

Wimbledon Hockey Club

Report of the Committee for Season 2002-2003

Chairman's introduction

This year, a good deal of the report is a direct cut & paste of the various contributions I have received from the Committee Members, Captains and other active Club Members. By doing this, I am hoping to capture more of the flavour, character and identity of the individuals and teams that combine to make the Club what it is.

Within the Club, there is an abundance of diverse talent – way beyond hockey prowess - and I am eager to tap into all of it, so that the membership as a whole benefits from the gifts and the energy that we all possess. With that in mind, it is proposed that a number of personnel changes are made to the Committee with new, younger members becoming more involved, and other individuals, who want to play a more active role in the running of the Club, are being encouraged to support specific Committee members in key areas (e.g. social functions, website).

The magic of a Club like Wimbledon Hockey Club is that **it is ours** to shape and evolve as we wish. In fact, it is more than *ours* – it is *us*! By our active participation, each and every one of us makes the Club what it is. That involves the investment of some time... and its worth every second spent. The rewards, in terms of competitive team sport, achievement and friendship are staggering and often something we come to take for granted.

It is because the lifeblood of The Club is so personal to us that it is so much more special than a Holmes Place or an LA Fitness. Simply paying for a “sporting service” wouldn't feel the same. Finances, however, are a key component of amateur sport today and The Wimbledon Club, with its excellent facilities and paid staff, is no exception. I would just like to explain in broad terms how the finances of the Wimbledon Club work for us as hockey players and also touch on some of the growing financial pressures that we have to manage going forward.

Recently, you will have received the Wimbledon Club's Annual Report for 2002/03. If you examined the Profit & Loss Account to end September 2002, you will have noticed an Operating Loss of £176,000 for the year. This is quite normal because we are in the enviable position of being able to generate significant revenue during the Wimbledon Championships each summer. Last year, the Fortnight Surplus was £323,000, which covered the Operating Loss and, after Interest Paid and Tax, left us with a profit of £96,000 for the year.

That profit is mainly used for capital investment and, in recent years, we hockey players have benefited from the relaying of KCS astro, the construction of RPH astro and the building of the new Clubhouse with the following headline terms:

1998	New Clubhouse	Social launch pad for Saturday nights (bar, showers, etc.)
	Cost to the Wimbledon Club:	£1.3m

1998	KCS astro re-laid	10 years prime-time pitch allocation for matches, training and Juniors. Cost to the Wimbledon Club: £20,000 (one-off cost) plus £22,650 p.a. (Approx. £24,650 p.a.)
2000	RPH construction	7 years prime-time pitch allocation up to 200 hours p.a. Cost to the Wimbledon Club: £75,000 (Approx. £10,000 p.a.)

This investment has enabled all of our teams to play their matches and train on astro. Plus, of course, there have been many other investments for the other sections, including relaying of tennis courts, cricket covers, and machinery for the grounds man.

In recent years, we have introduced additional training nights, which has led to additional pitch hire costs.

Starting this season, the Wimbledon Club now also makes available £5,000 per section p.a. (i.e. £5,000 for Men's hockey and £5,000 for Ladies' Hockey) for sports development, typically to pay for coaching.

If you do the sums, you will quickly see how much we receive for the subs that we pay each year.

Over and above our subs, we need to raise additional funds. This is because the successful development of the Club and, in particular, our flagship – the 1st XI – will increasingly require significant cash to pay for coaching at the required standard.

In recent years, we have been fortunate to have an existing member – Wilber – coach the 1st team at a relatively attractive rate. For 2 years now, Wilber and others have been working hard to recruit a new and highly qualified coach to take our 1st XI to the next level. This has proved a difficult task and, when impressive candidates have been interested, we have simply not been able to meet their fee expectations, which have been in excess of £10,000 p.a.

This is why we have the 200 Club, social functions and the £100 per team supplementary contribution. They help us to plan for a successful future and spread the burden throughout the whole Club. Sometimes, people who don't attend training or who don't play in the 1st XI might question why they should be contributing in this way. Well, that's where you have to take a step back and look at the bigger whole. We all benefit from having a successful 1st XI. It helps to attract good players into all of our sides and it makes the Club a more invigorating place to be. The actual sums per person are really quite small and normally involve a party of some description!

