

**ERSKINE STEWART'S MELVILLE**

**HOCKEY CLUB**

**REPORT TO THE FP CLUB**

**2020 - 2021**

**ADULT SECTION**

In general the pandemic has halted our ability to play senior competitive matches since February 2020 however the atmosphere within the hockey club has been positive, with excitement building as we move towards summer 2021.

Although we managed to play some matches early 2020, once lockdown was introduced it became clear that hockey would not resume for some time. During the height of the lockdown in March, April and May, our Club President, Ian Moss, kindly hosted a ‘virtual clubhouse’ on Saturday afternoons via Zoom, giving members the chance to catch up in a social setting.

Following on from the initial easing of lockdown restrictions during the summer, we played some club & local friendlies, and maintained regular training from July to December. Unfortunately matches were once again placed on hold in September when local covid restrictions changed, and our training sessions changing to comply with guidelines on social distancing.

Moving into the festive period, we finished all hockey early December, and hoped to recommence in January/February. Unfortunately this was not possible but we did start socially distanced and restricted sessions again in the middle of March. Being able to train is something that is not available to some other clubs, and we are grateful for access to Inverleith Playing fields.

Over the Summer we were delighted that four of our adult women players were selected for Scotland Masters Teams at Over35 and Over40 age groups, but sadly the tournaments were cancelled. They are hoping to apply again in 2021, or in 2022 when the next Masters World Cup take place in Nottingham. Our Club President was also selected to umpire for Scotland at the Masters World Cups which were sadly cancelled.

The Youth Section of ESM Hockey Club continues to go from strength to strength. The club has members from as young as 8 years of age right up to mid-teens, when the youth members then join the adult teams. At the present time the club has 268 youth members registered, with a waiting list for most age groups.

The pandemic during 2020 has significantly affected the ability to run training sessions or to participate in competitions, however prior to lockdown the U14 and U16 age groups were able to play a number of competitive matches, and In the latter half of 2020 several boys and girls have also been put forward for East of Scotland Development Squad and also for the East Academy series. The club has prioritised going back to youth training sessions as soon as it has been safe to do so, resulting in regular training sessions for youth players from mid-April. It is great to see our young members back on a pitch enjoying hockey once again. In addition we have also been able to host a variety of youth training camps including autumn and springtime, with preparations for summer camps underway. Feedback from parents has been very positive, particularly that we have been able to continue to provide a safe environment for training.

We continue to monitor guidelines and ensure we keep within the updated Scottish Government/Scottish Hockey guidance. We have just this week (end April) received sanction to undertake full training and arrange friendly matches again, so we are looking to get all the club teams active again before the Summer break. Overall it has been a very disjointed year, but we have kept in touch with people across the teams, abided by all the regulations, and now have lots of members looking to reconnect with their friends and their sport. Next season we look forward to our Womens 1st team playing in the National Premiership Division, and our Mens looking to match them by gaining promotion from National Division One. We can’t wait!