



planet
HOCKEY
magazine

ROAD TO RIO

SOUTH ISLAND TOUR

EURO-HOCKEY-NEWS





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CONTENTS

ISSUE 2
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14

A WAPPINGLY GOOD IDEA

There is a delicious synergy to the fact that Wapping Hockey club was formed in the year Great Britain won an Olympic Gold medal and now the club is resident at the Olympic Stadium in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, but synergy is something that Wapping seem to thrive upon.

20

TEAMS TOUGH IT UP IN TORONTO

Eight teams, contesting one continental title and an automatic qualification spot for Rio 2016 - this is what the Pan-Am Games held in Toronto, Canada, meant to the teams taking part in the men's and women's hockey competition earlier this year.

28

GHANA'S NATIONAL TEAM DARES TO DREAM OF RIO

32

SEVEN KOOKABURRAS COACHING IN BRISBANE HOCKEY LEAGUE

38

DUTCH MEN HIT SUPER SIX, WHILE ENGLAND WOMEN TAKE IT TO THE WIRE

42

ALL ROADS LEAD TO RIO

With less than 300 days to go until the Rio 2016 Olympics burst into life, there now remain just two slots up for grabs in both the men's and women's events.

52

HOCKEY'S YIN & YANG

As Germany men's and women's teams failed to recapture their European Championship titles in London, both coaches admit that their main targets are still some distance on the horizon. Planet Hockey catches up with both the affable and mercurial Mülders and the erudite and academic Weise as they assess the state of their teams.

60

AUSTRALIAN HOCKEY LEAGUE

116

BATTLE OF THE SOUTH

136

BLACK STICKS SOUTH ISLAND TOUR

69

STICK REVIEW

72

GOAL KEEPING

80

FORD NHL

98

NST 2015

132

OCEANIA CUP

REGULARS

Publisher's notes 7

Editor's notes 11

Giddy
by Shea McAleese 12



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WELCOME



BY
NED DAWSON

I am pleased to welcome you to the launch issue of Planet Hockey, a magazine that will fast become the face of hockey around the world.

It's been a project in the works for some time, actually since the Commonwealth Games where I got so frustrated at the total lack of mainstream media coverage of hockey, that I decided we would create our own medium to showcase this awesome sport.

As some of you will know the magazine started off as Kiwi Hockey. However after a recent trip to HWL 3 in Belgium the response was so amazing to the launch issue the constant feedback was "Why Isn't This a Global Publication". So that gave us quite a bit of food for thought and we looked at changing the focus.

During my research I found that the number of publications covering hockey was slim to none, and in fact the number of english language magazines dedicated to this fast paced sport globally was non-existent. I couldn't understand why? – it's fast, it's dynamic, it's played by both men and women, and it's ethnically diverse – played in 112 countries around the world.

As we started putting together our team of writers and photographers we wanted to create something special, something that would showcase not just the top level national teams, but also the various levels below them – the club level, the secondary school level and the juniors below that. Whether you play junior hockey on the West Coast of the south island of New Zealand or coach a masters team in Ghana we think that you will find something you enjoy in each issue of Planet Hockey.

We pride ourselves on the quality of our imagery and are sure you will agree that being a very dynamic 3-Dimensional sport, hockey lends itself to some amazing images, and we are sure you will enjoy the diverse coverage we have in our launch issue.

As we further grow our team I am pleased to introduce Sarah Juggins as our new Deputy Editor, those in the sport worldwide will know Sarah from her time at the FIH – and we couldn't ask for anyone better to help spearhead the expansion of the magazine. We also couldn't have done it without the awesome support of John Whiting and Julia Woodley at Hockey New Zealand. They saw the vision of what we wanted to create and have been onboard since Day One and for that we

are extremely grateful. Lawrence and Shevaun from Hockey Australia have also teamed up with us to bring you ongoing coverage of Aussie hockey, where two of the best teams in the world are located – the Kookaburras and Hockeyroos. So as you can see we have got some great people working with us on Planet Hockey which will ensure you get to enjoy some fantastic stories and stunning images.

We are sure you will find something inside the pages of Planet Hockey to tempt your interest.

We want you to think of Planet Hockey as “YOUR” magazine. Let us know about your events, competition results, the people who make your club what it is, or just general happenings. The more people we can expose to the world of hockey the better. Our goal is simple – increase the media exposure for hockey, both locally, nationally and on the global stage to help it grow.

With social media being embraced by the current generation and more importantly the next generation, it’s an important medium that we use to get Planet Hockey out there. Gone are the days when people went to the local bookshop and bought a printed magazine, these days it’s download a PDF file from the world-wide-web or download a magazine’s app from iTunes. That’s why Planet Hockey is a digitally based medium, easily available to everyone who has an email address. All you have to do is visit our website, click on the download PDF tab and hey presto Planet Hockey is on your iPhone, android, iPad, laptop or desktop. Join us on our Facebook page, twitter account or Instagram account – enjoy the places we go and the people we meet. Each issue of Planet Hockey will take you to the sidelines with the teams as they compete in the Hockey World League, Commonwealth Games, EuroHockey or local tournaments.

One important aspect of Planet Hockey we encourage you to visit is our new networking forum, a place where players, coaches, parents, admin staff or just passionate supporters can come and chat, exchange ideas and see whats happening in the world of hockey. Our goal is to make it the No1 networking site for everyone in hockey around the world – so click on the link and sign up.

www.planethockeyforum.com

So sit back, enjoy the read, and let us know what you think. My direct email is below, feel free to send me your thoughts, ideas, suggestions or criticisms. It’s all good feedback and allows us to develop Planet Hockey further. And make sure you add info@planethockeymag.com to your press release list and news updates.

Ned Dawson

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A WARM HELLO TO YOU ALL FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD



BY
SARAH JUGGINS

The launch of Planet Hockey heralds exciting times for hockey fans the world over. It seems our international teams spend half their lives travelling across the globe to play in test matches, invitational tournament and major competitions, so it is only right that there is a publication that keeps up with all the news, from wherever the latest hockey is being played.

These past few months have been incredibly busy in the hockey calendar, with teams jetting off to Buenos Aires, Antwerp, Valencia for the Hockey World League Semi-Finals, before returning to home turf for the continental championships. The reason for all these intense competitions? Qualification for Rio 2016.

You only have to read the newspapers or follow your favourite teams and players on social media to know that the qualification process for the 2016 Olympics has been a convoluted one, but the 12 men's and 12 women's slots are nearly all full, with just two events left to play – the Oceania Cup and the African Championships. By the end of October we will know every team that is going to Rio and the player preparations will begin in earnest.

As the international year draws to a close, one showcase event to watch out for is the Men's and Women's Hockey World League Finals which will be taking place in India and Argentina – the men's event in Raipur takes place from 27 November-6 December, while the women's event is in Rosario from 5 December-13 December. These two events see the best eight teams in the world go head to head in an event that will be the more competitive because players will be fighting for their Olympic places.

Of course its not all about the international scene; domestically it is a busy time as the European leagues all swing into action. Week in, week out, hundreds and thousands of players of all levels and abilities are taking to the turf to compete for their clubs. And the very beauty of the game is just how inclusive it is. From early Saturday morning until late Sunday evening, clubs across the globe are alive with the sounds of the hockey match – shouts, whistles, applause, the odd ripe statement – as competitors as old as 75 and young as six, take part in this sport that draws us all together.

So, I am pleased and proud to be the Deputy Editor of Planet Hockey, because as a player, coach, spectator and hockey writer, nothing gives me greater pleasure than to write about the sport I love, for an audience that shares that passion.

Sarah Juggins

Deputy Editor, Planet Hockey

NB: Here at Planet Hockey, we believe in audience participation, so email/write/tweet to me and share your thoughts on all things hockey - twitter: @sjuggs15



GIDDAY

BY
SHEA MCALEESE

So I'm getting this out pre-Oceania so you all know win or lose I feel the same way!

If you don't care don't read, if you love sport or hockey have a read!

If you like what is said and if you think we need to change for the better of our sport please SHARE!

Here we go.....

FIH has got the structure of our tournaments all wrong! At the moment you can qualify out of WL3 then your continental qualifiers. After finishing 6th at WL3 Argentina we had 3 ways to qualify from other teams and results. This is the same for anyone that finishes 4-6 at WL3. Instead of WL3 being a celebration you are left with having to rely on other results or teams double qualifying to get you into the Olympics this to me is just bizarre and wrong.

At least our fate is in our own hands. But shouldn't a team like Ireland who were fantastic at WL3 and finished 5th be given the pleasure then and there of going to Rio rather than hoping we lose to Australia to make it?

WL3 tournaments should never be hosted before the continental championships. Essentially if you qualify at WL3 only ranking points is on the line at continental champs. I have heard lots of talk that teams are taking weakened teams to their continental champs to blood new players as they have qualified. Again this is wrong.

What should happen is the continental champs go first. So the 5 continents have their champs plus potentially the host in this case Brazil! So 6 spots taken and 6 left (3 @ each WL3)

After this assess the World Rankings of teams and then make sure the teams at the 2 WL3 tournaments are fair with 3 spots at each event.

This then makes it easy. If Argentina win Pan Am's like they did you now know they don't need to qualify from WL3. This would mean if they finish 3rd at WL3 then teams 1/2 & 4 qualify, simpler than the current format. Even if Argentina took a reduced team it doesn't matter as you know there are 3 spots left and all the teams are on an equal pegging going in.

The World League system in itself is a mess and needs to be easier to understand. Try to explain the qualification root to non-hockey players is a nightmare.

The crowd goes wild a Sports show in NZ summed it up the best "the NZ women's team take on Japan in the quarter-final of the world league semi-final to qualify for the semi-final and the world league finals and Rio..... sort it out hockey" they proceeded to say later in the week "the girls have finished 4th so miss out on automatic qualification so now have to beat Australia in a winner takes all match to Rio... no but wait 3 weeks later our girls have qualified due to another team winning a competition giving our girls a higher ranking and qualifying...do you know how this works?... I'm confused!"

Also I am a fan of most of the rule changes, to speed up our game and be more attacking. But 2 of them are turning our sport into 'lets park the bus and defend hockey'. 1/4's aids weaker teams (this is OK) but when you add this to straight shoot-outs you get teams that simply play for a shoot-out (Korea Women) its not healthy for our sport and is boring to watch. The game is basically 60 minutes long why not play 2x5 or 7.5 minutes of 9v9 or 7v7 drop-off, to hope that someone scores the winner rather than straight shoot-out. The shoot out is a cool component of the game and should stay 100% but why not do it after extra time?

Also if you talk to any sports person in sport the most consistent teams across a tournament deserve the rewards. Pool play means nothing. So 4 pool games per team actually mean nothing. You might want to avoid someone but this is also shaky ground... will teams purposely lose or draw to avoid another team? Even the thought of this is against the spirit of the game, but with the current format it can be a reality.

If every pool game means something the above simply can't happen. The most consistent teams are rewarded and you still have finals!

Food for thought!

Shea



A WAPPINGLY GOOD IDEA

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grays





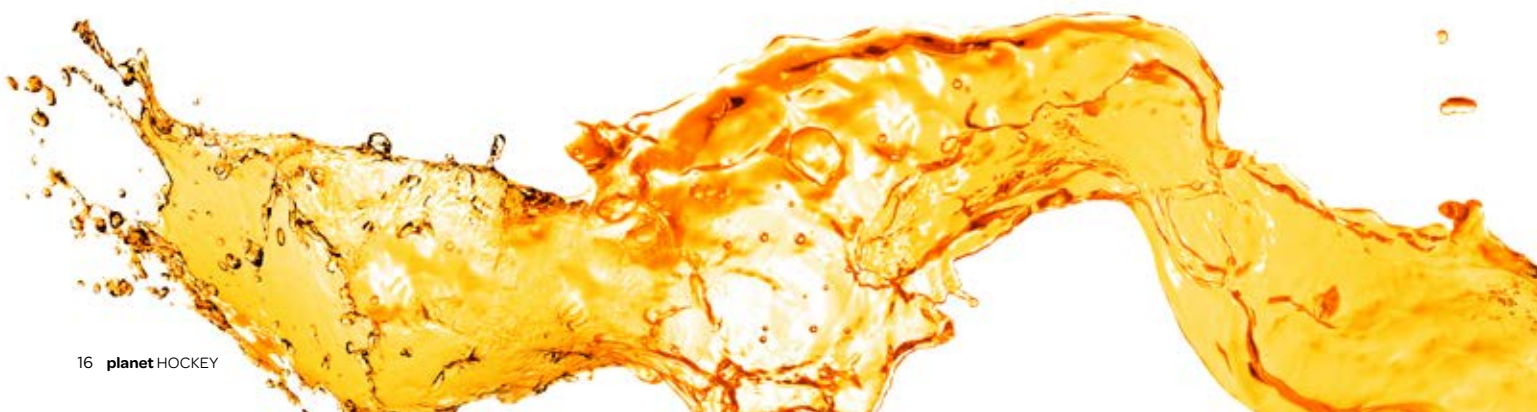


There is a delicious synergy to the fact that Wapping Hockey club was formed in the year Great Britain won an Olympic Gold medal and now the club is resident at the Olympic Stadium in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, but synergy is something that Wapping seem to thrive upon.

"The club was founded by Tim Poeton in 1988, inspired by the men's team winning gold in Seoul. Tim was determined to provide hockey in inner London at an affordable price," says Wapping Hockey Club's chairman, Stuart Burnside.

"Tim's vision was to run a hockey club like a business. He felt there was a lack of innovation within the hockey fraternity at the time and he wanted to change that. His main aim was to provide affordable hockey for inner city kids in places like Tower Hamlets."

Wapping Hockey Club set up links with local schools and soon had a thriving youth section. They won a bronze in the U16 outdoor and gold in the indoor national



championships and the adult sides began to make progress up the leagues. As a newly-formed club, all the teams had to start in the lowest of leagues, but were winning consecutive promotions and advancing up both the men's and ladies leagues.

