barnes Beavers

Congratulations to all of the Division winners and runners up, with a special mention for **West Herts M1** on securing promotion to EHL Conference East on the final day of the season, holding off the challenge of Southgate M2 by two points. West Herts' playing record was P22, W16, D5, L1 and GD +42.

The 2023/24 season saw 173 Men's teams participating across 15 divisions in 1,876 fixtures of which 36 were forfeited. Only two men's teams, Imperial Medics M1 and Old Kingstonian M1, withdrew during the season.

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

Women's League – Division Winners and Runners-Up


**LONDON
HOCKEY**

**Women
2023-24**

Division	Division Winner	Runner-Up
Premier	<u>Wapping W1</u>	Barnes W2
1	West Hampstead W1	Surbiton W4
2N	Spencer W3	Harrow W1
2S	Surbiton Sparks	Wanderers W2
3N	Richmond W2	Wanderers W5
3S	Teddington W3	Spencer W6
4E	Tulse Hill & Dulwich W3	London Academicals W2
4NW	PHC Chiswick W3	Hendon & Mill Hill W1
4SW	Teddington W4	Barnes W5
5E	Wanderers W7	Spencer W9
5NW	PHC Chiswick W4	Ealing W2
5SW	Epsom W5	Old Cranleigh W4
6E	Wapping W6	London Wayfarers Wolves
6SW	Sunbury & Walton Hawks W3	Indian Gymkhana W1

Congratulations to all of the Division winners and runners up, with a deserved mention for **Wapping W1** on their promotion to EHL Conference East in their final match of the season, finishing level with Barnes W2 on points with a better goal difference – by just one goal! Wapping's playing record was P22, W16, D5, L1 and GD +41 – almost identical to West Herts' record in the Men's League.

The 2023/24 season saw 165 Women's teams competing across 14 divisions in 1,848 fixtures (42 were forfeited). No women's teams withdrew during the season, although a few struggled for player availability for much of the season and especially in the New Year.

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

Top Goalscorers



**LONDON
HOCKEY**

**Top
Goalscorers
2023-24**

M	Player	Club	FG	PC	PS	Total
1	Max SPEDDING	Old Tonbridgian's	24	10	0	34
2	Toby MICKLEWRIGHT	Ealing	26	6	1	33
3=	Leonard POSTHUMUS MEYJES	Hampstead & Westminster	26	0	0	26
3=	Jake WIGHAM	London Royals	25	1	0	26
3=	Thomas BACON	Spencer	23	3	0	26

W	Player	Club	FG	PC	PS	Total
1	Catherine SMITH	West Hampstead	27	6	0	33
2=	Victoria ANDERSON	Berrylands	24	2	0	26
2=	Kirsten MEEHAN	Hampstead & Westminster	21	5	0	26
4=	Alexandra MASSEY	Wanderers	24	1	0	25
4=	Charlotte DODDS	Wanderers	20	5	0	25

Congratulations to our top goalscorers Max Spedding (34 goals, Old Tonbridgians M1, Men's Division 3 South) and Catherine Smith (33 goals, West Hampstead W1, Women's Division 1) on their fantastic goalscoring exploits this season.

Indoor Hockey

- Men's Winners - **Old Cranleighan**
- Women's Winners - **Southgate**

London's indoor competitions took place at Whitgift School over the weekend of 16-17 December.

The two winners progressed to the Division 2 South qualifiers held in January 2024.

Southgate qualified for the Division 2 National round where the team finished fourth and qualified automatically for the Division 2 South event in 2025.

Last year's London men's winners, Southgate, won the national Division 1 competition and were promoted to the Super 6s Premier Division in 2025.

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

Challenges Faced

The members of the ALMC are committed to providing effective management and governance for all adult league hockey activities in the London area in line with England Hockey policies and guidelines.

While there have been many League successes on and off the field, the ALMC also faced a number of challenges:

Complaints

- There was a rise in the number of low-level **complaints** after matches had taken place, often related either to on-field conduct by players or umpires/umpiring standards.
- The ALMC asked clubs not to complain about poor conduct when captains and umpires are present and able to manage and control such behaviour.
- More **serious issues** should be brought to our attention or perhaps necessitate a Disrepute complaint being raised with England Hockey, which has professional staff to handle such matters.

Poor Conduct

- Clubs were reminded that **umpires** should control the game – keeping it safe for everyone – and use cards if necessary to sanction players or coaches, including captains if they fail to control their team appropriately.
- At the time of writing England Hockey is working on a revised **Code of Conduct** that will be released before the 2024/25 season commences.

Fair Selection and Player Eligibility

- Clubs have reasonable **flexibility** in managing player selection and must select players for their League teams in hierarchical order based on their availability, with the understanding that players should not be selected at a lower level than their Regular Team to strengthen a lower ranked team.
- The ALMC conducted analyses to identify **violations** of fair selection.
- The ALMC imposed several **sanctions** on teams that fielded players who were ineligible to play, including players that either registered or transferred too late to play (after 1st February).

