

North Masters Hockey 2015-16: Report for North AGM, Monday 6 June

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of Masters hockey in the North this season has been a continued strong growth in participation. Regular Ladies' coaching/training events and tournaments, and over-60's men's "Gatherings" are now well established, with the Ladies' O-60 team making its debut this season. For the younger men, the Northern Inter-Counties tournament ran for its second season with O-40 and O-50 competitions, and Bill Barton of Leeds & Yorkshire has put in a heroic amount of effort to establish regular coaching/training sessions open to all across the North. For the first time

It is not just the base of the pyramid of players that is growing. North teams have performed strongly in the regional tournaments so far this year. 4 of the 7 tournaments completed so far have ended with titanic North-South clashes at the top. The Men's O-40 lost their final on flicks to the South; the Women's O-50 were 2nd to South on goal difference, and at the time of writing the result is eagerly awaited of the N v S final of the Men's O-50 competition. At the apex of the pyramid, the North was strongly represented in the highly successful England mens and womens teams playing in the World Masters and Grand Masters Cup and Trophy competitions in Australia in April and May.

After a torrid season, wrecked by a horrific leg/ankle break, David Ewing of York/North was in May appointed as Secretary of the World Grand Masters Hockey Association. Many congratulations to David!

But the undoubted highlight and best point of the whole Masters season was the full recovery made by Roger Lomas from his heart attack on the pitch. I am deeply grateful to Roger for all his help and support in keeping Masters moving and in particular for representing the North at England Hockey during a season in which work has prevented me being as active as I'd wish. Thank heavens for defibrillators! (Now mandatory at all England Hockey Masters' events).

Tony Taig

5 May 2016