It was at this point however, that Wapping Hockey Club hit problems. Burnside explains: "In the early 90s, the governors of our partner school decided that competitive sport was a 'no-no'. Our youth section lost its source of players and funds and the youth section just stopped. The club was able to rely on a never-ending stream of university graduates moving to east London's cheap housing, and continued to advance up the leagues, but had lost its original purpose to provide hockey to inner city youth."

By the time Burnside joined the club in 2004 it wasn't just the youth section that had hit the ropes. The facilities were fast disintegrating and the hospitality had become the laughing stock of the hockey world. The teams shared facilities with football, archery and any other number of activities; repairs meant that the pitch – was uneven and the lines were wavy; low quality teas were served in a east end pub too small to sit down in and Poeton's vision for accessible hockey was consigned to the past.

"As a club we had lost our legacy knowledge," says Burnside. "All the expertise we had learnt in the 1990s about running youth activities, applying for grants and working with other sports providers to access facilities, all of that was lost and we were just an adult club without a pitch or a clubhouse to our name."


That is not to say the club was not successful. In 2012 it had a healthy membership of just under 200 and young people setting out on their career paths were joining the club as they took up jobs in the east end of London. The problem was the transient nature of the membership. As they moved up the career ladder, so they moved out of east London.

The turning point came after the 2012 Olympics. Suddenly Tower Hamlets was an Olympic borough, gentrification of the East End had started so people were both happy to move there and, more importantly, to stay there. And Stuart Burnside, as the new club chairman in 2013, decided to resurrect Poeton's plans for the club.

"We had to take a more professional and businesslike approach if we were to resurrect the youth section, provide fully inclusive hockey and improve our facilities so they were worthy of a club pushing up the promotion ladder.

"We took a long hard look at ourselves and asked the question: 'What is the barrier to a person playing hockey here? Is it suitable for their age or gender, gender preference, is it ability, or disabilities? We don't want to turn someone away because they don't know how to play, and we don't want to turn someone away because they are too good for us (as has happened)! Whatever the barrier, let's remove it."

The approach led to the club's most successful season ever last season, with nine teams securing promotion, and the young club entering 2015/16 knocking on the doors of the National League.



THE HOCKEY BEER WAPPING HOPPY

THE HOME OF HOPPY

A SMOOTH, CRISP, REFRESHING CRAFT BEER WITH CITRUS AROMAS. THIS GOLDEN PALE ALE IS BREWED WITH MARRIS OTTER AND CARAGOLD MALTS.

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Speaking to Burnside the positivity and ambition almost crackle around him. In the past two years, led by their chairman, Wapping Hockey Club has secured six playing slots at the Olympic Stadium; it has in 2015 restarted its youth section; it provides playing opportunities for players with disabilities; it has frozen subscriptions for three years; it is attracting sponsorship to the tune of £10,000 per company; oh yes, and it is selling its own branded beer.

How has this been achieved? Hockey is notoriously reliant on backers and sponsors from within its own ranks. A businessperson with a hockey background might buy a set of team shirts, a local sports shop might supply match balls, this is the make-do nature of the amateur sport. Wapping Hockey Club has turned that concept on its head.

Firstly, the club moved to a larger premises in 2013 – The Cape public house – for teas and after match entertainment. The new venue was more attractive to all sections of the club and so players and their friends would stay longer. The club negotiated a deal to receive £6,000 for a home shirt sponsorship. The initial offer was £3,000, but Burnside and his team held out for a higher figure, committing to minimum spend targets at the venue. The annual target was achieved just three months into the season and Burnside has since moved the deal onto a flat percentage of bar spend.

After match hospitality, attention turned to the biggest problem – the pitch. This was the start of “an arduous journey”, according to Burnside. As an executive director in a large financial institution, Burnside invited some key players to his offices. Around the table were gathered representatives from England Hockey, London Sport, Sport England and the Tower Hamlets Sports Development team.

That meeting resulted in £450,000 being placed on the table – £300,000 from the Tower Hamlets council and a further £150,000 from England Hockey and Sport England. The money will fund a new pitch on the old site. The move, which will give Wapping access to three top quality pitches is designed to honour the pledge of removing all barriers to sport. “It is not just removing barriers to people with disabilities, or young kids, it is also about the barrier that currently presents itself to elite players – we need great facilities to match our progress up the league.”

Burnside himself talks a lot about working partnerships and making the system work by thinking laterally. Nowhere is this more evident than in his approach to securing playing slots at the Olympic Park. “We were one of four clubs to bid to become the resident club at Lee Valley, but the price point we were quoted was untenable for any hockey club. So I contacted the other three clubs and said ‘We have to unioinise.’”

Incredibly, the clubs – Waltham Forest, East London and Crostyx – all agreed and got their heads together to work out how they could share pitch access effectively. The result is Wapping has six match day slots and a further 4.5 training slots, and the other clubs have a number of slots between them. The arrangement works for everyone.

“It has just made us much more credible as a club that is going places. And we are trying to do everything that a legacy club that plays in a legacy stadium should do,” says Burnside, who was awarded England

Hockey’s Volunteer of the Season Award 2013/14 in large part in recognition of his role leading the commercial and legal negotiations for the clubs to use the venue. Since moving in, Wapping established their Goalkeeper Academy, where a who’s who of international goalkeepers coach both Wapping and non-Wapping players, and their coaches, which Burnside cites as an example of “delivering the legacy”.

Once the deal with Lee Valley was struck, Wapping went





into overdrive. A video was produced, complete with smoke in the tunnel as the players emerged, cheerleaders, crowd and general “razzle dazzle”. Burnside leveraged that and the credibility from the England Hockey Award to secure a £10,000 sponsorship deal from international property company JLL, adding an away sponsor to the existing Cape home sponsorship deal. To cement that new relationship, Ant Day, Wapping’s newly appointed Head of Digital Media & Production” produced a further film, *The Lost Ball*, which Burnside describes as a “John Lewis style Christmas ad” approach to celebrate both the new home at Lee Valley and the “new home” aspects of a property company sponsor. The result is a spectacular piece of marketing material that goes before potential sponsors,

“We decided to approach sponsorship a little differently,” says Burnside. “Most hockey clubs are great at selling themselves as ‘look, we are teaching kids sport’ and as a result they appeal to philanthropy and pick up small grants. We want to reach beyond philanthropy and appeal to people because we give them meaningful advertising reach.”

To drum up trade, Wapping Hockey Club has poured expertise and hours into developing a strong online presence and a high quality website. The local newspaper carries weekly reports and Burnside, in particular, is keen to highlight the role of the club’s two press officers, first Vicky Morphew and more recently Kaz Schaps in proactively getting the club’s story into wider media circles.

“We are a customer base for local businesses,” says Burnside. “So it makes sense for local companies and businesses such as restaurants and estate agents to sponsor us.”

The final chapter in this remarkable story comes from the bottom of the barrel. The beer barrel to be precise. Racking his brains to find a way to tap into the bar profits at Lee Valley, Burnside hit upon the idea of selling the club’s own brand of beer. Last year he went into negotiations with a local brewers: at the EuroHockey Championships this August, hockey spectators could buy Wapping Hoppy; drinkers at the Cape could drink Wapping Cape and Wapping Gold was named in honour of both the club’s foundation year and the latest EuroHockey gold medal.

Naturally there are more plans in the offing but for now, as the work continues on the new pitch and the club continues to break down barriers to participation, Burnside and his Wapping colleagues are happy to raise a glass to a job well done. ●





TEAMS TOUGH IT OUT IN TORONTO

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Eight teams, contesting one continental title and an automatic qualification spot for Rio 2016 – this is what the **Pan-Am Games** held in Toronto, Canada, meant to the teams taking part in the men's and women's hockey competition earlier this year.

Photos courtesy Yan Huckendubler

CANADA



Lucas Rey puts Canada defence under pressure



Scott Tupper in action for Canada



History was on the side of Argentina. The men have won the gold medal at nine of the Pan-Am Games since 1967, with Canada taking the honours on the other four occasions. Until 2011, the Argentinian women had won on every occasion, but then the USA stepped up to spoil the party. However, with both the Argentine men and women flying high after qualifying for the Rio 2016 via the Hockey World League Semi-Finals, the pressure was off them and Argentina were the team to beat.

However, there were several teams who were determined that the guys and girls in blue and white would not have it all their own way. The USA women were still smarting from losing out on automatic qualification from the Hockey World League Semi-Finals and coach Craig Parnham and his determined team were not going to miss

out on Rio 2016 if they could help it. Both Canada and Uruguay had both been at the Hockey World League Semi-Finals alongside USA and Argentina and that taste of top tier competition had given these lower ranked teams the inspiration and, importantly, the experience to make things tough for their opponents.

Earlier in the year, Canada men had put in a tremendous performance to take fourth spot in the Hockey World League Semi-Finals, qualifying for Rio 2016 in the process. They too had the Pan-Am title in their sites, a perfect end to a great year.

Then there was the unique case of Brazil. As the hosts of Rio Olympics 2016, Brazil men and women would be entitled to an automatic spot at the Olympics. However, in an effort to ensure a good competition, with relatively evenly-matched teams, the governing body of hockey, the



CANADA



ARGENTINA





USA and Brazil battle it out in the quarters

BRAZIL





ARGENTINA



USA



International Hockey Federation (FIH), stipulated that for Brazil to qualify they must fulfil one of two criteria. They must either be ranked within the top 30 in the world by the time the Hockey World League Semi-Finals took place or they must finish sixth or above in the Pan-Am Games. With Brazil men ranked 37 and the women at 49, it was all down to their performance in Toronto.

The first team to discover their fate was the Brazil men's team. They played USA in the quarter-final stages and a 3-1 win, following a shoot-out – thanks largely to the heroics of 'keeper Rodrigo Faustino who made three saves – was enough to secure the Olympic host nation a place in the Games next year. The icing on the cake for Brazil would have been a medal but, in the semi-finals, despite holding Canada to 0-0 at full-time, the Brazil team were unable to replicate their quarter-final performance in the shoot-out and Canada marched through to a show-down against Argentina.

The men's final was a replica of all the finals since 1975 – the last team besides Canada or Argentina to contest the Pan-Am final was Mexico in 1971. Argentina were in imperious form as Pedro Ibarra, Lucas Vila and Manuel Brunet all hit the target to beat Canada 3-0.

In the bronze medal match, Chile beat Brazil 4-1, with two goals for Nicolas Renz and a goal apiece for Thomas Kannegiesser and Vicente Martin. Stephane Verhle-Smith scored a consolation goal for Brazil just before full-time.

In the women's competition, USA knew this was their only shot at Olympic qualification and the north American team made no mistakes as they topped their pool with some dominant performances, including a 15-0 win over the Dominican Republic. In the other pool, Argentina were making similarly impressive progress, and their driver was the memory of their loss at the hands of the USA in 2011.

It was a north-American encounter in the first semi-final, with USA beating Canada 3-1, while the other semi-final saw Argentina take apart Chile in a 5-0 win. And so the stage was set for a cracking final between these two top 10 teams. Neither side had yet conceded a goal and they had racked up some cricket score goal-lines against earlier opponents. The result – a 2-1 win for USA – came after an intense and physical game. USA 'keeper Jackie Briggs was instrumental in taming the Argentine attack in the opening minutes of the game and then, first Katie Reinprecht and then Michelle Vitesse gave the USA the lead they needed. Argentina came back through Florencia Habif, but it was too little, too late for Las Leonas and the sigh of relief through the USA camp was almost as loud as the victory cheers.

The results of the Pan-Am Games and the Hockey World League Semi-Finals mean that Pan-America will be represented at Rio 2016 by Brazil, Argentina and Canada in the men's competition and the USA and Argentina in the women's competition. ●



GHANA'S NATIONAL TEAM DARES TO DREAM OF RIO

Photos by Andy Smith & Rob Rowe

Raw, talented and keen to learn, a recent visit to the home of England Hockey at Bisham Abbey by the Ghana national women's team left no-one doubting the scale of the African team's ambitions.

For the coaching team of Darren Cheeseman, Seigfried Aikman and Mark Jarvis, and England Hockey Relationship Manager Lucy Rowe, the target is a sustainable hockey scene at grassroots and high performance level, with qualification for a major international event, such as the 2018 Commonwealth Games, within the next four years. But speak to 21-year-old Elizabeth Opoku or any of her Ghanaian teammates and it is Rio 2016 that is on her radar.

"Why not?" she asks as she takes a break from a rigorous fitness session. "We are improving all the time, we will continue to work hard and we have learnt so much here."

The Ghana Hockey Association, working with a number of partners – England Hockey and UK Sport among them – is nearly two years into the four year FIH Target Assisted Programme (TAP). As part of the programme, a coaching and umpiring team travelled to Ghana to run training and education programmes in the West African country and the Ghana women's national team recently spent two weeks based at England Hockey's home, Bisham Abbey, playing, training and observing top quality hockey.

The project is part of England Hockey's commitment to developing hockey in upcoming nations and the scale and ambition of the project was part of the reason that the International Hockey Federation (FIH) chose to award England the hosting rights for the women's Champions Trophy next June and the women's Hockey World Cup in 2018. Under the agreement, England Hockey staff will

work alongside coaches, umpires and players from Ghana and other West African countries to promote hockey at all levels – grass roots and performance level. The ultimate aim of the programme is to develop hockey hubs where players and coaches can develop skills and knowledge, and to raise the standard of the national team. The programme, says Lucy Rowe, aims to get Ghana women competing at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, but the current players believe there is a much more pressing appointment in Rio.

Before the programme got underway, head coach Darren Cheeseman travelled out to Delhi in India to watch Ghana women take part in the 2014 Hockey World League





Ghana and Wales before a test match

Round One series. He was both impressed and unnerved by what he saw.

"I first saw the team compete in Delhi in Hockey World League Round One and I was taken by the raw talent on display. The players are frighteningly competitive. They will fight and argue among themselves, it can be frightening to see such passion on display," says the former GB and England international. "I know and understand why they are doing it; that will to win is so great, but it needs to be channelled.

"This team could be brilliant but there are strategies that must be in place," he adds. "We are teaching the players to think for themselves and find solutions, at the moment the culture is all about doing what they are told.

But already I can see a difference."

