



## **South Central AGM - Masters Report**

Overall the profile and participation in Masters hockey continues to increase each season, though there are concerns regarding team numbers in league hockey.

### **EH Masters Club Championships**

Once again there was plenty of enthusiasm from South Central clubs for the age group competitions. These appear to be excellent opportunities for teams to reform and relive past glories. Across all age groups and genders over fifty five teams entered from SC clubs and we had some successes.

MO40 - Amersham & Chalfont (tier 2 -

MO50 - Reading (tier 1

WO45 - Wycombe (tier 2

WO55 - Bournemouth & Dorset Wanderers (tier 1

### **EH Area Masters Championships**

After a hesitant start over the past two years, representative hockey has started to take off across the age groups. A big thank you to all the volunteers who have come forward to organise trials, coach and manage the teams. As you'll see below we still have a few gaps to fill and we are always in need of more support. If you want to get involved, please get in touch.

This season, our Ladies were once again first out of the block in term of organizing and selection events, all of the organizing team deserve a big pack on the back, well done.

Disappointingly, for another year South Central failed to enter a Men's Over 35 team into the competition. As the feeder for Masters hockey, this is a vital age group to get involved in Masters hockey. I believe we may now have found a volunteer to take the organization on, which is what really drives attendance. Also this year, sadly the Men's Ov60s ended up withdrawing very close to the event due to lack of availability.

Our Ov75 men started their campaign for the first time this year. We were so close to being to field a big enough squad to compete. Unfortunately, due to the way the exemption process fell we didn't quite get there alone. Both London and South East were unable to field teams and eventually a combined team was entered. It is worth mentioning that over 9 of the 16 man squad were South Central players.

Results from this season's area competitions:

#### **Women**

O35 - 5th

O40 - 2nd

O45 - 3rd

O50 - tbc 28th/29<sup>th</sup> June

O55 - 3rd

O60 - 7th

O65 - 6th



## **South Central AGM - Masters Report**

### **Men**

O35 – No Entry

O40 - 6th

O45 – 4th

O50 – 4th

O55 - 7th

O60 - Withdrawn

O65 – 8th

O70 – 2nd

O75 – Combined LDN/SC/SE 1st

### **Championship Hosting**

Once again South Central were asked to host two competitions over the same weekend. Men's Over 45 at Basingstoke and Men's Over 75s at Bournemouth. Both venues were used last year and once again the local teams from Bournemouth Headed up by John Stuart and Basingstoke headed up by Miranda Smith (whose son just happened to organise the South Central Men's over 45 team) did an exceptional job. Without umpires of course we would be lost and once again David Boyle and the South Central team came up trumps. Thank you everyone involved.

Any other clubs out there wanting to host please get in contact.

### **Masters League Hockey**

The South Masters league was formed two seasons ago to co-ordinate masters league hockey for teams from the London, South Central and South East areas. On the men's side, last season there were fifty teams spread across five divisions and three age groups (O40/50/60). Matches take place on a Saturday. Women's matches take place on a Sunday and last season there were twenty teams, across four divisions and two age groups (O35/45).

A worrying trend over the season were the number of matches officially conceded - sixty in the men's league and sixteen in the women's. In addition a number of postponed matches were not rearranged. There appears to be a number of reasons for this:

- clubs pulling players from masters teams to fill gaps in adult teams;
- players unwilling to play two matches at weekends when there are cup competitions or representative trials;
- Shortage of players due to injuries and holiday commitments.

One positive piece of news is that the Wessex Supervets Fixtures Alliance has agreed to come under the South league umbrella. This will add seventeen teams at the MO50 and MO60 level for the 2025/26 season. The bad news is the continuing decline at MO40 level, with only ten teams remaining. Those with long memories will recall the Wessex Masters MO40s league. At one point in the early 2000s (?) it consisted of three divisions and over thirty five teams.



### **South Central AGM - Masters Report**

It's not clear at this stage what the answer is to attract more clubs to run masters teams on a weekly basis in league competitions. One option may be to have just a single minimum qualifying age, thirty five or forty, and allow a natural pyramid of ability to emerge, as with Adult leagues.

John Stuart  
South Central Masters

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