Weather Disruptions

- On two weekends (late Nov/early Dec) we faced significant weather-related challenges that led to significant **disruption** and the postponement of most matches.
- Despite these disruptions, most clubs managed to reschedule games effectively within specified timeframes to ensure the completion of League fixtures.

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

Closure of Battersea Park Pitches

- Safety issues at Battersea Park, with the lines having sunk below the level of the pitch surface and causing the ball to rise sharply on impact and leading to injuries, saw **temporary closure** from early February until mid-March, during which time an in-fill solution was implemented to bring the pitches back into service.
- Thanks to everyone who worked to overcome this issue by rearranging or moving fixtures.

Cancelled Fixtures – Pitch Costs:

- From time to time clubs have come to the ALMC about recovering **pitch costs** incurred when fixtures are cancelled. Our response has always been that it's a matter between the clubs concerned and the ALMC does not intervene between clubs on such matters.
- The League Regulations provide clubs with the opportunity to recoup pitch and hospitality costs incurred in the event that a fixture is forfeited. An away team may, however, need to cover pitch expenses for a rearranged fixture.

Club Appointed Umpires

- A new Club Umpiring **strategy** was launched to improve umpiring operations across London hockey. Clubs are directed towards using the London Hockey officiating umpire development forms to provide additional **feedback** where appropriate.
- Every club should assign correctly **qualified** and experienced umpires wherever possible. All umpires must be registered members of the England Hockey Officiating (EHO) club. An unregistered umpire can complete their registration up to 24 hours after the relevant fixture has been completed.

Technology Enhancements

- **GMS:** A working group was formed in January by England Hockey to address the concerns of the 8 Areas on the lack of progress in improving the functionality of GMS. The group has three focus areas, with improvement due ahead of the new season:
 - **Matchday Processes:** Need to simplify each step and ensure that the process can be completed quickly and easily, with compatibility for different types of device.
 - **Transfer Process:** Issues with transfers outside deadlines, lack of reports/visibility for competition administrators, players re-registering instead of transferring and inconsistent alerts/emails.
 - **Data Issues:** Difficulty accessing and understanding GMS data is a major hurdle. Work is ongoing to improve data accuracy and accessibility plus reporting capabilities.
- **Viewable Match Sheets:** Since February 2024 teams have been able to view team and match sheets for their fixtures on the London Hockey website, which has assisted in identifying incorrect information.

Looking Ahead

- **Balancing Competitiveness and Inclusivity:** Ensuring that the league remains competitive while also being inclusive for players of all skill levels is a delicate balance and continuous efforts are made to address this through tailored programs and feedback from participants.
 - The ALMC is introducing **Development Teams** in London for the upcoming season following discussions with a number of clubs.
 - Development Teams are allowed more flexibility in player selection for a club's lowest-ranking team, playing in Grade 5 only.
 - The aim is to enable new, young or returning players to gain league experience and to develop their ability and confidence.
 - The role of any experienced players selected is to provide support and guidance to developing players.
 - The trial is aimed at encouraging teams that would not ordinarily play adult league hockey, rather than relaxing the rules for existing adult teams.
 - The initiative received positive feedback overall and will help to facilitate development-level hockey across London.
- **League Regulations:** An annual review of the Adult Regulations League Regulations is conducted by the 8 Areas in conjunction with England Hockey.
 - The Regulations have been reviewed by the 8 Areas ahead of the 2024/25 season.
 - Fair Selection section updated in light of the experiences and feedback of clubs and Leagues nationwide.
 - Youth Experience Player (YEP) section removed from Fair Selection as this had created a loophole that was being exploited in some Areas.
- **Sanctions:** The ALMC has always strived to deliver fair and enjoyable hockey for all participants regardless of the level that they play at. In the recent post-covid seasons we have been lenient in imposing sanctions at some Grades, including points deductions and fines. From next season we anticipate being stricter with teams and players at all levels in expecting their compliance with the Adult League Regulations. Some examples might include:
 - Full completion of GMS team sheets prior to match, including shirt numbers for all teams;
 - Correct and timely completion of GMS match sheets, including all goals and yellow cards;
 - All players to be correctly registered in GMS and transfers completed properly;
 - Rearranged fixtures to be played within the correct time frame (rather than being delayed to suit one or other team).

AGM Report 2024 – Adult League Hockey

Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to all clubs for their continued support and we would like to thank all of the dedicated players, officials, volunteers, coaches and spectators who have played a crucial role in the success of the Leagues again this year. Your enthusiasm and commitment is greatly appreciated.

My personal thanks to the members of the London Area League Management Committee for their continuing hard work on behalf of London's hockey clubs: *Chris Savory, David Lloyd-Williams, Georga Reed, Kam Roopra, Liz Laird, Rich Chere and Sherry Parnell.*

Conclusion

The Adult League Hockey activities in 2023/24 have been a resounding success, marked by high participation, competitive spirit and engagement. We look forward to building on this success in the coming year and continuing to provide a premier hockey experience for all participants.

The past year has been a period of growth and development for our Adult League Hockey activities. The achievements made are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our players, coaches and administrative staff. As we look forward to the next year, we are committed to building on these successes and addressing the challenges to further enhance our league.

Paul Mangat
Chair, London ALMC
17 June 2024