Opuku agrees: "We have learnt so much. For example, we know that the defending area is split into red, orange and green zones, we must keep the ball out of the red zone and force the opposition into the green zone. And we must make our attacks count, by making the right decisions under pressure."

Ghana's coaches have been involved in all the sessions and Cheeseman's hope is that the team will continue to work on these principles in the future, but he is also wary of the impact the Ghana culture could have upon the way hockey coaching is delivered.

"The culture in Ghana is all about command and obeying commands. For

the first few days with us, the players were just not able to make decisions for themselves because they had never been permitted to in the past. Now they ask questions all the time. They question why they are doing something, how that will work for the good of the team and they are able to be both self critical and critical of others in a positive way."

The problem, says Cheeseman, is whether this change can continue when the players return home.

"We have worked hard to change the mindset of the coaches too, because our time with the players is over now. The programme will only succeed if the coaches from Ghana have bought into the new culture as well. Do I think they have? Only time will tell, but it is very hard to change a culture that permeates every aspect of society."

Speaking to the players, there is a fierce determination that everything they have learnt from Cheeseman and his colleagues will continue in the future. And the training has been geared up to be sustainable. "They have tablets and smartphones," says Rowe. "So we can send them training programmes and videos. It is ironic really, there is a shortage of sticks and shin pads and goalkeeping gear, but everyone in Ghana has a smartphone."

While they were at Bisham Abbey, the national squad received a series of strength and conditioning sessions from coaches. These all focused on the players using their own body weight because, explained Rowe, "they have no gym equipment to train with. This way, they can use all the information they have been given to continue to improve their core strength back home."

With the Olympics just around the corner, was there



Ready for the off



Ghana v Maidenhead

ever a temptation to throw all the resources at getting the Ghana team to Rio and hoping that this would drive participation up in West Africa?

"Tempting? Yes," says Rowe. "But totally against the nature and ambition of the project. We could have put all our resources into paying

Darren and his team to just train the national squad.

They might have qualified and then we would have

sat back and hoped that

hockey would just develop organically in Ghana, but that

was never going to provide us with

the sort of sustainability and growth we

want." Sustainability and longevity of the

project is key for the partners behind

the TAP project. Rowe says: "Our three

aims are grass roots development,

for which we are collecting thousands

of hockey sticks and goalkeeping

equipment; building an umpire

and coach education programme in

Ghana and the wider West Africa area;

and developing the high performance angle."

All three targets are being met. Equipment is on its way to Ghana, courtesy of a scheme to get players to donate old sticks and goalkeeper kit; the coach educator programme has resulted in 21 level one coaches, against a target of 12; 18 level two coaches against a target of four; plus 21 trained umpires; and Ghana is in line to do well at the African continental championships.

UK Sport is the sports body that runs elite sport in the UK, and as part of its partnership with England Hockey, it is investing £30,000 a year into the project. Cathy Sweet is the UK Sport representative for the TAP project and she was overwhelmed by its speed of success. "We never envisaged this programme moving

forwards so quickly; it is a real surprise in the most positive of ways."

"These players are the coaches of the future," she added, "And not only will their involvement in coaching be good for developing hockey in Ghana, it is a really powerful way to empower women in that society and raise their levels of self-confidence and achievement."

Over the next few months, there will be further coach and umpire education as well as an African competition, with organisational support from England Hockey. However, for the 20 athletes who spent 10 days at Bisham Abbey, Rio 2016 is never far from their thoughts, particularly with South Africa likely to miss out on an Olympic spot.

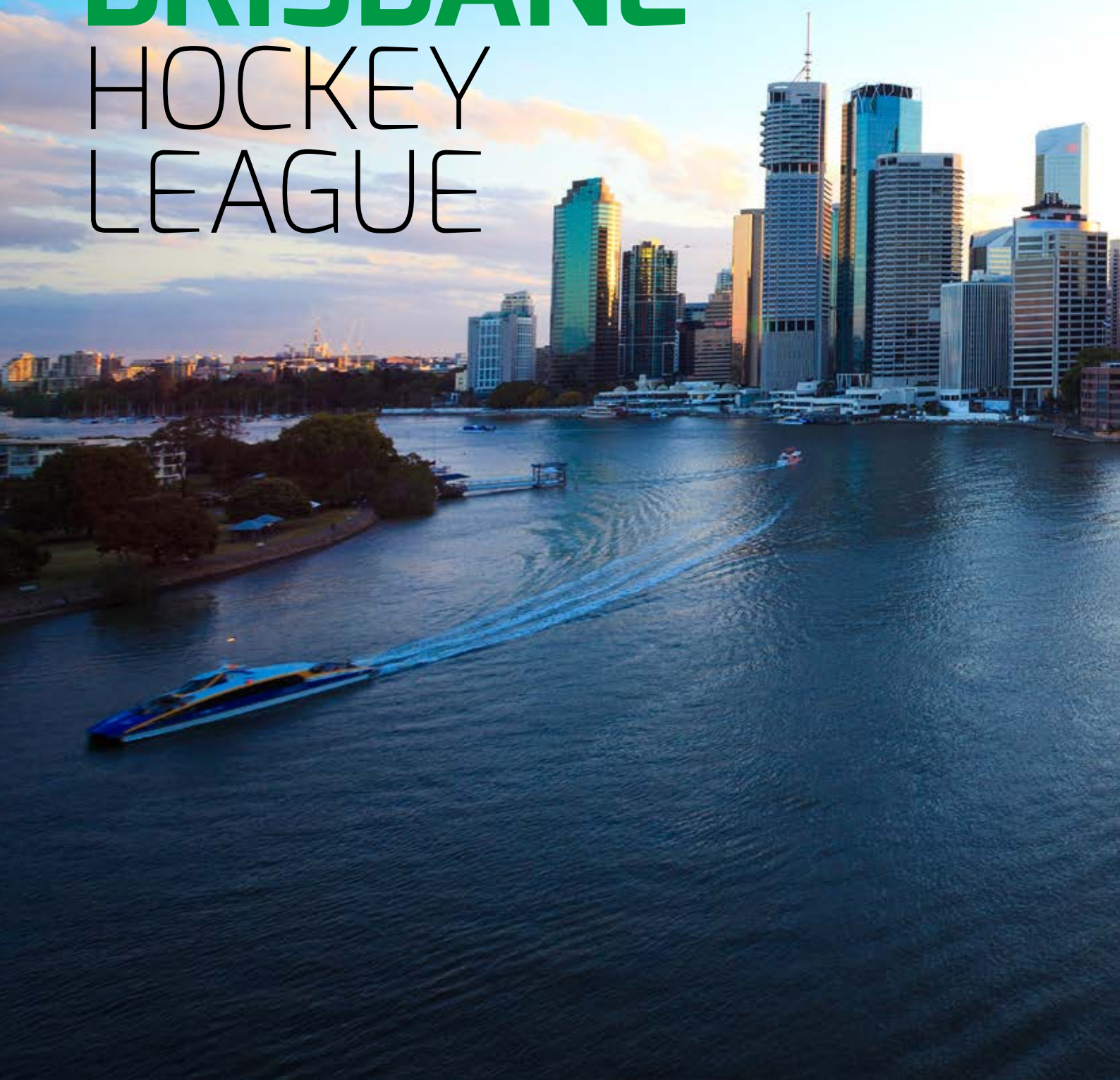
The continental qualifiers provide a route to the Olympics for the winners. On the African continent, South Africa women have won the tournament and the Olympic qualifier's spot on every occasion. This time round however, the South African government has said that it will not send a women's hockey team, whether they qualify via the continental championships or not, because they didn't qualify through the Hockey World League Semi-Final route.

The government's decision is based upon the likelihood of the team winning an Olympic medal, and for the 2016 edition of the Olympic Games, the South African Olympic Association has decided the women's team are just not good enough. And this is where Ghana could take real advantage.

"Kenya will be a challenge," says Cheeseman, "But the strides these players have made in the past few weeks is incredible. The speed and talent is something that I have rarely seen and if we could just keep moulding these players and encouraging them to think about the game more strategically, well...".

"Just think," there is a glint in Cheeseman's eye. "The Ghana national team at the Olympics, what a story that would make." ●

SEVEN
KOOKABURRAS
COACHING IN
BRISBANE
HOCKEY
LEAGUE





How's this for a roster of coaching talent in a club competition?

Seven of the ten clubs contesting this year's men's Brisbane Hockey League are coached by former Australian Kookaburras players.

In fact with more than 1000 international games between them you're unlikely to find another sports league in Australia with a pedigree of coaches like this.

The players are: **Liam De Young** (Pine Rivers St Andrews Hockey Club), **Troy Elder** (Bulimba Hockey Club), **Matthew Smith** (Kedron Wavell Services Hockey Club), **Greg Browning** (University of Queensland Hockey Club), **Lee Bodimeade** (Valley Hockey Club), **Jason Wilson** (Labrador Hockey Club) and **Peter Shaw** (Easts Hockey Club).

Between them they have tallied 1025 games for Australia and won eight Olympic medals.

Joining Elder, Smith and premiers winners Browning and Shaw in Brisbane's coaching ranks this year are Wilson, who last played for Australia in 2014, and three-time Olympians De Young and Bodimeade, who played for Australia then twice coached the USA women's team at Olympic level.





Labrador player-coach Jason Wilson.
Photo by Husted Images.



Bulimba player-coach Troy Elder.
Photo by Husted Images

CAREER SNAPSHOTS

LIAM DE YOUNG - *Pine Rivers St Andrews*
302 games for Australia
3 Olympic Games: 2004 (gold medal),
2008 (bronze medal), 2012 (bronze medal)

TROY ELDER - *Bulimba*
169 games for Australia
2 Olympic Games: 2000 (bronze medal),
2004 (gold medal)

MATTHEW SMITH - *Kedron Wavell*
166 games for Australia
1 Olympic Games: 1996 (bronze medal)

GREG BROWNING - *University of Queensland*
145 games for Australia
2 Olympic Games: 1972, 1976 (silver medal)

LEE BODIMEADE - *Valley*
143 games for Australia
1 Olympic Games: 1992 (silver medal);
2 Olympics as USA women's coach (2008, 2012)

JASON WILSON - *Labrador*
97 games for Australia

PETER SHAW - *East*
3 games for Australia



Pine Rivers St Andrews player-coach Liam De Young.
Photo by Husted Images





Motivation man -
Max Caldas outlines
his plans.

DUTCH MEN HIT SUPER SIX, **WHILE** ENGLAND WOMEN TAKE IT TO THE WIRE

Photos by Grant Treeby / World Sport Pics

The EuroHockey Championships provided a dramatic and action-packed 10 days of hockey at the end of August. The Netherlands men's team put 28 years of hurt behind them to wreak revenge on Germany, a nation that had previously consigned the Dutch to six defeats in six finals. And England women ensured that the capacity crowd were kept on the edge of their seats until the final whistle blew on the final day of action.

Netherlands men and England women emerged victorious at the 2015 EuroHockey Championships that took place in the last 10 days of August in London. The event – featuring the eight best men's and women's sides in Europe – was held at the new Lee Valley Stadium on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

The Dutch men handed out a masterclass in attacking play to beat Germany 6-1, the largest ever defeat suffered by the German team in a major competition. England women secured their goal in less emphatic, but very dramatic, fashion as they overcame a two-nil deficit against the Netherlands with just 10 minutes left on the clock. Two quick goals took the match to shoot-out and Maddie Hinch in the England goal proved why doing your homework pays off as she out-thought her Dutch rivals.

In the bronze medal games, Ireland men won their first

ever medal at a major championship with a 4-2 win over England, while Germany overcame a feisty Spanish team to take bronze in the women's match.

At the other end of the table, France and Russia men, along with Italy and Poland women were all relegated from the first tier of European hockey and will play in the lower division of the competition in two years time.

While the continental championships offer a route to the Rio 2016 Games, in the case of Europe, this was a dead rubber, with both the men's and women's winners already qualified via the Hockey World League Semi-Finals. But if anyone suspected that the tournament would lack its usual bite, then they were very mistaken. The quality and passion on display throughout the ten day competition was at times breath-taking and with capacity crowds on many days, the atmosphere at Lee Valley was electric.

In the men's final it was the old protagonists



Hats off to England -
captain Kate
Richardson-Walsh

Netherlands versus Germany, but this time around the script was very different. Whereas Germany had won the six previous encounters at a European Hockey Championship final, this time Netherlands were firmly in the driver's seat. The Dutch built a 5-0 lead in the first 30 minutes of play, an experience that Dutch captain Rob van der Horst described as "the best result ever in my career." This was the first gold medal at this tournament for the Netherlands men's team since 1987.

"When a score is like that, you start to enjoy it a little more," he said. "You see things on the big screen that make you smile, people cheering, guys on the bench crying. you get time to enjoy it and the emotions."

WOMEN'S COMPETITION

Gold	England
Silver	Netherlands
Bronze	Germany
4th	Spain
5th	Belgium
6th	Scotland
7th	Italy
8th	Poland

Player of the tournament:
Alex Danson (ENG)

Goalkeeper of the tournament:
Yvonne Frank (GER)

Top goal scorer:
Caia van Maasakker (NED)

Robbert Kemperman agreed with his captain that this was one of the best moments ever, adding, "It was so quick: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0 – from there we can control the game. We've lost several finals against the Germans so finally we got there and we are really happy."

England women were also feeling the love after they prevented a Dutch double. The home nation found themselves 2-0 down with just a few minutes remaining on the clock after Caia van Maasakker scored twice from penalty corners to give the Netherlands the lead. Sophie Bray and Lily Owsley's corner rebounds got England back into the game and the final went to shoot-out.

MEN'S COMPETITION

Gold	Netherlands
Silver	Germany
Bronze	Ireland
4th	England
5th	Spain
6th	Belgium
7th	France
8th	Russia

Player of the tournament:
Florian Fuchs (GER)

Goalkeeper of the tournament:
Davey Harte (IRL)

Top goal scorer:
Tom Boon (BEL)

England's Maddie Hinch, who famously keeps a book with notes about all her opponents and their shoot-out tactics, made three saves to keep the Dutch out and ensure the title went to England.