Looking to the future, we should all be thinking about Wimbledon Hockey Club in terms of our personal active contribution. Everybody is busy these days, so the more the load is shared, the easier it is and the stronger the fabric of the Club.

Immediate priorities are recruiting a new 1st XI coach and attracting more new young players to Wimbledon at 1st and 2nd team level. Anybody and everybody should help with this and our existing younger members especially must work hard to bring other high quality players to Wimbledon next season. It has already been suggested that some tours to Universities be arranged to establish a natural link with Wimbledon. This is an excellent initiative and I trust that plans are already being made.

Team Reviews

1st XI, (Brett Gillman)

High Points:

Encouraging performances from newcomers into the team, Dave Shutt, Dale, Justin, Jacko, Nick Davies.
Strong defensive record despite lowly position in league.
Strong recovery in second half of season achieving safety from relegation zone and possible mid table finish.

Low Points:

Fitness levels slow to get to appropriate levels
Availability (annual problem)
Not scored enough goals.....
Performance/availability of senior players

League position: currently 9th out of 12 (lowest possible finish is 10th)

Target next year: not to have to struggle with relegation, when we deserve better. Need to be fitter, earlier in the season, aim for top 4 in the league, aim to attract some younger talent into the club. Once we have attracted more high quality young players to the Club and appointed a coach for the medium term, then we can seriously aim to win the league and obtain National League status.

2nd XI (Paul Gyles)

The 2ndXI are without doubt an unrecognisable team to the one that started the season, both in the personal and the manner of their performances. The team's ambition is to win promotion back to the Premier League and to provide a good launch pad for new players to move up to the 1stXI.

- Due to initial captain Charlie Revill maintaining a 1stXI spot, it was not until Paul Gyles took over the reigns in December that the team developed a settled pattern.
- The new structure provides more of an opportunity for players coming up the club, rather than those going down. Youth was never so much in evidence in what is the youngest team in the club by far, with quite often an average age of sub-25. Barring the captain, this is the fittest side in the club too!
- The team spirit proved to be the backbone of the side, never emphasised more than training on Wednesday when the 2ndXI has not lost to the 1stXI in the end of session match all season.
- The successful integration of new members into the squad: Dan Mules, Justin Ablett, Matt Stevenson, Duncan Morris, Malcolm Lockhart and Kev Alberty as well as promotion through the ranks of Thatuka Manasa.
- The following players all moved up to the 1stXI this season from the 2ndXI: Matt Stevenson, Dave Shutt, Dale Vearnecombe, Malcolm Lockhart, Sandy Bhogal, Rob Jackson, Justin Ablett & Thatuka Manasa.

- There were many fine performances this season, but to pick just a few:
 - Thatuka Manasa coming up through the club as a new goal scoring sensation
 - The emergence of 22 year old Duncan Morris as a quality right back
 - The energy and skill of Matt Stevenson
 - The skill and flair of Sandy Bhogal
 - And the immense contribution both on and off the field of Robert Jackson
- The 2ndXI still has designs on the top 4 play-offs which will be a considerable achievement for a team lying 10th at Christmas. While the squad is strong enough now to have pushed for promotion, the side has only really gelled in the second half of the season. There is certainly no-one to fear next season and the clear goal must be a return to the Premier League and the highest possible standard of 2nd XI hockey.
- Funny moments are too plentiful in a team featuring the Twinnies, Tina Ablett, Ginger Malcs, Jacko and The Cone. However, the one recurring theme is if you hear the words "Twinnie Olympics", standby for action!
- And finally thanks to the captains: Charlie Revill (1 match), Neil Dobson (0 matches), Sandy Bhogal (4 matches), Tom Manwaring (1 match), Rob Jackson (nearly 1 match) from myself who captained the rest of the time. A special note to Charlie Revill who organised the team for the 1st half of the season, whilst playing for the 1stXI, and to Rob Jackson for his Vice Captain work in the 2nd half of the season. Also thanks to our many club umpires this season, Dobbo, Bean, Mango, Daryl to name but a few.

