

27th April 2024



Juniors – Casey Fudge

It has been great seeing our junior players improve over the season, not only their hockey skills but also their friendships. Although the junior section of the club is small, the players we do have bring lots of energy, commitment, enthusiasm and fun and are eager to learn. We've been delighted to welcome some new players throughout the season which is fantastic and I'm hopeful we'll get more juniors coming along to hockey next season.

This season the club started an U8s Saturday morning group which started off small with just a couple of players, but throughout the season we have seen more come along and join in. These sessions have been regularly attended and it's brilliant to see players enjoying hockey at such a young age.

The U10s and U12s have competed in tournaments throughout the season which have been great for them to practise what they have learned at coaching, getting good results and enjoying the experience. A personal highlight for me was the Poole hosted tournament which showed the club in its best light – thank you to all the coaches, umpires, players and parents who made it such a success. A proud moment for the club!

Sadly, again we didn't have enough U14s to make a team but we were grateful to be invited by local teams to join with them to enable some pitch time for our U14 players. This age group is included in both the junior and senior sections of the club. To help transition players into senior hockey, these players are invited to join the senior development coaching sessions. This has been a great success and the club has benefitted from these players joining the senior development teams and starting to play in Saturday matches.

Some feedback from our junior coaches:

- U8s – A bundle of energy and tonnes of fun for a Saturday morning, sometimes more exhausting than playing a full game of hockey. Have loved every minute of coaching this group, you're a joy! Look forward to more next season!
- U10s – The season started with welcoming players into the club, and up into the U10 age group. We've grown a lot throughout the year: starting with some balls skills and developing to start thinking more about pitch positioning. And as the season came towards the end, we started to see structure in match play, rather than buzzy bees!
- U12s – They've all made great progress this year, their skills have improved, and in every session, everyone has been involved, invested and try their best. Their decision making has gotten better and they're beginning to see the bigger picture when playing on the field. There are still improvements to be made, of course, during games communication, spacing in both attack and defence, but that will come with more training and experience. They've been a great bunch to train, it's been enjoyable, and they've taken on the advice from all the coaches and put what they're learning into action.
- U14 boys – The players have been receptive throughout and have been improving as hockey players as the season has progressed. We expect several of the players to be making their way through the senior ranks next season.
- U14 girls – It's been an absolute pleasure and the growth you have all shown has been incredible. It has been such a fun experience and I hope to coach you again next year with new ideas to help you improve even more. You all have great potential and never give up.

Juniors come to Poole Hockey Club not only to learn and become better hockey players but because we're very welcoming and we have fun! It's because of the commitment our coaches give to training that players develop and progress throughout the season. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't have hockey teams and player improvement so I do want to say a big thank you to the junior coaches Lewis, Hazel, TJ, Megan, Ben, Monty, Ed, John, Alex, Kirsty, Lucy, Sam and Ruth for all their hard work and effort this season.

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Targets for next season:

- Get more junior players at the club, please bring a friend, tell them how amazing Poole hockey club is and how amazing your coaches are.
- We're always looking for more coaches so, parents please come and have a chat if interested.
- Build up working relationship with schools to get more juniors involved, Mike Hampton will be looking into this so please let us know if you have any school contacts we can utilise.
- Involvement with the England Hockey Talent Academy, as a club we have join the management committee for the South Coast Talent Academy. Being involved should help us understand what is required and hopefully making it a leading pathway for our juniors.

And finally, I would like to say a big thank you to the parents. Week in, week out you stand on the side of the pitch in the cold and wet so your child can enjoy the sport they love, or maybe it's for an hour of peace? Thank you for coming every week and choosing us as a club, we can't thank you enough.

Summer coaching:

Starting 7th May we have our 10-week summer coaching programme, full info on Teamo. Please mark if your child will be attending or not.

Feedback from parents:

Enjoyed the chance to play mini games and practice spacing and passing with his team. He's enjoyed being included in some of the tournaments and has formed some lovely bonds with the coaches who have encouraged and challenged him.
Loved hockey this year, the opportunity to be with the u12s has helped his game and confidence enormously.
Thank you so much for all you do.
You have all been really amazing, really listened and helped. Thank you.
Thank you have all been great and really welcoming into to the team.
It's been great.
Coaching has been much better this year - good pace of session, more engaging and not doing same drill for too long...also having a change of coach has been beneficial too.