"I'm just in a state of shock," said Hinch after the game. "It just shows the level of belief in or team at the moment to come from two goals down, to say 'we are not giving up on this'. That's exactly what we did."

Lidewij Welton, the Netherlands midfielder, spoke of her disappointment at the result. "We do not like to lose, ever. At the moment there is no positive to come from the game. But we will regroup, learn and come back stronger." ●



ALL ROADS LEAD TO RIO

Photos by
Grant Treeby/World Sport Pics



With less than **300 days** to go until the **Rio 2016 Olympics** burst into life, there now remain just **two slots** up for grabs in both the men's and women's events. In theory those slots are available to the **winners of the Oceania Cup** and the **African continental qualifiers**, but as with everything in sport, it is never as simple as it first appears.

Qualification for the 2016 Rio Olympics has been a convoluted process to say the very least, with the international body responsible for hockey, the FIH, admitting that it is a process they must look at in the future. But, at heart, complicated as it was, this qualification process was a very determined attempt to make the playing field as open and as even as possible.

So just how have the likes of Canada men, Brazil men and India women achieved qualification at the expense of much higher ranked teams? Why are Ireland men waiting so anxiously on the result of the African continental championships? And how can Ghana women, ranked 31, be in with a shout of making it to Rio ahead of the team ranked 11th, South Africa?

"We are very relieved to know that we have qualified for Rio," said Spain's coach Frederic Soye, speaking after

Spain finished sixth in the EuroHockey Championships in London earlier this year. "But learning that just yesterday might have affected our last game here [Spain beat France by a narrow 4-3 margin] I'm not sure the players were concentrating 100 per cent."

Spain's men's team booked their place in Brazil once Ireland men had been knocked out of the EuroHockey semi-finals by Germany. Now Ireland are relying on South Africa winning the African continental qualifiers but not being permitted to take their place at Rio by their own national Olympic Association – something the South African sports body has indicated is likely to happen.

If all of this seems a bit confusing, well... it is. But, come the end of October when all the continental qualifiers are over, one thing is very certain – 12 men's teams and 12 women's teams will be on countdown to 5 August 2016 when the flame is lit over the Brazilian capital.



So here is our whistle-stop tour of the qualification process, looking at how the teams qualified and some of the reactions from players and coaches.

The first two teams to book their berths came courtesy of success in the Asian Games, which took place in November 2014. The men's final was a thrilling affair, with two old adversaries, India and Pakistan, facing off in a nail-biting encounter. The game didn't disappoint as action flew from end to end, and nothing could separate the two teams. The match finished 1-1 in regulation time and it was India who held their nerve and won the shoot-out 4-2. In case anyone was fooled into thinking that India would then settle down to prepare for the Olympics, just a few months later, their coach Paul van Ass was sent packing after he fell out with people within Hockey India, joining Terry Walsh as yet another coach to be unceremoniously dumped after achieving a relatively successful outcome.

India's captain, Sardar Singh spoke diplomatically about the disruption suffered by the squad as van Ass became the fourth foreign coach to be dismissed in as many years. "When a coach is replaced, the players face difficulty," said the India hockey captain. "But we remain very positive about the Olympics."

India will be coached up to and during the Games by High Performance Director Roelant Oltmans. The

Dutchman wryly conceded that his job might now be in jeopardy, but said he was "pretty relaxed about it all."

Korea were the first women's team to qualify for Rio. The team ranked ninth in the world recorded a surprise win over tournament favourites China, who are ranked three places ahead of them. Coach Han Jin Soo said he was delighted with his players but the "real work begins now, as we prepare for Rio."

While the simplest way to qualify for the Olympic Games is via the continental championships, where winner takes all, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has introduced a new system of qualification for the World Cup and the Olympic Games. The Hockey World League is an on-going competition that spans a two-year cycle. It uses the world ranking system to determine at what point a nation enters this event, but it is at the penultimate stages of the competition that the results become crucial.

In Hockey World League Round One, 40 men's and 40 women's teams entered the competition. These teams had world rankings of higher than 20, and some of the competitors were on the global stage for the first time in their history. This is where teams such as Ghana, Mexico and Fiji first cut their international teeth.

In HWL Round Two, the teams ranked 20-11 enter the fray, and lock horns with established teams who are trying



to move up the world rankings as well as the winners from HWL Round One. It is this system that FIH hope will allow developing nations to progress swiftly, and for the old order of hockey to be shaken up by some new faces.

The third round, known as the HWL Semi-Finals, is where the teams are hoping to excel as it is at this point that qualification spots are up for grabs. Depending upon the cycle of events, this will be qualification for either the World Cup or the Olympics. In the current cycle, the top four finishes at each of the Hockey World League Semi-Finals automatically qualified for a place at Rio.

In the first of the two women's semi-final events, held in Valencia, Spain, it was Great Britain who excelled, Danny Kerry's team seeing off all challengers to sweep to the gold medal position. China took second place, also securing their place at Rio and Germany beat Argentina into the bronze medal position, although Argentina's fourth place finish also means automatic qualification. The surprise

of the tournament was the poor showing by the USA. At the start of the event, the USA squad, who have improved dramatically in the past few years, were among the favourites to win the event. At the very least they expected a podium finish. However, a draw against Germany and a shock defeat at the hands of the Irish meant Craig Parnham's team were left vying for fifth-eighth place and no chance of automatic Olympic qualification.

Speaking after they had scored a last minute equaliser against Argentina and then beaten the world number three side on penalty strokes, Germany's Janne Muller-Weiland spoke about her team's ability to pull victory from the jaws of defeat when it is a big occasion. "We just never know when to give up. It is the German way, we do not leave until the last bus."

The second women's HWL Semi-Final saw the Netherlands establishing themselves as the world's number one team. The Dutch – current World Cup holders and



Olympic Champions – convincingly saw off a semi-final challenge from Australia with a resounding 5-1 victory, before dispatching Korea 2-1 in a hard-fought, but ultimately predictable final. Australia took out their anger on New Zealand’s Black Sticks in a 4-2 bronze medal match. The results meant Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand will all join Korea and the Valencia finalists in Rio.

The men’s HWL Semi-Final in Buenos Aires turned up some interesting results with the Black Sticks the biggest casualties. Canada, who are ranked 13th in the world, beat seventh-ranked New Zealand in the quarter finals to earn a place in the last four and achieve an unexpected Olympic qualification.

New Zealand then faced Spain, with both teams knowing that a fifth place finish might offer a slim chance of qualification, but Spain proved up for the challenge and won 3-1, leaving the Black Sticks facing the prospect of

needing to beat Australia in the Oceania Cup to qualify for Rio. Speaking after the game a disappointed Colin Batch said: “We started very well and had a good first half [against Spain] but then we didn’t perform when the pressure came on and we need to learn how to do this. We didn’t play collectively in the important moments of the game. This is something we need to develop further. Our next step is to try to qualify through the Oceania Cup and we know that we are capable of doing this.”

Canada eventually took fourth place, joining the Netherlands, Argentina and tournament winners Germany in the four to qualify for Rio.

Over in Belgium, it wasn’t to be Boon time as Belgium and their talismanic goal-scoring machine Tom Boon were defeated in the finals by Australia. However, the Belgium side will be happy by the level of competitiveness they brought to the encounter, with the Kookaburra’s ‘keeper

While Brazil men are ranked 37, thus not qualifying, they finished fourth in Toronto, thereby securing a spot at their home Olympics.





Jubilant Danny Kerry as England qualify for Rio 2016.



Paumen's Netherlands on the way to Rio.

Andrew Charter seeing more action in that one game than he had for most of the tournament. "We want guys to step up at big moments," said Kookaburra captain Mark Knowles, and that is what Chris Cirello finally did - his powerful drag flick flying past Vincent Vanasch to earn his side the gold medal and a place at Rio.

Great Britain and India contested third place, with the Great Briatin side winning 5-1 and joining their women's team in automatic qualification. "This is good news for us," said Great Britain's 'keeper George Pinner. "It takes the pressure off us for the European Championships, so we can go out there and play hockey without the stress of thinking about Olympic qualification."

With the HWL Semi-Finals done and dusted, players and coaches set their sights on the remaining continental qualifiers. Over in Toronto, Canada, the Pan-Am Games

proved the saviour of the USA as the team re-grouped after their disappointment in Valencia and beat Argentina in the final of the women's competition. The men's competition was won by Argentina, who beat Canada 3-0 in a one-sided final. The surprise of the day, and one that will delight the supporters in Rio was the qualification of Brazil.

In a further twist in this tortuous trail of qualification, under FIH rules the home nation do qualify for the Olympics by right, but only if they achieve a certain standard in the months preceding the event. The FIH has ruled that for a home team to qualify the team must achieve a ranking higher than 30 or finish in the top six at their continental qualifiers. While Brazil men are ranked 37, thus not qualifying, they finished fourth in Toronto, thereby securing a spot at their home Olympics.

The EuroHockey Championships could have been a



damp squib when it came to playing for Olympic places, with all the usual suspects already securing their places. However, Ireland men managed to keep the Olympic qualification promise alight with a scintillating performance that saw them win bronze – their first major medal at an international event. They must now wait until the African continental qualifiers to see if they will appear in Rio. Ireland will only go to the 2016 Olympics if South Africa win in October. If any other team wins – and Egypt look to be the most likely contenders – then Ireland’s hopes are dashed. Netherlands men and England women won

the EuroHockey Championships, with Germany losing by their heaviest ever margin to the Dutch (6-1) in the men’s final, while England staged a remarkable come-back and penalty-shoot-out victory to inflict a rare defeat upon the Dutch women. With the Oceania Cup and the African continental championships still to be played, there may yet be more twists in this story, but with Rio 2016 a glittering target on the horizon, the next few months will provide hockey fans everywhere with some scintillating and fascinating competition, with teams preparing to do battle for the greatest hockey prize of all. ●



gToRio



HOCKEY'S YIN & YANG

As Germany men's and women's teams failed to recapture their European Championship titles in London, both coaches admit that their main targets are still some distance on the horizon. Planet Hockey catches up with both the affable and mercurial Mulders and the erudite and academic Weise as they assess the state of their teams, the challenges ahead and Germany's place in the top echelons of international hockey.

Photos by Grant Treeby / World Sport Pics







“When the players win, it is down to their ability and the way they have tackled the game. But when they lose it is my fault. As the coach, I have failed in my preparations.”

Jamilon Mülders



For Markus Weise, coach of the men's team, it is Rio 2016 and the chance to add a fourth gold medal to his current stash of three Olympic golds – won with the German women in 2004 and Germany's men's team in 2008 and 2012. For his younger counterpart, Jamilon Mülders, who is coach to the women's team, it is actually Tokyo in 2020 which is his date with destiny – any major medal

before that would be a bonus. "It takes time to be a Danas player," says Mülders. "For me 2020 is the time for this team to reach maturity."

Talk of the European power houses of hockey and usually Germany is one of the first teams on everyone's lips. Both the men and the women have a rich history of success in European, Olympic and World Cup hockey, and under coaches Markus Weise and Jamilon

Mülders – the self-styled Yin and Yang of hockey – the men and women have built a reputation for winning when it most matters. The teams fell just short of their usual high standards at this year's EuroHockey Championships – the men took silver and the women bronze – but both coaches denied any sense of disappointment as they feel their teams are in the rebuilding stage.



Mülders is a coach who carries a huge weight of responsibility upon his shoulders. Not because his bosses at the German Hockey Federation puts pressure on him – far from it – no, Mülders sense of responsibility is self-inflicted. “When the players win, it is down to their ability and the way they have tackled the game. But when they lose it is my fault. As the coach, I have failed in my preparations.”

Since Mülders took over as head coach of the German women’s team in 2013, the team has had some disappointing results. An eighth place finish in the World Cup, a seventh place at the Champions Trophy, and ranked sixth in the FIH world rankings. These are not the results that the Germans want or are used to. But, as the coach points out, neither were the team expected to win the 2013 European Championships, but they did, beating England in the final. “That is sport, it provides the unexpected,” says Jami. “Remember as well, we also won World League Three in Rotterdam in 2013. We are not in a bad place, we are simply a team that is building.”

Following the disappointment of the World Cup, the team sat down

and had a hard look at what went wrong. “We wanted to know why we didn’t perform. One of those things was some very negative dynamic running, for example,” says Mülders. “At the base level, we identified that we had failed to make the performance level that we are capable of, but we also looked further back at some of the things we had done well and analysed why those things went well for us.”

At the Hockey World League Semi-Finals in Valencia, there were signs that Germany were beginning to play as a match-winning unit again, but these were far from convincing. A third place finish guaranteed the reigning European Champions a slot at the 2016 Rio Olympics but the bare result hides the story – two wins from penalty shoot-outs, both coming after Germany fought back from the brink of defeat within regulation time, scoring equalisers with just a few minutes on the clock – against Spain in the quarter-finals and Argentina in the third place play-off – this wasn’t the stuff of champions. Germany had stuttered into the Olympics.

Just a month later and a third place finish at the European

One of the lads celebrating a win.



Laying down the law Markus Weise outlines his tactics.



Championships, demolishing Spain in the process, suggests that German women are on the rise again. “We played some really good hockey with a really consistent way of attacking and pressing as well as outletting,” was Mülders’ verdict at the end of the tournament. “And we scored a lot of goals, which had been a problem for us. Our progress, here and in Valencia, is visible. We have to improve different things; that’s obvious. But the reaction of the side after the loss to the Netherlands (in the semi-finals) was good and this was a really good finish [to the tournament].”

Optimism and positivity reflects all that is the core of Mülders’ own coaching philosophy. “I like to show my players that they are on the sunny side of life. Playing for Germany is a privilege and the players know they have to work hard to achieve it, but it must also be fun.”

Mülders barely conceals his immense regard for his players as he points out that the team members are not full-time athletes and have to juggle work, study, training and

family life. “There are remarkable personalities within the squad. Not just great players, but really great people too. I think they are role models to a far greater degree than say, the football players, who are paid really good money. They are able to go out into real life and be good, interesting people. And that is why, after a game, if things have gone wrong, I will stand in front of them and take the flak. ‘Leave them alone.’ I would never blame a player. I can lose tournaments with poor preparation or a poor decision, but the players... no never blame the players.”