3rd XI

To follow.

4th XI (Daryl Collings)

Two fantastic results, 12-0 over Hounslow and 8-2 over Richmond, highlighted a season that might have been rather than being the icing on a season of success. Sliding to 11 defeats on the way to mid-table obscurity and missing the playoffs for the 1st time in many years has been a disappointment.

The style and quality of hockey has been good; of those 11 defeats the 4's led 7 games, created and missed enough chances to win most of games and where only outplayed in 2 games all season. Although not a successful season in the league the team have succeeded in achieving a season of enjoyable hockey.

Thatuka Manasa (Tuks) had a big influence on the team in the 1st few weeks. Our pleasure in seeing him rise through the teams as top scorer was only tempered by regret that we did not keep his early performances under wraps.

Lots of new faces to the club like Tim Atkinson, Richard Cox, Craig Sutherland, Lenny and Tom Lazur have settled and become regulars in the team. Old favourites continued to offer loyal service. Chris Lewis slid from centreforward to leftback over the season, but still managed to be in the running for top goal scorer until the situation was realised and corrected by the team.

A pleasant contrast to cursing of missed opportunities was provided in some of the lighter moments. After years of straining at the seams, Hugh Morgan

finally split out of his shirt against St Albans - by popular consent, Mango is on schedule for a similar outpouring next season.

Other targets for next year - more of the same style of enjoyable hockey but improved fitness and conversion rate to improve the league position. Despite a hotly contested leadership contest Dazza is to continue as team administrator.

5th XI (Jim Davis)

- High point: - winning the league again
- Low points - nearly losing a game
- Exceptional individual contributions - there aren't any as there is no 'I' in this team
- Humorous events - the time we nearly lost a game
- Targets for next year - beat the 1st XI
- Issues to raise - any competition out there? Getting a bit boring

Think that's it, hope this doesn't come across as too arrogant?

6th XI

To follow.

Sparrows (Simon Close)

High point: Beating Richmond in the second game to go top of the league.

Low points: Losing the next five games and being 9th in the league at present.

League position: 9/12 but working on it.

Humorous events: On pre-season tour to Hamburg, Squeals telling Podger over breakfast about the Scandinavian Moose they befriended the night before.

Target for next year: Another good tour, better availability, practice our short corner routines, sign Thierry Henry, and a top 4 finish.

Millers

League position: top by four points - one challenger and it will probably go to the wire

Low points: there is a considerable amount of traveling in this league, which some are not so keen on - otherwise few "lows".

Exceptional contributions by individuals:

1) Colin Campbell for becoming a really useful keeper in only two seasons, without whom the team would not have enjoyed the success we have

2) Umpire Tara Singh who has turned out Sat after Sat - despite the traveling - and raised the umpiring and hence the quality and enjoyment of all involved, in every game he has whistled.

Humorous events: Hobbs whilst being tackled round the waist by someone clearly qualified in Sumo wrestling. After severe provocation, he threw his stick down and responded by winning the bout of said wrestling and then, with the oppo grounded, Hobbs spent a few minutes behind the goal.

Target for next year: maintain a good position in Wessex Masters Div 2.

Nightmares

To follow.

Indoor

- No activity this year.

Mixed

Round 3 of the Mixed Cup is due to be played on 23rd March so we will know at the AGM whether we are still on the long march to Milton Keynes....

Round 1 was played on KCS against Gillingham Anchorians back in January. Junior Grayser was playing in the oppo which made for some entertaining family related banter throughout the match, but that was the best comeback Gillingham could muster. We won quite comfortably having taken a 2 – 0 lead within the first 10 minutes thanks to an uncharacteristic energetic start from the whole team. Our South African guests Greg (The ladies first team coach) and his missus notched 4 goals between them, a cracking solo effort from club gay icon Daley and a couple of other scores made for a healthy tally in favour. Gillingham clawed a couple back once the hangovers started taking their tolls, but otherwise part time keeper Matty did all that was asked.

