Junior section report

The season has been another very busy one for the junior section. Our numbers continue to grow and we now have over 200 U18s registered with the club. Approximately 35 of these juniors are involved in senior hockey but what is also encouraging is that 110 of our junior members are 12 and younger.

To ensure we can manage large numbers of children on Sunday mornings we have 16 volunteer senior coaches who are helped by approximately 10 junior assistant coaches. Many thanks to the huge commitment and enthusiasm these coaches show every week and for their commitment to travel to tournaments all round the region. I’d particularly like to thank Paul Eagles who for many years has been a junior coach at Newark. Obviously started when his son Ben took up hockey but Paul’s commitment and enthusiasm has never wavered and he is currently coaching a very successful U10 boys team.

Unfortunately we have to say goodbye this season to three fab coaches - Charlotte Staniforth, Ellie Laughton and Robbie Robertshaw who have inspire so many young players at the club.

We also rely on the help of four inside volunteers who are an integral part of Sunday mornings at the Magnus. Thank you to them also.

This season has seen our juniors involved in more matches than ever before. In total we have played 52 fixtures so far this season and still have five more to play before the end of the season on May 12th.

We are particularly excited about the U10 and U12 girls who qualified for the midlands finals of England Hockey In2Hockey in a few weeks time .

Badgers still continues to be an excellent transition from junior 7-a-side hockey to 11-a-side hockey. The juniors love playing Badgers. Quite often they turn up very nervous for their first match but once they’ve seen what it’s all about they come off the pitch smiling. I must say a huge thank you to our senior players who help make badgers hockey the success it is. In particular I’d liked to thank the stalwarts Bepe, Simon, Charles and Martin who have played quite a few games this season.

And my final thank you goes to our umpires both young and old. I’d like to thank in particular Hannah Bond who has travelled to  various tournaments to help support our juniors.

Not only do we have quantity of juniors players we also have quality players and over 20 of our juniors have represented the county this season. But special praise goes to Hannah Lawton who has managed to reach performance centre and beyond and we look forward to great things happening to Hannah in the future. We are sad to see her leave the club as she takes up her scholarship at Repton. But Hannah has been really loyal to Newark and will always be one of our own.

It’s important that we all realise the club is over 120 years old and much of its future is dependent on developing talent from within.  it’s important we have a pathway for each junior player and ultimately we want as many of them as possible to play senior hockey for the club. We are the only club within quite a large area so we need this approach to enable the club will prosper and grow well into the future.

Therefore we are always looking to recruit more junior players coming through. Word-of-mouth recommendation is great, but most important is the primary school league that Tim organises every Wednesday.