“Jami is the Yang to my Yin, or maybe it is the other way round, it is confusing from time to time...,” Markus Weise smiles as he talks about his younger counterpart. The two coaches worked together prior to 2012, Mülders was assistant coach to the national women’s team under Weise and now Mülders names Weise as one of the coaches who has inspired and influenced his own coaching style. “Markus is a coach with great vision. He sees the bigger

picture and is an inspirational leader.”

Weise himself says that he had doubts about his decision to become a professional coach. “I struggled with that decision for quite a while, it took my brain ages to know that I made the right decision, it was something my heart was sure about 10 years earlier.” Since taking that step however, Weise has cornered the market in successful coaching – he was the first coach to win Olympic gold with both a men’s and a women’s team – as well as gaining a reputation for speaking his mind on all matters regarding hockey.

One such issue at the moment vexing the German coach is the heavy competition load his players

are facing in the coming months. “It is very difficult to continuously get the players to a state of ‘readiness’. It is hardly possible to find a balance, but we have a calendar where it is all about tournaments. Take the upcoming Champions Trophy for example. We are supposed to play the Champions Trophy in India in June, and only two months later we will have to travel to Rio to play the Olympics. How do we balance that? How do we find the money and keep up the motivation of the players?”

But if any coach can find a way to overcome the difficulties posed by a heavy playing schedule, it is the German coach. Certainly Weise arrived at the EuroHockey Championships with his usual sanguine approach. “I don’t know how

we will perform. There are too many factors influencing the game and the performance. We are prepared well so, if we do our jobs in the tournament, we will perform well: if not we will get punched in the face.” As it turned out, Germany did get “punched in the face” when they were taken apart 6-1 by a Netherlands side for who nothing could go wrong. But Weise, while disappointed to relinquish the title, has his eye on the bigger prize – Rio 2016. “Of course a 6-1 loss does not make me happy, it is hard to take because Netherlands were so much stronger than us today, but we must check that off and look forward, next year is the big tournament.”

When it comes to player preparation, Weise is interested in the psychology of players as much as the physical readiness. It is an area of player and team performance that he feels gets neglected to an extent. “With all the other stuff that has to be covered to develop a competitive advantage, like technical skills, corners, physical shape, tactics, whatever, the mental side can be overlooked. I try to make sure this isn’t the case with my players and with the teams I am part of. I believe it is a skill of certain players and coaches to build a winner’s mindset that is hopefully contagious enough to reach every team member.”

If a winning mindset is contagious, then both German teams will be tough to beat in Rio. Although Mülders continuously repeats his mantra that his main target is Tokyo in five years time, it is always dangerous to write off any German side in a major competition. Echoing the thoughts of Germany star defender Janne Muller-Weiland: “It is the German way, we don’t believe in leaving until the last bus goes.” ●

“With all the other stuff that has to be covered to develop a competitive advantage, like technical skills, corners, physical shape, tactics, whatever, the mental side can be overlooked. I try to make sure this isn’t the case with my players.”

Markus Weise



NT vs QLD. Photo by Greg Thompson [Click InFocus]



Australian Hockey League

2015

The Australian Hockey League, or AHL as it's more often known, is the pinnacle of domestic competition of Australian hockey. A state-versus-state competition, it sees the best players from across the country – plus a handful of imports – representing their home states and territories for national glory.

Queensland Blades Gold Medallists
Photo by Russell Brown, Darwin
Camera House.



Over the years it has had various guises; everything from a series of home and away fixtures across the country to a two-week national championship in one location. The current format – an eight day event with the eight teams divided into two pools of four – mimics many of the major international tournaments now.

The 2015 AHL competitions saw traditional powerhouse Queensland return to the top of the podium winning the men's and women's titles in Darwin and Sydney respectively.

The Queensland Blades – the men's team – swept to their sixth crown in ten years with a squad built on defensive resoluteness. The men in maroon featured the likes of international forwards Jamie Dwyer, Matt Gohdes and Jake Whetton amongst others, but it was the back line defensive effort that impressed. Conceding just six goals in their six matches, their back line leaked five goals fewer than the next tightest defences of Western Australia and New South Wales.

While the Thundersticks put up a great fight in the grand finale, very few came close to denying the Queensland men over the course of the tournament.

Cale Cramer was the hero for the Blades, netting a double in their 2-1 grand final victory over Western Australia's Thundersticks, for whom Chris Bausor scored a penalty stroke.

Captain Mark Knowles, the reigning International Player of the Year, says



Western Australia Silver Medallists
Photo by Russell Brown, Darwin
Camera House.



that while the team is packed with international stars of the game, its success is very much down to the home-grown talent from Queensland.

"It's not the national squad players winning these tournaments, it's the guys back in Brisbane in the home training environment," said the 31 year-old from Rockhampton.

"It's an exceptional effort for all the work the guys are doing back in Brisbane, the fitness work the guys in the national program in Perth are doing. To integrate everyone into one program...every year we continue to do it."

Perhaps the surprise of the tournament was NSW Waratahs, who failed to make it into the coveted Pool C to contest the medals before ultimately finishing fifth. The Waratahs arrived with high expectations and squad full of young Kookaburras talent, going on to score 29 goals with penalty corner ace Blake Govers firing home ten of them to secure the top goal scorer award.

Special mention too for Eddie Ockenden. The Tasmanian was runner-up to Mark Knowles in the 2014 International Player of the Year voting but showed once again he is very much a home favourite back in Australia as he scooped his fourth AHL Player of the Tournament award in five years.

In Sydney, the Blades' female compatriots – the Queensland Scorchers – took home the silverware for the second time in three years. Having missed out on the gold medal 12 months earlier at the hands of the NSW Arrows the Scorchers were a team determined to get back on top.

For the Queensland women, the trophy came as a result of success at



On what they'd like to see changed in future AHLs:

"Back to home and away weekends. The 1-2 week tournament doesn't do the event justice. We need to get it back out there during the local competitions and make events of each match day weekend."

Andrew Charter, RAMS Home Loans Canberra Lakers

"Return it to a few weekends throughout the year. It gives the new guys and club players a taste of the speed of the game and the level they should and can be training at. It would help deliver better growth throughout all players."

Chris Ciriello, Victorian Vikings



both ends of the pitch as they top scored with 21 goals while conceding just seven, and as a result of doing it the hard way with a crucial semi-final win over home favourites NSW Arrows.

The Arrows, under the leadership of new coach Katrina Powell, an Olympic gold medallist at the same venue 15 years earlier, were considered by many to be the pre-tournament favourites to retain their 2014 title. But a defeat in the pool phase for Queensland at the hands of the Victorian Vipers set up the heavyweight clash in the semi-finals.

With little to separate the sides, it took Jill Dwyer's goal 60 seconds from full time to earn the Scorchers a 2-1 win and a place in the final, to face the Vipers once again.

As in the semi-final, the Scorchers fell behind in the gold medal match but rallied through goals from Hockeyroos stalwarts Jodie Kenny and Madonna Blyth to clinch the women's AHL crown, cancelling out Emily Hurtz's early opener.

Despite the influence of Dutch import, Olympic champion and two-time World Cup gold medallist Kim Lammers, the WA Diamonds had to settle for fifth after missing out on a place in the top four. Their surprise turnaround defeat at the hands of ACT's Strikers did the damage in the pool phase.

NOT JUST ABOUT THE HOCKEY

One of the most successful developments in recent years has been Hockey Australia's decision to 'twin' the AHL with the Under 13 Australian

TAS v WA. Photo by Greg Thompson
[Click InFocus]



On coming up against Kookaburras teammates at the AHL:

“It becomes a cat and mouse game mentally. To see if they utilise their favourite skills or challenge you with something else or different.”

Chris Ciriello,
Victorian Vikings

Eddie Bone (ACT). Photo by Greg Thompson
[Click InFocus]



NSW Waratahas. Photo by Russell Brown,
Darwin Camera House.



WA vs VIC.

Queensland Scorchers - Champions.
Photo by Greg Thompson [Click InFocus]



Championships so that the youngest state team players compete in their national championship event at the same venue as their senior heroes and heroines.

Aside from sharing the same venue, hotels and the pitches, the two groups – juniors and seniors – get together over the course of the week for coaching clinics, barbecues and social activities. It's not unusual to see the Under 13s cheering on their more senior counterparts each afternoon and it was especially pleasing to see the roles reversed on a number of occasions as the AHL teams came down to the venue in the morning to cheer on their "mini me" equivalents.

BIGGEST EVER BROADCAST OF THE AHL

Almost 3000 minutes of AHL action was live streamed from Darwin and Sydney this year with every one of the 48 matches filmed and streamed live in conjunction with Australian hockey production company Hockey Zone.

On joining up with state teammates and friends:

"The best thing is simply getting the chance to hang out and get back in touch with my old friends and play like we did in the old days."

Andrew Charter, RAMS Home Loans Canberra Lakers

The result was the biggest production of Australian Hockey League content ever, which resulted in Aussie broadcaster Ten showing the AHL on its tenplay website.

In all, the matches and highlights packages were viewed more than 300,000 times across Livestream, tenplay and Facebook.

MOSSY & ROBBO'S AHL BLAB

In another first for the AHL this year, sports journalism double act Mossy and Robbo broadcast a live daily show each night featuring some of the stars of the AHL. Each evening a Kookaburra and a Hockeyroo competing at the AHL took part in an online chat with the social media stars, giving their insights into the tournaments and answering the day's burning questions, like "who chose Hotshots for the SA team name?" ●

FINAL STANDING: WOMEN'S AHL

1. Queensland Scorchers (QLD)
2. Victorian Vipers (VIC)
3. NSW Arrows (NSW)
4. Canberra Labor Club Strikers (ACT)
5. WA Diamonds (WA)
6. SA Suns (SA)
7. NT Pearls (NT)
8. Tassie Van Demons (TAS)

FINAL STANDING: MEN'S AHL

1. Queensland Blades (QLD)
2. WA Thundersticks (WA)
3. Tassie Tigers (TAS)
4. Victorian Vikings (VIC)
5. NSW Waratahs (NSW)
6. RAMS Home Loan Canberra Lakers (ACT)
7. SA Hotshots (SA)
8. SRA Territory Stingers (NT)

AND THE WINNER IS...

WOMEN'S AHL AWARDS

Player of the Tournament: Jane Claxton (SA Suns)

Player of the Final: Rachael Lynch (Victorian Vipers)

Goalkeeper of the Tournament: Rachael Lynch (Victorian Vipers)

Top Goal Scorer of the Tournament: Emily Hurtz (Victorian Vipers) 6 goals

Player the Whistle Award: Victorian Vipers

MEN'S AHL AWARDS

Player of the Tournament: Eddie Ockenden (Tassie Tigers)

Player of the Final: Cale Cramer (Queensland Blades)

Goalkeeper of the Tournament: Andrew Charter (RAMS Home Loans Canberra Lakers)

Top Goal Scorer: Blake Govers (NSW Waratahs) 10 goals

Player the Whistle Award: Tassie Tigers

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STICK REVIEW

BY
HUGH HOCKING

Grays

GR 11000 Jumbow

For starters...
what a flashy looking
stick. Visually, this stick
looks absolutely stunning.



Anway, onto the actual stick. I'll touch on what "tech talk" I feel is actually relevant. For more info, please have a look at Grays' tech page where they cover everything in extensive detail.

JUMBOW BLADE PROFILE

Everyone has run into this one before, and for good reason. The Jumbow is one of the most extreme bows on the market, making it a drag flicker's dream, and hoisting overheads very very easy.



GRAPHENE ENHANCEMENT TECHNOLOGY

While at first I considered this a marketing gimmick, after two months of extensive use I kinda do agree with Grays that the Graphene embedded into the stick makes it feel, and play fundamentally different to expected. Talks of increased touch, feel and power transfer check out. In particular, I feel the handling response, on traps mostly is very good for a stick of this high a carbon percentage.

OCTAGONAL HANDLE

One of the stick's weirder, and in my eyes poorly implemented features. On paper, the handle being an octagon to improve touch and feel is an excellent idea. In reality, even through the grip the edges felt sharp, and meant that if you mishit the ball the sensation was more jarring than expected.

HITTING

This is a good segue into my next point. The hitting on this stick is absolutely superb. Absolutely mind blowingly easy and comfortable. The sweet spot is large, and hitting comes off cleanly and comfortably. Once you adjust to the low bow shape, hitting hard flat passes, as well as blasting balls into the roof of the net should come with ease. As always with more extreme low bows though, expect to spend a training session or two watching your



team mates scramble for cover as you switch your technique up to compensate.

TOMAHAWKS

Put simply, the easiest stick to tomahawk with I've ever used. The sweet spot is gigantic, it's very easy to control height on the ball thanks to the blade profile and the power transfer is flawless. Swing hard, the ball goes harder. It's really easy to guide accuracy too.

Backhands seem to be a strength of Grays recently, and this stick just continues the trend.

PUSHING & SLAPPING

I've grouped these together for convenience, as my feedback for both is remarkably similar. Dragging, pushing and slinging the ball with this stick is a breeze. The headshape, in combination with the low bow means it's very easy to drag the ball around your body, or around opposition players. Touch on the ball is surprisingly good for such a high carbon content stick.



As with hitting, the sweet spot for slapping with this stick is gigantic. Seemingly, the harder you swing at the ball, the faster it comes off. It's very hard to have a slap come off badly and I've only messed one or two up since I've been using this stick. In contrast to my last Grays (7000 Jumbow) I could spend energy focusing on my swing, and more into putting a large amount of power through the ball.

FLICKING

On this, my feedback and feelings are somewhat paradoxical. On paper, the bow is excellent for flicking. In game though, and on corners the reality is different. The stick isn't amazingly light, and though it is easy to flick with the weight almost hampers drag flicking.

Aerials on the other hand are a joke. You'll be throwing with distance and precision with ease. The low bow and touch on the stick make it flawless.

To use in matches, this stick is excellent. However after two months of use, its durability is slightly dubious. I do play in a lower grade, where people tackle like they're trying to injure you, and this is probably evident on my stick. I've documented the major damage to the head, all of which have come from fairly mediocre tackles. After two months, the stick plays as nicely as it did the day I got it. My main issue for the first few weeks was the rather sharp handle, which I fixed with a layer of K Tape under a Grays cushion grip.