Round 2 was expected to be a tougher challenge when we faced Wimborne Wayfairers who knocked us out in the first round last year. Not only did we go on to be runners up in the final of the plate thanks to this defeat, but this year was to be a different story because most of us were not sweating neat vodka and sambuka this year!

Selection was looking shaky with two injuries on Saturday afternoon and Jimmy Floyd's lack of decisiveness looked as though we might not have a team to take down to Poole. However, some excellent press gang work in the bar resulted in FLUD, Rob Twinnie, Kiwi, and Jimmy Floyd all playing. Bogs had an excellent ladies contingent, including first team striker Corny and two ladies who happened to be down there on the piss. Monkey had a stormer at the back but once he passed the reigns back to FLUD he fancied a wobble up front .. convinced he could score more than Jimmy .. and surprise surprise was proved right .. two goals in the last ten minutes would have meant a total of 14 goals throughout the match had he played as much time as Jimmy apparently!

Corny notched a couple, Kiwi scored the best/luckiest reverse stick chip ever witnessed (yeah it was a shot wasn't it Kiwi??), Jimmy did eventually tickle one over the line, Monkey's couple and another display from Matty resulted in a comfortable win.

Let's hope we have won round 3 and then we're only a couple of games away from another piss up, I mean finals weekend, in Milton Keynes.

Communication (Paul Gyles)

This season has represented perhaps the toughest yet for the web team. After 3 exceedingly lax years, Mango and Gylesy suddenly found themselves under a mountain of work in their real work lives. There is still some feeling that a snitch had informed their respective employers that they spent many a work hour doing wimbledonhockey.net, instead of managing hedge funds or advancing the digital television world. Nevertheless, the site just about kept on running, although it was not updated as much as all would have liked. The main saviours were Charlie Revill, who maintained the site and David Alford, who developed

his web skills editing and authoring. Also, a big thank you to Barnes Graham's Managing Director Tom Barnes who takes time out to send all our club emails in a new customised format. Our sincere thanks go to these guys. The final member of the web crew, Mr Creed, was strangely subdued, except for one very strange article about Jim Davis's car.

Wimbledonhockey.net has always been about communicating inter-club and allowing club members the opportunity to express their true feelings. At its inception the site was revolutionary in publishing a match report from every team, and whilst only a few other clubs even attempt this, other sites have certainly caught up. As mentioned above, my work commitments do not allow me to spend the time required to create and maintain the site. After 4 years I also believe it requires fresh blood. Next year the site will be run by a new editor and I am pleased to report that many have offered their services. Through the summer the new web team will be trained up and the old packhorses can be put out to stud (actually Mango has already started that bit).

Thank you to everyone who continues to write reports, read the site and moan about their goal tally on Big Ron's Stats.

Social events (Paul Maskell)

Staged events this year have included:

- a Bar-B-Q at the beginning of the season;
- the Vets Christmas Lunch organized by Brian O'Connor;
- the Christmas party – disappointing turnout this year;
- an inter-gender top swapping event cunningly disguised as a "Rubik's Cube" party;
- the Vets Dinner organized by Tony Hawksley;
- the Stag dinner to be held after the AGM; and
- the **May Ball** to be held... in May.

It feels like this season has been a strange one socially at the club. Injuries have meant that several bar-hogs (myself included) having not been around as much as normal and, unusually, critical drinking mass has not always been achieved.

It's crucial that all team members are encouraged to spend time in the bar and attend the social events organised, and the Captains must take the lead with this, including attending themselves!

Next year, I will be handing over to a younger, hungry hound to take over responsibility for social events.

Finance (Neil Dobson)

We started the year with £301 in the main bank account, a strong kitty in the 200 Club and social kitties, and a small supply of playing kit left over.

Last year finished with several of the teams still owing their £100 supplementary contributions, though all bar the 5th XI paid up early in this season. The 5th XI contribution is still outstanding.

So far this year the collection of the team contributions has not been good and at the 12th March only 2 teams have paid. Combined with a policy of ordering a large supply of kit at the beginning of the season (in the hope of selling lots at trials and in the first few weeks – which

did not transpire), this has left us short of cash in the main account, but with a large stock of kit. We do however still have a good float in both the 200 club and social accounts.

