



Winchester Hockey Club – 2024-25 Season
Men's Club Captain Report

2024/25 has generally been another good season for the Men's section. We benefitted from an influx of new players, mostly from Andover, which helped increase the strength in depth of all our men's teams with a trickle-down effect from the top. We rarely struggled for players and all teams did well in their divisions.

The 1st XI finished second in South Central Prem 2 and will be promoted back to Prem 1 next season. A fantastic performance week in week out. Several new players added real competition for places. The leadership team of Ben Hibberd and Nick Clark did a brilliant job of reshaping the team with players joining from Andover and the promotion of young players within the club. Preparation for next season has already begun. We hope to consolidate our position in Prem 1 and build the squad spirit.

Our best finishing men's team this season, Rob Ritchie thoughtfully led the 2s to the title and promotion to South Central South 1. The squad struggled to find a rhythm initially with changing personnel as the early season took time to settle players into the right team. Some players moved up, some players moved down but they all played their part in this fantastic result for the Prem squad, keeping the two teams close together in the league pyramid.

The 3rd XI also suffered early season from a bit of squad instability but pressed on through the season to achieve a respectable 6th place finish. James Wakely and I will be reviewing the focus of the squad over the summer, currently it is a bit adult heavy for an Academy squad, and we will be looking at how we can best provide a pathway for young players aspiring to Prem squad hockey.

Following promotion last season, the 4th XI knew they had to up their game or it could be a tough season. They sure did that fighting for promotion until the very last match. Narrowly missing out and finishing 4th but another excellent season completed. Andy Mallinson will be passing the leadership to Alex Faulkner, he has trained him well so hopefully the team can go one better next season.

The 5XI Whippets had a solid season, once again introducing a new group of young players to senior hockey, as usual this team is hugely reliant on the support of senior players, so thank you to everyone who did their bit. Most importantly thank you to Tom Brunt who continued to lead the team this season and is hugely supportive of the young players and inducting them on the first steps of their senior hockey lives. The Whippets finished a respectable mid-table 7th in Forest 1. Due to some league restructuring they will be playing in Solent Division 2 next season.

The Wizards romped the league season finishing 2nd in South Masters 1, another great season under the stewardship of Ben Shaughnessy. They even welcomed several new recruits and blended them in seamlessly. Unfortunately, the masters league has suffered from several other clubs withdrawing and, in an effort, to secure regular reliable fixtures the Wizards will be joining the South league and playing in Solent Division 1 next season. They will continue to be a "Masters" team but will now have the flexibility to use underage players if needed.

Everything Wanderers continues as it has, minimum fuss, maximum hockey. The guys once again had numerous entertaining fixtures against foes of old and they are unaffected by the Masters league changes.



We had masters cup run in the o35 and o45 sections that were great fun bring players together from across the club. We will continue this next season with an eye on trying to go further once again.

So many people have done so much this season, it really has been much easier to organise than it has been for a good few years. Thank you, all umpires, managers and Captains, for all your support.

Tip-tap

Swiftly

Men's Club Captain

21st May 2025