Overall, I really do enjoy using this stick. The new technology seems to have been implemented well (minus the octa handle) and the stick feels well constructed, with striking graphics on it. ●





EFFECTIVE GOAL KEEPING

BY
JUDE MENEZES

Penalty Corner Defence
Logging technique



In the last edition we touched on the importance of balance and positioning in order to be better goal keepers. In this article we will go through the Penalty corner defence and discuss the logging technique to bring off a save off a direct hit or sweep. Timing is the key to making this skill work well for you.

Firstly, the defence of penalty corners is a very important aspect of modern day hockey. With the Penalty corner exponents becoming more lethal with their execution and variations getting more clinical, defences have their work cut out. The runners, postie and the goal keeper have to work together and also change their running patterns (to keep the opposition guessing) constantly.

Secondly, there is a big difference in the men and women's game as far as Penalty corner attack and defence goes. In the men's game, almost every international team has about two to three quality drag flickers, hence the flick would be the go to option. Goal keepers will remaining standing while defending

drag flicks. However, in the women's game, despite a number of teams having at least one drag flicker, the variations get used quite a bit more. The sweep or hit becomes an option, hence an effective logging technique can cover a lot of the goal by presenting a long barrier. Since the first hit of a PC has to hit the 18 inch back board, if a goal keeper logs effectively, an easy save can be made. If you haven't logged before it can be pretty challenging, especially seeing the ball coming at you while on the deck. Once you master the technique of logging (both going down and getting back up) you will bring off a lot of saves and make it a lot harder for the opposition to score as you are presenting a longer barrier.



Preparing to defend a PC (Direct hit or sweep)

- ✓ Call out your defensive pattern - get organised early (teams usually have set running lines to defend PC's) e.g 1st runner pressures the strike/flick, 2nd and 3rd runner take away the lay offs and deflectors, and the post defender covers the goal keepers left post (this can vary)
- ✓ Keep your hips and shoulders pointed to the target at the top of the circle and only turn your head towards the injector
- ✓ Stay nice and relaxed in your stance





Execution of the logging technique

- ✓ Watch the ball all the way, from the injector to the trapper and then the hitter
- ✓ Two to three relaxed steps towards the ball (depending on GK height, some goalies go out further to cut down the angle)
- ✓ As the ball is trapped and bunted into the circle, slide the right leg in front of your left (can be behind as well, GK preference), right hip and right glove sliding along the turf, ensuring that your log is smooth, left leg sits on top of the right, hips leaning slightly forward, toes extended to cover every inch possible (left post to be covered by defender who can also clear any rebound off the pads)
- ✓ Head vertical to watch the ball all the way (eyes level)
- ✓ Left glove in front of the neck ready to block any ball that comes from waist upwards to the stick side post, especially the ones that are slightly raised off the ground
- ✓ Use the left glove to smother anything that comes to the torso above the waist and let the defenders clear (usually a well practised move)
- ✓ Stick extends all the way to cover the post, face slightly closed to prevent the ball deflecting into the net and angled so the ball goes over the base line and prevents giving away a soft rebound
- ✓ Full extension ensures the gap under the arm is covered, in case the ball squeezes past the left glove
- ✓ Any ball below the waist should be allowed to hit the body or pads and allowed to be cleared by the defenders (remember to lean forwards to prevent the ball going into the net off the pads)



Getting back up smoothly for 2nd Phase (from a log position)

If the ball is hit towards your stick side and you deflect it over the baseline then usually you can get up any way you like. But if the ball has rebounded to the top of the circle then this technique will help you get up smoothly and yet still be facing the ball. All this without using your right knee to get up. This technique demands a lot of core and upper body strength, but that's a prerequisite for a goal keeper so you should aim to keep building and getting stronger. The more you practise this movement, the easier and smoother it will get.

- ✓ Keep your eye on the ball at all times
- ✓ Get your left leg behind your right leg and push simultaneously upwards with your right hand (left leg and right hand work together)
- ✓ Pull your right leg across in front of your body and you will now end up facing the ball ready for a second phase shot
- ✓ Left glove ready at all times during this movement





In the video, Junior Black stick, Sarah Matthews demonstrates the technique really well.

This skill is to be used only to defend a direct strike or sweep during penalty corners. Timing is the key so make sure you watch the ball and look for cues for a hit or flick.

So keep practising this skill and use it when required. The more you practice this movement, the smoother and easier it becomes. It's great to have a range of different skills in your quiver. The decision making process of when to pull out a specific skill is what separates a good goal keeper from a great one. ●





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CAPITAL COBRAS & AUCKLAND WOMEN WIN FORD NHL

This year's Ford National Hockey League saw several weekends of top class hockey at various venues around the country, before all regions came together for finals week at the Whangarei ITM Hockey Centre where the Men's Challenge Shield and Women's K Cup winners were crowned.

STORY BY JOHN WHITING / PHOTOS BY NED DAWSON







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It was one of the hardest fought NHL campaigns in recent years, with the incentive of national selection seeing all current Black Sticks and hopefuls playing in their regional colours. There were plenty of storylines going into the tournament, highlighted by the Auckland Men who were looking for an unbelievable fifth consecutive championship while the Auckland Women were also on the hunt for a

repeat after taking out the K Cup in 2014.

More exciting news was the additional of several key names on both the men's and women's team sheets. Former Black Sticks captain Kayla Whitelock (Central Mysticks), Emily Naylor (Central Mysticks), Krystal Forgeson (Auckland), Charlotte Harrison (Auckland) and Cathryn Pollock (nee Finlayson) (Central) all returned for

the tournament. Capital Men also welcomed back former Black Stick goalkeeper Kyle Pontifex.

Whitelock, who had given birth just three months earlier, enjoyed being back on the turf and said it will take some time to regain her fitness and form.

"I'm just taking it step by step and starting with the basic stuff first. The big thing for me is building up my fitness gradually so I don't have



any knee issues. So interval training, building up my core, and a real focus on speed and power – that’s what I’m really lacking at the moment,” Whitelock said.

The opening rounds of the tournament saw teams set the tone on their home turfs, and after two games it was the Canterbury Cats and North Harbour sitting pretty on the women’s table with a maximum eight points, while North Harbour and Auckland were also undefeated in the men’s fixtures.

Finals week showcased some brilliant hockey with points tables getting a shake up several times as the pressure came on to lock in semi final spots. At the conclusion of round robin the men’s semis saw Auckland face the Capital Cobras and the Southern Dogs go up against Midlands. Meanwhile, the Canterbury Cats went head to head with hosts Northland and Midlands battled Auckland in the women’s semi finals.

SEMI FINALS

The Capital Cobras upset top seeded Auckland 3-2 in their semi-final, leaving the defending champions to play the bronze medal





game. Auckland looked on track early after Arun Panchia opened the scoring in the eighth minute, but the Cobras replied with three unanswered goals courtesy of Matt Symonds, Stephen Jenness and Benedict van Woerkom. With goalkeeper Devon Manchester subbed for an extra field player in the 54th minute, Auckland scored six seconds from fulltime but it was too

late to deliver an equaliser.

The Southern Dogs powered home to grab their berth in the final following a 2-0 victory against a strong Midlands side. Black Sticks striker Hugo Inglis opened the scoring in the 19th minute for the Dogs after an intentional infringement in the circle from Midlands led to a penalty stroke. Kane Russell then sealed the result

six minutes out from fulltime with a powerful penalty corner drag flick.

In the women's semis, Northland booked their place in the final after a hard fought 4-2 win over the Canterbury Cats in front of a vocal crowd. Canterbury opened strongly with Olivia Merry scoring in the seventh minute, before Northland responded with goals from Hannah Haughn and Samantha Polovnikoff



to go into halftime with a 2-1 lead. The Cats equalised in the first minute of the third quarter but Northland, despite being without injured star Stacey Michelsen (hamstring), muscled up and scored twice more through Jasmin McQuinn and Anna Thorpe to ensure the result.

Auckland joined Northland in the final thanks to a narrow 3-2 victory over Midlands. It was an extremely close match-up which went into halftime at 1-1 following first half goals from Gemma Flynn for Midlands and Krystal Forgesson for Auckland. Auckland went to score a further two unanswered goals through Julia King and Sam Harrison before Midlands pulled back to within one after a goal from captain Sam Charlton. Auckland were able to hold on to secure a chance to defend their title.

FINALS

Auckland powered to their second straight K Cup title with a dominant 6-0 win over hosts Northland in a replay of last year's final. It took just four minutes for Auckland to get on the board when Liz Thompson smashed home a penalty corner shot. The defending champions went on to score two more goals in the first half through Katie Glynn and Julia King. A vocal crowd urged on Northland throughout the second half, but Auckland proved too good on both sides of the ball and sealed the result with three further goals to Deanna Ritchie, Sam Harrison and Monique Wilson.

Auckland had been beaten 3-0 by Northland and three times needed shoot-outs to win matches during round robin, but they made no mistake in the final against the hosts, whom they also beat in last year's final.

"We're pretty happy with our overall performance. We kept the goals coming and kept our foot on the throttle for the whole 60 minutes," Black Sticks defender Liz Thompson said.

Thompson was one of Auckland's outstanding players, locking the





defence shut against a Northland side who struggled to get clear scoring opportunities.

"We just wanted to make sure we kept our basics up and linked up through all the layers. When we were all doing the little one percenters and everyone was doing their bit, it added up to a pretty good performance."

Northland defender Brooke Neal was named Women's Most Valuable Player for the tournament after a top class week of hockey. Midlands forward Gemma Flynn took out the women's top goal scorer trophy with 10 goals at the tournament, including eight field goals and two penalty corners.

Meanwhile, the Capital Cobras won the Challenge Shield with a 4-3 shoot-out result after the score was level 0-0 at fulltime. Wet conditions slowed play on the turf and the game became a defensive battle, with neither side able to put the ball into the back of the net. The second half saw some high quality end to end hockey as the Cobras and Dogs searched for a game winning

blow, but the stalemate at the end of regulation time sent the result to shoot-out. It's the first time the Capital side has won the Challenge Shield since 2010.

Capital's veteran goalkeeper Kyle Pontifex proved the hero in the shoot-out, keeping composed to save Southern's final attempt from Kirk Shimmins.

"I think out of everyone I've got the easiest job because I can play a part in it, everyone gets nervous when they're watching on telly or from the sidelines because they can't affect it," Pontifex said.

"With the shoot-outs the way they are, you just need to stay in it and stay on your feet for as long as possible, given the eight seconds deadline as soon as you commit or dive one way you've taken yourself out of the competition.

"I wasn't sure if it was the last one or not, so I was hoping it was and I had to have a bit of a pause to make sure the refs called fulltime, when they did I was pretty happy."

Southern captain Blair Tarrant

scooped the Men's Most Valuable Player award for his superb performance throughout the tournament. Canterbury Cavaliers defender Nick Haig locked up the men's top goal scorer award with eight, including seven penalty corners and one penalty stroke.

Midlands came through to win the women's bronze medal in a high scoring 7-4 win over the Canterbury Cats. Captain Sam Charlton scored a hat-trick while Arnica Palmer, Shiloh Gloyn, Gemma Flynn and Amy Robinson were also on the score sheet. Olivia Merry scored a double for Canterbury along with goals from Catherine Tinning and Jenny Storey.

In the men's bronze medal game Auckland came away with a hard fought 3-2 result over Midlands. Nic Woods opened the scoring for Midlands in the ninth minute before Joe Crooks equalised two minutes from halftime. Midlands grabbed the lead again but Simon Child ensured third place for Auckland with goals in the 42nd and 47th minutes. ●



FINAL STANDING: MEN'S FORD NHL

1. Capital Cobras
2. Southern Dogs
3. Auckland
4. Midlands
5. Canterbury Cavaliers
6. North Harbour
7. Central Mavericks
8. Northland

FINAL STANDING: WOMEN'S FORD NHL

1. Auckland
2. Northland
3. Midlands
4. Canterbury Cats
5. Central Mysticks
6. North Harbour
7. Capital
8. Southern Storm

WOMEN'S TOP GOAL SCORERS

PLAYER NAME	FORD NHL TEAM	FG	PC	PS	TOTAL
Gemma Flynn	Midlands	8	2	0	10
Kirsten Pearce	North Harbour	5	3	0	8
Sam Charlton	Midlands	3	3	0	6
Renee Ashton	Capital	4	0	0	4
Michaela Curtis	Central Mysticks	3	1	0	4

MEN'S TOP GOAL SCORERS

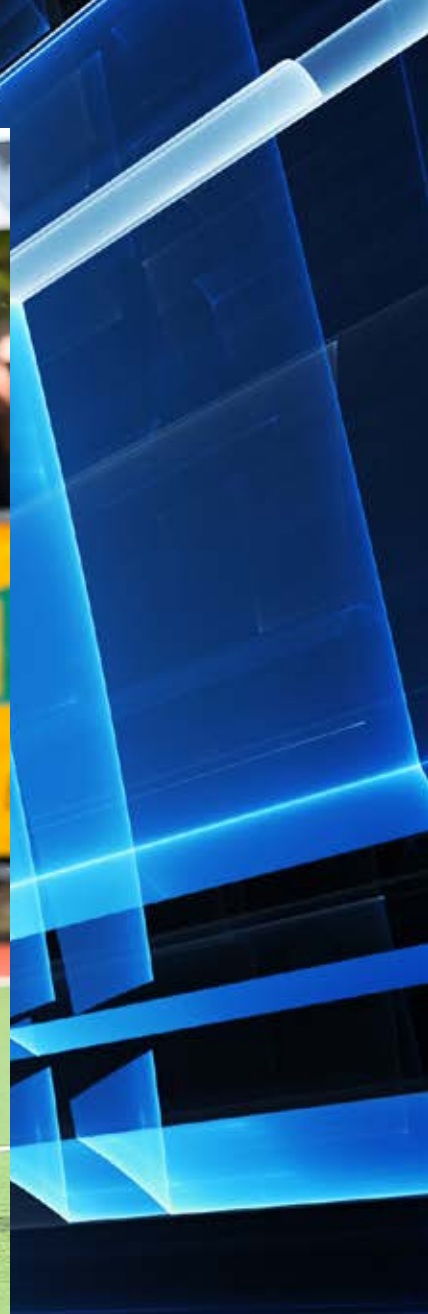
PLAYER NAME	FORD NHL TEAM	FG	PC	PS	TOTAL
Nick Haig	Canterbury Cavaliers	0	7	1	8
Steve Davison	Central Mavericks	6	1	0	7
Nick Wilson	Central Mavericks	5	1	1	7
Hugo Inglis	Southern Dogs	3	1	2	6
Stephen Jenness	Capital Cobras	5	0	1	6





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WOMEN**









CANTERBURY DO THE DOUBLE

NST 2015

STORY BY AIDAN O'CONNOR
PHOTOS BY NED DAWSON







It was all Red and Black on National Senior's Finals day in Whangarei this year, as both the Canterbury Barracudas and Canterbury Beavers took out the Women's and Men's competitions respectively. For the Barracudas, it was a first triumph in 6 years, whilst the Beavers managed to retain their title won last year against the New Zealand Defence Force.