Assuming the remaining team contributions can be collected I would expect us to start next year with approximately £800-850 in the account. We also have nearly £2500 worth of kit left over.

More financial detail is available at the end of this report.

Comments, ideas and proposals

Recruitment of high quality young players

- Arrange matches with Universities to establish links with Wimbledon;
- Advertise to the South African community in Southfields!
- Advertise to Australians coming over to teach in London.

Trials and early season selection

It is likely that the format of the trials day will be improved by making it more focused on new members and less time consuming. Also, it might be brought forward by a couple of weeks to allow more time for teams to integrate before the season starts. This will, however, depend upon the availability of captains for the trials day. One drawback is that some people will still be away on holiday in early September. Captains are also encouraged to communicate more freely with each other at the beginning of the season so that new players can be placed in the appropriate teams without unnecessary delay.

Pre-season fitness training

This is open to all and needs to be better advertised so that everybody who wishes to take part can do so. We are also looking into the possibility of arranging for someone outside the club to take some of the sessions and provide interested players with a fitness programme.

Match fees, petrol money etc.

As a minimum, match fees (and fines?) are used to pay for teas (home games) and beer (for the oppo, the umpires and your team). It is also suggested that regular drivers be offered petrol money from the kitty and any surplus is put towards the team supplementary contribution.

Kit

All players representing the Club should wear proper Wimbledon HC kit and captains should ensure that this is the case.

Sponsorship

This idea has been mooted for a couple of years now. It is another way that Wimbledon HC may be able to raise funds and put in place some of the long term objectives that have been discussed at previous AGM's. All members are encouraged to exploit any potential contacts and contact Sandy or Podger if this leads anywhere.

Juniors (Graham Atkins and Tom Lazur)

Junior hockey is being taken increasingly seriously by a number of clubs in our area. Surbiton, the previously unchallenged top local junior hockey club has now been joined (more or less) by Teddington and Guildford. Teddington and Surbiton are sucking talent from our catchment area.

Richmond have just started a junior section, although it is early days for them at the moment. The most successful junior sections are closely integrated into their senior sections. Without that close integration, it is very difficult to maintain momentum and foster a club esprit de corps.

What we have going for us is the enthusiasm of a few "amateurs" backed by Julie Questor and increasingly close links with Wimbledon KCS who supply quite a large number of our juniors and also it is to be hoped the possibility of further coaching support. However, the crunch is that junior boys with ambition will always go to clubs where they can improve their game. It is, perhaps, better to think of them not as "kids" but as young men. The key, therefore, is coaching.

Tom Lazur has been a lucky break for the junior section in that he has volunteered his coaching skills particularly at under-sixteen level and this has worked very well. Tom's team reports follows below.

Tom is 22 years of age and has coached at Bristol University and taken Bristol University Touring sides to South Africa. At the moment he is waiting to see if he is to be appointed as next season's Regional Development Squad Coach (U15/U17) for the South. He also coaches at indoor level. He is a serious and focused coach.

The senior club has already benefited from the junior section. Several of the juniors have played at senior level. The current crop at under-sixteen level is particularly strong and there are about twenty-five players in that group, many of whom are very talented indeed. It really depends on what the senior section wants which perhaps in turn begs questions as to the senior sections own ambitions.

At the moment there is an enthusiastic resource, but we need to continue to develop a coherent plan with support (umpiring volunteers) and, in particular, coaching (and that includes financial implications). One practical possibility is that particularly talented U16s should be invited to train with senior squads. This would help build bridges.

In summation, it is both an exciting possibility for the future and also a challenge.

U11:

The general skill level has increased and a first-choice team has emerged. The emphasis on the coaching has been to try to develop basic skills and understanding of the game. At present the quality of the younger members is not up to the standards displayed by other clubs. This is most likely due to the more competitive nature of the other clubs in the area, the relative experience of the children at other clubs, in addition to the different standards of coaching available at school level. The main issue is that 1-1.5 hour on a Sunday once a week is not sufficient to build up a good skill level in a single season. Our goal should be to develop the earlier age groups to a higher level so that, over the years, a consistently high standard is produced at U11. This age group should not need to be taught how to hold a stick for example. This is a big task considering that intake of novices is particularly high at this age group. The long term goal should be to make this age group competitive in competition with our neighbouring clubs. The solution is to focus our recruiting drive to the younger age groups.

