

Presidents Report: 2023

The start of my last reports I was either referring to floods and soaked fields or the effects of Covid on our competition. This year we have had perfect weather, a mild winter and with few Saturdays effected by rain. It has been a great season for hockey.

With the end of the season upon us, I wish to highlight the wonderful contribution of players, supporters, friends and families who enable us to run a smooth competition and to foster a sporting club that encourages the growth of friendship, skills, opportunities to experience hockey in a broad context and general enjoyment of playing in our club.

My first thankyou goes to our club committee. No matter that our club is small, our committee is diligent and committed and its not just in the months we are active.

We are blessed to have our long term members in Lindsay and Vince, they certainly take on a work load that is the backbone in the running of the club. Supported also by Kate, Juliet, Roxy, myself, Ian, Mark. I can honestly say that we have a committee that is passionate not just about hockey but also about the growth of our club in all aspects within our community.

Our committee and club is well supported by the players and parents of players and supporters of our club who each Saturday come along to ensure that our players both senior and junior have the best opportunity to play their sport in a positive and fun atmosphere.

A big thankyou to Nathan Whitten and his two boys, Oscar and Mason, each Saturday they were here at early to set up for hockey. They rarely missed a Saturday morning.

Another thankyou to Jamie Astil who helped with the line marking.

A huge thankyou to Catherine Owen to managing our canteen.

Another amazing effort by Ian who umpired both seniors and juniors and willing to give advice and coaching to our junior umpires.

Another thankyou to Sean O Rouke who managed our goalie gear and coached our young and old players to learn this important role in the game.

To all our junior coaches and umpires who managed teams in our junior grades we deeply appreciate your commitment to our juniors and seniors.

Our club is part of the Hunter Association which involves the clubs of Maitland and Cessnock. I believe this year we have seen a growth in our identity as a club that belongs to a dynamic association.

The Hunter Association has seen a growth in numbers and teams participating in State Championships. With success in winning state titles or reaching finals in State carnivals.

The Un13 boys won their State finals for their division. With two teams entered this year. We had teams in un15 boys and girls. With the boys making the final of the division. With seniors we had entered an Open's men side for the first time and they made the finals. Also an Over 40s men side which made the finals also. With the women, 6 teams entered the Masters carnival with two teams making finals, one as joint winners and the other winning.

We are an association that is providing juniors and seniors opportunities to develop their skills, which is reflected in the increase in selection in State Squads and teams.

An important initiative was the creation of the Hunter development program which ran at the beginning of the season to focus on improving skills and foster friendship between clubs.

Our goal as an association is provide an opportunities to experience quality coaching while keeping the costs low for all families.

Our season started with a successful Twilight competition. Twilight competition is an opportunity for new players have a go at hockey and for others to have fun and with some much needed exercise. Its focus is a friendly preseason competition which is a chance to invite people to have a go, next year the focus will be to promote to a wider audience.

After last year's season that was effected by rain we turned our attention to obtaining a turf. We have to thank Lindsay Brown for the many hours he put into developing the concept of a Multipurpose turf to be used by all the community. This was presented to the Sports Council, which was received with mixed reaction. Though we were disappointed with the lack of support from some areas, there is now an opportunity presented by Tomaree High school for a turf though not a playing size but will have positive outcomes for our club. Still in the planning stage.

An important goal of our club was to use the grant we obtained to build a much needed disability ramp for users of the sporting center. Yet again Lindsay Brown has put many hours to make this a reality. This project is ongoing.

Though the rain has been minimal this season the fields have been a concern with the use by other users of the center and damage has occurred. Lindsay has been onto this with emails to the council to bring attention to the fields which is a safety issue for us as well as wishing to have good fields for enjoyment of the game. Thankyou Lindsay for your focus in this area.

Our club has a continued focus on reaching out to local schools. Our goal is to introduce hockey and give kids and opportunity to learn about the sport and hopefully we can grow our game in this manner. I would like to thank Juliet ORourke for her continued support in assisting me in this, we reach over 100 students each week and get great positive feedback from students and teachers.

Our junior competition has been mixed in its growth. Our C grade though low in numbers due to players moving up to B grade it still was able to provide a mixture of development of skills and competition and from the feedback from parents a positive competition. Our B grade this year has grown and it was exciting to see new players in this area and has been a successful competition with the growth of skills and the consistent numbers each week.

Our A grade competition though down on numbers, displayed consistent high quality games each week. Most of the players are playing seniors and in the Newcastle competition.

The senior competition has been an exciting and close competition this season and the quality of the games have been a high standard of hockey. With finals coming up it is still open to who

is able to win on the day. I would like to thank Ian for umpiring, Lindsay and for Luke Payne, Stuart Churchill and Scott Rainbow from Hornets hockey for helping out when needed.

Our end of season carnival in Maitland for juniors was a great success, we had an un 10s side and two un13s side this year and one Un16s team. The players expressed they had a great time and were exhausted by the long day and much hockey was played. Our Un16s side were joint winners on the day and our Nelson Bay un 13s side came second and third. A very worthwhile experience for all concerned. I like to thank our coaches, Mark, Jane, Hamish and David for helping out with the coaching of the teams. Of course to Lindsay, Mark, myself, Riley Wells, Sean O Rouke and Charlie for umpiring.

Our club wishes to thank and acknowledge our sponsors this year. We like to thank Johnstons for their continued support to our club. A thankyou also to Nathan Whitten from Fair Dinkum Builds who funded our storeroom shelving upgrade. Also to 888 Survey, Mark Williams in his support of a representative player.

To end this report of which I may have missed saying something important. I feel positive about the future of the club and I believe with the support of our committee, players and parents the club is in good hands to continue to provide a friendly, inspiring, and forward thinking club that will ensure the growth of our sport.

Thankyou

Cathryn Churchill