The competition was fierce across the 6 days of play with some cracking games, noticeably the first game of the tournament between the New Zealand Defence Force and Tauranga, won by Tauranga with an incredible scoreline of 8-6. The match which will live long in the memory however is the clash between the Beavers and the Defence Force. The Beavers had to win to go through to the final, which they did on the last play of the game through a cracking reverse stick shot





from Rob Buhler. The elation on the field was matched only by the agony shown by the Defence Force team.

It wasn't just the Men on fire in Whangarei, with the Women's competition producing some incredible games. Semi Final's day in particular was all action – both Semi Final's went into Golden Goal drop-off extra time, with Northland prevailing over Southland 2-1 and Canterbury edging Auckland 1-0. The drop-off system to decide knockout games was introduced to great success in Secondary School and Association tournaments this year.

The Barracudas were up first on Finals day, taking on the local Northland side in front of a big crowd at the Whangarei ITM Hockey Centre. The game was evenly matched throughout, with Canterbury heading to the halftime break with a slender 2-1 lead. Northland pushed hard in the second half to no avail, with Samara Dalziel finally putting the game beyond doubt with a 3rd goal 6 minutes from Full time. Auckland managed to hold off a strong late Southland push to win the 3rd/4th playoff 2-0 and secure the bronze medals.





The Men's final followed a similar storyline to the Women's – a close first half with Canterbury again heading to the break with a 2-1 lead. The second half was a different story, Canterbury deservedly building their lead 13 minutes in with Sam Baxter finding the back of the net, and holding on in driving rain in the late stages to secure the win.





Captain Chris Goldsbury was quick to pay tribute to both the Tauranga and New Zealand Defence Force teams after the match – the Defence Force securing the Bronze with a convincing 8-2 win over the local Northland side.

This was the third edition of the combined National Senior Tournament and National Hockey League tournaments, and the event continues to go from strength to strength. The atmosphere with all 3 turfs brimming with action was electric, with spectators often not knowing which game to watch! Once again, selectors named both a Women's and Men's National Senior Tournament team to compete at the HNZ Affiliates tournament in Hawke's Bay in April 2016. This event will once again coincide with the HBSEEC 8 Nations International Women's tournament creating a real festival of hockey in the Bay. ●





FINAL STANDING: WOMEN'S NST 2015

1. Canterbury Barracudas
2. Northland
3. Auckland
4. Southland
5. Tasman
6. Wellington
7. Waikato
- 9=. North Harbour
- 9=. Tauranga

FINAL STANDING: MEN'S NST 2015

1. Canterbury Beavers
2. Tauranga
3. New Zealand Defence Force
4. Northland
5. Waikato
6. North Harbour
7. Tasman
8. Southland

NATIONAL SENIOR TOURNAMENT TEAMS SELECTED TO COMPETE AT HNZ AFFILIATES TOURNAMENT

APRIL 4 – 8 2016, HAWKE'S BAY

WOMEN'S TOP GOAL SCORERS

Hannah Baldwin, Nicola Connell, Meghan Dalton (Auckland), Kiriana Brown, Kate Chapman, Jess Deakins, Anne MacKechnie (Canterbury), Lucy De Pass, Kendyll Peters, Rebecca Wilson (Northland), Aimee Heaps, Erin Smyth (Southland), Tory Daugherty (Tasman), Franki Traini (Tauranga), Rachel Lecky, Imogen Neil (Waikato), Haley Mallinder, Penny Stark (Wanganui)

MEN'S TOP GOAL SCORERS

Rob Bhuler, Chris Goldsbury, Garren Fyfe, Andrew Sherratt (Canterbury), Paul Fordham (North Harbour), Brad Cotton (Northland), Kyle Leslie, Ambrose O'Halloran, Jan Peterson (NZDF), Ben McLean (Southland), David Melhopt (Tasman), Craig Fowler, Hugh Gilmer, Abir Mukherjee, Lachie Musgrave, Gareth Stewart (Tauranga), Dean Armstrong, Josh Rainey (Waikato)



NST 2015 FINAL WOMEN









NST 2015 FINAL MEN











BATTLE of the SOUTH

STORY & PHOTOS
BY NED DAWSON

Ashburton, New Zealand, a small town about an hour south of Christchurch played home recently to eleven of New Zealand's top secondary school 2nd XIs for the annual **Chris Arthur Cup**.







"Secondary School tournaments provide competitive hockey for school teams from all over New Zealand. For some it is an opportunity to represent their school in a tournament close to home and for others an opportunity for them to travel to other parts of the country" explained Andrew Brydon, chairperson of the Hockey NZ Youth Council. He added "For all players, umpires, coaches and managers it is an opportunity to develop their skills. These tournaments foster pride in one's school, and friendships with fellow players.

Teams ventured south from around New Zealand and the lineup for this year included Auckland Diocesan School for Girls, Christchurch Girls High School, Rangī Ruru Girls School, Rangitoto College, St Cuthberts College, St Hilda's Collegiate, St Margarets College, Tauranga Girls College, Villa Maria College, Waikato Diocesan and Whangarei Girls High School. The tournament consisted of pool games over the first three days (31st Aug to 2nd Sept) with the finals coming together on the 3rd and 4th of September.

The weather over the week was typical New Zealand winter weather – with single digit temperatures being the norm for the week, and a few days where rain decided to come and visit – whose bright idea was it to make hockey a winter sport ?? One great advantage about holding the tournament in Ashburton is the hockey turf is never far from anywhere. For many of the girls attending this event it was their first time at an away tournament. Chatting with some of the girls and it was evident that it was exciting to be away – but also thankful for the leadership and support of their team managers and support staff while away from family and friends. "It was great to see the girls all dig deep and do whatever was needed during our stay in Ashburton" explained Auckland Diocesan Girls School team manager Lynne Lawson. And this was typical of all the teams. However come Monday



BOOM!





morning it was back to business with ten games being held on opening day – five in the morning and then five in the afternoon. The morning session saw Christchurch Girls open their account with a 4-1 win over Rangitoto College, St Margarets were 3-2 victors over Rangi Ruru and St Cuthberts took a 5-0 win over Waikato Dio. Tauranga Girls took 1-0 win over Villa Maria and the final game of the morning saw Whangarei Girls emerge victorious over St Hildas 3-0. Auckland Dio had the bye for the morning session but would be first up in the afternoon matches.

Heading into the afternoon matches and Dio Auckland drew 0-0 with Rangitoto College before Christchurch Girls took a hard fought win over Rangi Ruru with a 3-1 result. St Cuthberts continued on their winning streak with a 1-0 win over Villa Maria while Whangarei Girls accounted for Waikato Dio 3-1. The final match of opening day saw Tauranga Girls put 4 unanswered goals into the back of the St Hildas goal. St Margarets enjoyed the bye by watching a few games from the sideline. As Day One came to a close there was an interesting mix of winners and losers, some expected and some not so much.

After a nights rest day two dawned with only five games on the schedule with Christchurch Girls having the day off. First game up saw Rangi Ruru take on Rangitoto and come away with a 1-0 win, followed by Diocesan Auckland going down 5-0 to St Margarets. It was a bit closer game between Whangarei Girls and Villa Maria with Villa Maria taking the win 2-0.





Next up it was Waikato Dio securing valuable points with a 3-2 in over St Hildas and the final game of the day was between St Cuthberts and Tauranga Girls. So far the St Cuthberts girls hadn't been beaten and that trend would continue with a 2-0 win over Tauranga Girls. Again time for a decent nights rest because Wednesday was another double header day with ten games planned – Rangi Ruru having the bye for the morning and Rangitoto the afternoon bye.

It was going to be a cold start to the next days play with snow on the mountain tops in the distance, well we are in winter. The first game between Waikato Dio and Villa Maria kicked off at 8am in drizzle but it wasn't long before Villa Maria got the upper hand, and extending to a 3-0 win. When the second game came around St Hildas was on the end of a 7-0 steamrolling by the St Cuthberts girls as they continued on their





WOW!





winning ways. Whangarei Girls accounted for Tauranga Girls 2-0 in their game and Diocesan Auckland put up a great fight in their game against Christchurch Girls to emerge with a 1-1 draw. The final game of the morning matches saw St Margarets with a 5-0 win over Rangitoto College.

After a two hour break teams were back again for the afternoon session. Points were becoming even more important as this was the last day of pool play – the finals series was starting tomorrow so the ideal scenario was to grab as many points as possible today before heading into the sudden death Thursday games.

Villa Maria opened the scoring of the afternoon session with a 3-1 win over St Hildas followed by a shock loss to St Cuthberts going down 0-1 to Whangarei Girls. Waikato Dio accounted for Tauranga Girls 2-1 while Diocesan Auckland lost to Rangitoto 2-0. The last game of the day was played under lights combined with a chillingly cold southerly wind – and it was an all southern battle between St Margarets and Christchurch Girls, with St Margarets taking a hard fought win 2-0.

When it was all said and done the pool play provided some great hockey, probably the most impressive individual performance to date was that of Diocesan Auckland defender Gemma Charteris who was seconded into goal when regular goalie Brooklyn Cross injured herself in one of the earlier games.

Now it was onto the semi finals and first game up was between Rangitoto and St Hildas – with Rangitoto



taking a slim 1-0 win. The next semi was between Rangī Ruru and Tauranga Girls and as expected it wasn't going to be walkovers between any of the teams, however Rangī Ruru came out 3-1 over Tauranga Girls. Whangarei Girls were gaining some momentum throughout the series and in their semi final against St Margarets they emerged victorious with a 1-0 win. Diocesan Auckland was also starting to get their games together in the latter end of the tournament and scored a 2-1 win over Villa Maria. It was now down to Christchurch Girls and St Cuthberts to finish off the semi finals day and it would be St Cuthberts who came through as a 2-0 winner.

The finals draw had now been decided and it was going to be some great games on finals day. Every game played during the week was now part of history and all that mattered was the one last game tomorrow. Whether you were playing off for 9th and 10th, or were in the final – it was just as important for these girls. School pride was on the line.

Friday morning dawned and it was a crisp winters morning so you had to feel sorry for the first teams

up playing off for 9th and 10th place, this being Rangitoto and Waikato Diocesan. However the hockey gods had other ideas and at the end of the game it was a 0-0 draw, meaning both teams were 9th equal in the standings. Then it was onto the Tauranga Girls and Villa Maria game, playing off for the 7th and 8th positions. Tauranga gained the upper hand early and never relinquished it, keeping a 1-0 lead to the end. South Island powerhouse Rangī Ruru was taking on Diocesan Auckland in the battle for 5th and 6th. While Dio put up a good fight it was Rangī Ruru who emerged victorious with a 1-0 win.

Last years winners St Margarets found themselves in the position of playing off for 3rd and 4th place against fellow Canterbury school Christchurch Girls, and they had a point to prove – but would they. It was a great game to watch but there unfortunately had to be a winner and in this case it was St Margarets stretching to a 2-1 win over rivals Christchurch Girls.

Now we were into the final game of the 2015 Chris Arthur Cup. St Cuthberts had started the tournament off with some convincing wins but Whangarei

Girls had built up some good momentum throughout their pool play and semi final games so it was going to be an epic battle for the winner's title. As play got underway at 2pm on the Friday afternoon it was a fast paced affair, going from end to end. Neither team had the superiority expected over the other and at the end of normal time it was still locked 0-0. So what now, the rules for this tournament was goalie comes off and you play another 5 mins each way, if still no score then one player from each team comes off and you play another 5 mins each way. Well it took til the 50th minute in the second drop off period before Whangarei Girls High School's Brittany Glavish got a break and pushed the ball into the back of the St Cuthberts goal. It was a game worthy of a tournament final and unfortunately one team had to win. Whangarei Girls High School became the 2015 Chris Arthur Cup winners – well done girls.

Full marks must be given to the Mid Canterbury Hockey Club for some great hospitality and event management over the week. It was a tournament that was enjoyed by all and one that many of the girls will look forward to again next year. ●

**THE
FINAL**







Standings

Final Standings

Pool A

Pool B

Team	Standing
Whangarei Girls High 2nd XI	1
St Cuthbert's College 2nd XI	2
St Margaret's College 2nd XI	3
Christchurch Girls High 2nd XI	4
Rangl Ruru Girls' School 2nd XI	5
Diocesan School For Girls 2nd XI	6
Tauranga Girls' College 2nd XI	7
Villa Maria College 2nd XI	8
Rangitoto College 2nd XI	9
Waikato Diocesan School 2nd XI	9
St Hilda's Collegiate 2nd XI	11

Statistics

Individual Goal Scorers

Team Goal Scoring

Player	Team	FG	PC	PS	Total
GOODWIN-LISTER Ayla	STMG	6	0	0	6
EVANS Katie	STCU	5	0	0	5
BRIDGMAN Kate	VILL	4	0	0	4
MANYIMO Toni	TRGC	4	0	0	4
ABELL Maddie	CGHS	3	0	0	3
CATLEY Breana	STCU	3	0	0	3
HORN Amy	WHGG	3	0	0	3
NATRASS Maisie	RRGS	3	0	0	3
ROBERTS Lucy	STMG	3	0	0	3
ROBINSON Phoebe	RRGS	3	0	0	3

[View All](#)



PREVIOUS WINNERS

- 2008: St Margarets College
- 2009: Diocesan School for Girls
- 2010: Whangarei Girls High School
- 2011: Rangī Ruru Girls School
- 2012: Christchurch Girls High School
- 2013: Christchurch Girls High School
- 2014: St Margarets College





2015 OCEANIA CUP

21-25 October
Stratford

STORY BY JULIA WOODLEY
PHOTOS BY NED DAWSON







The final countdown is on – the Black Sticks Men are embracing their biggest challenge in recent years after head coach Colin Batch named his team for the Oceania Cup next week in Stratford, Taranaki.