U13/14:

Progress in these age groups has been helped significantly by Peter Truman and Mike Wright's efforts. It is clear that the standard of hockey is influenced by similar factors to the

U11 age group. My plan for next year is to apply a loose coaching framework based around key principles that I believe are central to playing a good standard of hockey both individually and collectively. This should answer the request from the other coaches to be 'brought up to date' on certain elements of 'the modern game'. I would like to commend the 2 coaches on their efforts this year, which have been exemplary. Unfortunately, the attitude of many of the squad members has been far from exemplary. Here there is a conflict between the desire to become competitive and the need to keep Sundays fun. It may be that this attitude factor cannot be overcome and that other clubs experience the same problems. It is hoped that over the years an attitude to the game can be introduced from the younger age groups which will filter through. The second aspect is that more challenging training sessions could provide a renewed vigour to the squads.

U16:

The progress of the U16s has been remarkable. Newly promoted to the top league in this area, they have reached the dizzy heights of 2nd in the league before slipping to 4th where they stand at present. This has been due to a high calibre of players and a keen desire to learn. The presence of the stronger players encourages a faster learning curve for the younger players and bodes well for next year's team. Our goal should be to finish mid-table this year and try to win the league next year. Development for this team could not be improved. The only issue is that there is nowhere for these players to go after this age group. Next year we plan to introduce an U18 team which will not only allow the players to develop beyond U16 level but will also provide a much-needed link between the junior and senior sections of the club.

Officers of the Club

First, a huge thank you for the contribution over the years of those who are stepping down from the Committee:

Mike Eley;
Neil Dobson;
Paul Maskell;
Tom Barnes;
Hugh Thomas; and
Graham Atkins.

New members of the Committee are proposed as follows:

Robert Jackson	Treasurer
Richard Charlesworth	Social
Simon Gray	Umpiring
Bobby Abdullah / Brian Pickup	Juniors
Rob Stone; and Adam Dobson.	

We are still looking for a permanent **Fixtures Secretary**. Those interested, please contact Sandy or Podger, or make yourselves known at the AGM.

In addition, active support will be provided by:

Tom Barnes e-communication

Robert Jackson Website
Justin Ablett
Malcolm Lockhart
Rob Twinnie

Gareth Nicholls Social TBC

Proposed Team Captains for 2003-2004

1 st	Dan Lavers
2 nd	Paul Gyles
3 rd	Al Fraser
4 th	Daryl Collings
5 th	Jim Davis
6 th	Dean Manicom
Sparrows	Simon Close
Millers	John Brooks
Nightmares	Tony Hawksley

Awards for 2002-2003

To be advised and awarded at the AGM:

Top scorer
Best team
Creed Jug (for outstanding performance in the bar)
Fyfe Cup (for the Best Vet)
Club Man of the Year
Ben Rea Trophy (for outstanding contribution to Wimbledon Hockey Club)

Nominations for Vice President

This year, there is one nomination for Vice President:

Graham Atkins

Joined XXX; captained the 3rd XI and has contributed enormously to the successful development of the Junior section. Also, the long suffering champion of the “chicken wire around the ground” cause.

Ed Cole

Joined XXX; played for and captained the 5th XI before captaining the Sparrows and latterly playing for the Millers. As the energetic link between the established Vets and the latest recruits, he now has a pivotal role as a tour organiser for the Flamingos.

And a big thank you to...

Sandy Bhogal – for his co-ordination and sorting out of almost everything! Outstanding energy, clarity and time management to keep all the wheels spinning when others just seem confused.

All the goalkeepers, especially Kelvin, Dobbo, Nick and Geoff, for their doubling-up, flexibility and willingness to help.

Creedy – for continuing to be Creedy.