

LX Club Day, Cambridge 15th October 2024

In spite of the absence of members playing in Cape Town we were able to entertain 53 players at the University Sports Ground in Cambridge. The four teams enjoyed a competitive series of games, each playing a total of 90 minutes of hockey. Indeed, the teams unanimously rejected the option of reducing the length of their last game. Perhaps that decision was made with the intention of working up a real appetite to enjoy the excellent food provided afterwards!



Team A, captained by Phil Hutley, achieved two wins and a draw, with Murray Graham in goal keeping three clean sheets. His defence held firm, aided particularly by the young legs of Tim Blackburn and Steven Taylor. the energy of Ali Wardale and the calmness of Tony Mastroddi. It also helped that the midfield was full of energy, moving the ball quickly to dominate long periods of each game. Special mention to Kevin White and Rob Fisher who worked tirelessly to support the forwards. In attack to youthful Ian Kennedy was ably supported by the more mature pair of Brian Smith and (the bionic) David Gill – the latter really beginning to show a return to form after an extended absence from the sport.

John Michalik reports that Team B started with lots of possession at the back but in spite of sterling work by Whittle in the midfield and some excellent interceptions and passes from Dakin little penetration was made into the opposition D. White and King did well at the back until a breakaway goal in the second half and another near to the end gave Team A deserved 2-0 win. The squad combined much better in the second match against Team D with a penetrating pass by Sheridan giving Gibbs a chance to take a trademark back post goal. Further

chances were missed until Glading came close with a one on one with the opposition keeper. An exchange with Whittle gave Watson a chance to make it 2-0. Rushton and White combined with Stoker at the back to keep a strong Team C at bay for much of the first half but two goals were conceded before half time in spite of some great anticipation by Chong in goal. Midway through the second half Webber picked out Michalik in the D and a goal made it 2-1 but the comeback was short-lived and shortly before the end Team C were able to close out the game with a further well-taken goal. So, a 2-0 loss, a 2-0 win and a 3-1 loss but all in all a very enjoyable day's hockey.



Team B

Kim Hansen's Team C's opening match against Team D was a close affair in the first half but after the turn around the second half proved to be a one-way affair once the 'C's' had found their momentum. Two goals resulted from the constant pressure. Scorers - Kevin Appleyard and Fergus Stapleton. Win 2 – 0

The second game saw a reverse of fortunes with Team A being totally dominant in the first half, scoring two goals without reply – a score line that actually flattered the 'C's'. A couple of changes of personnel and of tactics at half time resulted in a much closer second half, with the 'C's' being unlucky not bring the score line closer by the end. L 0 – 2.

The final game of the day and the 'C's' were now at full throttle. Two great goals, one from Kevin Appleyard and a short corner follow up from Kevin Wilson had put the 'C's' in total control. Half time 2 – 0. A brief response from the 'B's' lead to a scrappy concession but this only galvanised more positive play the result of which was a third goal of the day from Appleyard and a comfortable. W 3 – 1.

Overall, a great day and some most enjoyable hockey played by all of the teams. Thanks to all Team C players, [I hope you enjoyed the day as much as I], the Umpires for their sterling efforts, the weather and specially thanks to Chris Blake for his wonderful organisation, as always.

For Team D captain Mike Banham reports that “These games are never easy to match players into a formation. For Team D we had competitive games, which were end to end but in our first 2 games v Team C & Team B, we managed to lose our momentum from competitive goalless first halves, to concede 2 goals in each of the 2nd halves. In the last game v Team A, we changed to a more attacking formation but could not find the goal to break the deadlock.

Really enjoyable day, good hockey, excellent food & good to see a few guests to convert into LX members.

A final thanks to the umpires – Peter Austin, Mark Collins, Chris Perry and (late substitute) David Blackmore.