The Oceania Cup will see the Black Sticks Men take on Samoa, Fiji and World No.1 Australia. The Black Sticks Women will take on Samoa and World No.2 Australia.

For the Black Sticks Men, it's the last chance at automatic qualification for the 2016 Olympic Games as they need to beat world champions Australia and win the tournament to book a ticket to Rio.

This week Batch named a talented group for the Oceania Cup, headlining the announcement is the selection of debutant Midlands striker Leo Mitai-Wells, aged 20, who is expected to add a spark up front for the men in black.

On the women's side, both the New Zealand and Australia women have already qualified for next year's Olympics, with valuable world ranking points on the line.

Several key names return to the Black Sticks after having missed the recent series, including influential midfielder Stacey Michelsen, goalkeeper Sally Rutherford, Ford National Hockey League MVP Brooke Neal, Ella Gunson and Jordan Grant.

Auckland striker Charlotte Harrison and North Harbour defender Kat Henry





have both earned a place in the side based on their recent performances.

On top of the action happening on the turf, popular band The Lady Killers will be putting on a power-packed show from 3.15pm on Saturday afternoon. Other entertainers including Ash & Aidan and Brendan Chase will also be performing throughout Saturday.

On Sunday, the popular Seaside Markets are relocating from New Plymouth to Stratford to offer up some of the region's best food, drinks and goods.

There are still VIP tickets available for the big trans-Tasman games on Thursday 22 October and Saturday 24 October and there's lots on offer to enjoy. A VIP ticket includes:

- A delicious two course buffet meal
- Two complimentary drinks
- Priority VIP stadium access
- Reserved stadium seating and indoor viewing if preferred.

To buy tickets and for more information click below:

<http://hockeynz.co.nz/Events/Full-Events-Listing/2015-oceania-cup>



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BLACK STICKS SOUTH ISLAND

PHOTOS BY NED DAWSON

Tour





It was a big week for the Black Sticks as they made their way from Blenheim, Nelson and then to Christchurch playing a total of eight internationals during the 2015 South Island Tour.



On the men's side it was the skilful India side who took out the series following a win, two losses and a draw. The Black Sticks Women faced Argentina and both teams picked up two wins, drawing the series.

There were three new faces for the Black Sticks during the tour - Auckland's Maddie Dowe, Capital's Kelsey Smith and Midlands' Matt Rees-Gibbs - all putting on the black shirt and immersing themselves in the Black Sticks environment for the first time.

There were also three milestone games with Natasha Fitzsimons clocking up 50 tests in Christchurch as well as hometown hero Olivia Merry playing her 100th on the same night. In Nelson, Steve Edwards walked on to the turf for



the 200th time since his debut in 2007 – an incredible achievement, placing him in the top ten most experienced New Zealand (men) players of all time.

The crowds came out at all three venues showing huge support for the two national teams.

In Blenheim, the Black Sticks Women ran a special training session for over 100 local children which will be fondly remembered for years to come.

Buoyed by funding from partners and council, Marlborough Hockey did a superb job of organising their first test match since 1958. They installed new seating and an electronic scoreboard as well as upgrading their carpark – and over the weekend, they turned on some typically beautiful sunny weather!

The visitors won 2-1 but not without a spirited comeback in the fourth



BARRONEVO

27

Macro



quarter from the Kiwis, spurred on by a goal from Black Stick Shiloh Gloyn. 'We were too patchy and not cohesive enough today, the last five minutes was pretty much the best part of our game with three or four shots – we finished well, but we have got to be better,' said head coach Mark Hager.

It was an end-to-end affair in the first half with both sides having their opportunities – Argentina were unlucky not to score early on when the ball bounced off the post. Likewise, the Black Sticks were rueing their chances when a nice piece of play was disallowed when the ball edged over the baseline and a Charlotte Harrison shot was superbly saved by the goalkeeper.

Argentina's Zuloaga was the first to score in the eighth minute from a penalty corner and the score remained till half time. The visitors doubled their lead when Maria Granatto finished off a nice team goal in the 35th minute. A strong vocal crowd in Blenheim kept the Black Sticks buoyed but the Kiwis struggled to find the connections in the circle to get on the scoreboard throughout most of the second half. With only four minutes left on the clock Sam Charlton set up a great goal which Gloyn finished off giving the Kiwis a sniff of a win. In the final minutes the Kiwis held possession, entering the





circle and taking shots but it was not to be and the win went the visitor's way. For Dowe and Smith they got their first taste of international hockey. 'Obviously a bit of nerves from both of them today, it's a big learning curve playing number three in the world – they are a team of very talented hockey players. But I'm pleased we can give Maddie and Kelsey an opportunity and no doubt they will learn from that today,' said Hager.

Onto the second test against Argentina and the Black Sticks Women took a 3-2 win over the visitors.

The Black Sticks got the result they wanted thanks to goals from Kirsten Pearce, Gemma Flynn and Olivia Merry. "It's always good to get a win and it's pleasing to see improvements in some areas of our game. But we just need to get better at playing the full four quarters well, and probably still need to be better structured," said Merry. In comparison to their previous performance, the Black Sticks Women were on fire from the first whistle and they continued to play with intensity, placing the World No. 3 Argentinians under pressure throughout the game.

There was excitement early on when Black Stick Kirsten Pearce drew goalkeeper Belen Succi to the top of the circle, and seemingly easily Pearce tapped the ball around her and it gently rolled over the line. But the Kiwis 1-0 lead didn't last long, the visitors found the net twice through Maria Granatto and then Noel Barrionuevo's unstoppable drag flick made it 2-1.

The Black Sticks were straight back into it after half time and when they were awarded a penalty corner it was Gemma Flynn who got the deflection and equalised.

With four minutes left on the clock, Merry got the crowd to their feet when she scored from her trade mark penalty corner flick to put the Kiwis in the lead. "Penalty corners were definitely a work-on from our last game and so to score from penalty corners today was pleasing," said Merry. Argentina had the opportunity to equalise when they were awarded a penalty corner right on full time, but they could not convert and the Kiwis bagged the win.





After perfect weather and fantastic crowds in Blenheim it was time to head over to Nelson where the Black Sticks bagged two wins - with the Women storming to a 4-1 victory to take the series lead and the Men taking out the first game 2-0 against India.

In the women's match, the Black Sticks Women were first to score when Sophie Cocks picked up the ball on the baseline and passed to Gemma Flynn who fired it to the back of the net to give the Kiwis a 1-0 lead in the 10th minute. Natasha Fitzsimons added to it ten minutes later thanks to a penalty corner drag-flick which went high over the keeper into the net. The team talk at half time worked for Argentina's Martina Cavallero who got the visitors on the scoreboard, but the Black Sticks held their composure, continuing to play an attacking and exciting style of hockey against the World No. 3 side and it paid off. Canterbury's Rachel McCann scored with six minutes on the clock and then Flynn took the game beyond doubt, scoring a double, to make it 4-1 in the final minute. "I think our first quarter and the last quarter were really good, I think there were a few patches when we panicked in defence, we have a young and inexperienced defensive line up so hopefully we learn from that and on Friday we are even better," said head coach Mark Hager.

Captain Anita Punt was all smiles after the game – getting a win from her first international on her home ground in front of a large crowd on a night where conditions couldn't have been more perfect.

In the men's game, it was a big occasion for Steve Edwards who was playing his 200th international. "Really cool for Stevie to bring up 200, really well deserved. He's a bit of a magician on the field!" said Canterbury's Nick







Haig. It was end to end hockey in the first half, and Haig was the first to score with a penalty corner drag-flick that ricocheted off the keeper's pad and went into the net. "It was a good win, I think it's coming together really well. The guys haven't been together for a while – so for the first hit out I think it was a good performance," said Haig. Auckland's Jared Panchia scored the second goal of the night, a great piece of play that finished when he received a pass from Ryan Archibald and slotted it home.

The second test for the men against India was a lot different to the game before with the Black Sticks Men going down 1-3, squaring up the series. "We started poorly, we had the edge in game one but they had that edge in game two," said head coach Colin Batch.

"We did improve as the game went on but the Indian goalkeeper denied us. A lot of good opportunities were created, but we need to finish them off. We created more opportunities tonight than we did last night which is a good sign, but we still need to be more thorough in our overall game," said Batch.

India was first to score through Ramandeep Singh who picked up a rebound from goalkeeper Devon Manchester and at close range knocked it home at the end of the first quarter.

Throughout the first half the Black Sticks Men had their chances to score from field goals and penalty corners, but goalkeeper Sreejesh Parattu was superb and was well supported by the Indian defenders.

In the second half, the Kiwis relentless attacking efforts paid off when Kane Russell scored from a cracking penalty corner drag-flick in the 45th minute just before the hooter. India converted their chances seven minutes later when Lalit Upadhyay scored a nice field goal to give the visitors the lead. With little time left on the clock, the Black Sticks made the call to remove Manchester and add an extra field player.

New Zealand held possession and once again looked threatening up front, but when the ball fell to India the Kiwis were scrambling in defence and Thimmaiah Chananda closed out the game with a goal in the final minute.

After a sensational time in Nelson it was time to pack up and head south





for the final game for the women and two more for men where both the Black Sticks Men and Women were both edged by India and Argentina at Marist Park at St Bede's College in Christchurch. The final weekend in Christchurch attracted a sell-out crowd, with the VIP tent brimming, sumo action at half time, fanatical Indian supporters and the MC getting the crowd right in behind the Black Sticks. However both Kiwi sides were outdone by just one goal - the winning goals coming in the last few minutes of each match.

It was the final game for the Black Sticks Women who walk away with a series draw after going down 1-2. It was end-to-end hockey in the first half with the Black Sticks unable to break through some solid Argentinian defence. There were two penalty corners awarded to Argentina in the first half and they made it count on the second attempt when Noel Barrionuevo got it past goalkeeper Amelia Gibson to give her side a 1-0 lead.

The tempo stepped up in the second half and the Black Sticks were awarded numerous penalty corners and it was Kat Henry that converted and found the equaliser in the 50th minute. As the clock counted down, both teams fought hard to find the series winning goal and with a sold-out crowd



the Black Sticks had the locals off their seats and on their side. But it was Julia Gomes who spoiled the Black Sticks party, converting a penalty corner with three minutes left to secure the win.

Black Stick Striker Olivia Merry was playing her 100th international tonight and she described it as a “bitter-sweet” experience. “Playing your 100th in front of a sold-out Christchurch home crowd is an absolutely awesome feeling, but to not come away with the win is gut-wrenching,” said Merry. “We didn’t come out firing in the second quarter and once Argentina went 1-0 up it was hard. They are a very skilful side, and they had the confidence and were able to get another goal with little time left to play,” said Merry. Merry was joined by Midlands Natasha Fitzsimons who played her 50th international.

In the men’s game, India was the first to get on the scoreboard when Rupinder Singh scored from a penalty corner in the 10th minute. The Black Sticks began to settle into the game during the second quarter and in the 22nd minute Auckland’s Jared Panchia superbly beat the keeper in a one-on-one contest at close range to tie it up.

The score remained until some nice counter-attack resulted in Ramandeep



Singh scoring a field goal to make it 2-1 to the visitors late in the third quarter. In the fourth quarter, the Black Sticks really put the pressure on and North Harbour's Steve Edwards found the space at the top of the circle and clinically smacked it home to get the Kiwis back in the game. It could have gone either way in the final five minutes, but it was Dharamvir Singh who scored a field goal to give the visitors the win. It was a big occasion for Nick Haig who was playing his first international on his home ground.

Then it was down to the final game of the series where the Black Sticks Men came away with a 1-1 draw – a game that head coach Colin Batch says was their best performance of the 2015 South Island Tour.

After a scoreless first half, the action was in the third quarter when Nick Ross scored for New Zealand with Sunil Sowmarpet finding the equaliser moments later. "I thought we played pretty well today. In the areas that we have been working on there has been good progress – I think it was our best performance even though we didn't win the game," said Batch.

"India tested us and we overcame those challenges well today, so a lot of positives have come out of the game but of course the game is about winning and we didn't do that today."

"This time in two weeks we will be lining up for the final [Oceania Cup] game, we have just played four games in a short amount of time and it's demanding for the players, so we will rest up over the next few days and refocus. There are a lot of positives to take from this tour – it's been good preparation" said Batch.



ARC



OBO



In the first half, both teams played clinical hockey with local Black Stick Brad Shaw playing a blinder in defence and making it difficult for the skillful Indian side to enter the circle. A dangerous tackle in the 22nd minute meant Shaw was yellow-carded, but it didn't appear to affect the Black Sticks as they rallied together for the remainder of the half.

Despite a nil-all score line at half time, it was an exciting 30 minutes of hockey with both sides creating opportunities and playing at high intensity throughout. The Kiwis finally made it count in the 41st minute when Nick Ross intercepted a ball in their attacking third, passed to Nick Wilson who dribbled it into the circle, passing back to Ross who tapped it in.

It was only two minutes later that India found the equaliser through Sunil Sowmarpet, the Black Sticks defenders caught unaware in a goalmouth scramble as the ball rolled over the line. The Black Sticks were awarded a penalty corner with just a couple of minutes on the clock but luck didn't go the Kiwis way and Ryan Archibald's deflection went just wide of the post.

The Black Sticks Men finished the series with one win, one draw and two losses. ●



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