



**CHARNWOOD FOREST
HOCKEY CLUB**

Practical Advice for Juniors Playing Adult Hockey

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Welcome to Charnwood Forest Senior Hockey Club.

Charnwood Forest Hockey Club (CFHC) aims to provide a fun and safe environment where people of all ages can play hockey. The club believes that all players should be provided with opportunities to improve their hockey, and if you are reading this, the coaches have suggested your young person would benefit from the experience of playing with and against older players. CFHC Prides itself on being a family orientated HC, with whole families playing for different teams across all sections of the club. Progression from Juniors to Seniors has been a key part of our success.

This document aims to provide some practical guidance for junior players, and the parents of junior players, who are currently playing, or thinking about playing, senior hockey. For more detailed information about our policies, please visit our website.

Why play senior hockey?

Playing in senior league hockey is an ambition of many youth players, and at Charnwood Forest we encourage participation, although it is not expected: -

- For the majority of players, senior hockey represents a natural progression from age group play.
- This season we have been able to provide age group hockey (U14) for some players – the standard of which is very high and therefore it is deemed appropriate for the stronger players to play in these fixtures.
- Ages 12 and 13. The opportunity for age group hockey for years 12 and 13 can be limited. We try and prioritise this age group for the Badgers fixtures where possible and look to include some 12 year olds in some junior tournaments still.
- For many players it is a great opportunity to play more regular games of competitive hockey in addition to age group hockey, especially those not getting hockey in a school environment.
- Stretch. It provides valuable and enjoyable hockey experience at a different level and pace and can make a significant contribution to young player's development.
- It is a great opportunity for juniors to develop social skills playing alongside adults
- Youth players are present in all teams across the club, and in turn make a significant contribution to the club's overall competitive achievements through the addition of young talent at all levels.

At what age can a junior transition to play senior hockey?

In general, and in line with Midlands Hockey League rules, all players playing in the Midlands league must be 13 years old or over. As soon as they're 13 they can play if the coaches think they are ready.

Although where we have/If we have a senior team listed as a development team, then 12 year olds can be invited to play at the discretion of the coaches and the agreement of the team captains. This needs to have prior notification to the league.

We believe a good first step for the female youth players currently is to join the ladies 2s team, who are currently in Division 5 of the Midlands League.

For youth males, a good first step is into the Mens 4s, although if deemed capable they could be placed in a higher team, there also may be opportunities in the mixed teams (we have two teams)

How do we decide when it is best for a young person to start playing senior hockey?

It is important that youth players should enter into senior hockey at the right level commensurate with their physical and mental development, skill and experience (applying England Hockey's RARE (Right Athlete, Right Environment) principles). We therefore consider a number of factors before inviting them to senior training: -

- Physical capability
- Game awareness & hockey skills
- Emotional maturity
- Their own interest and desire to play senior hockey
- Hockey 'load'. Many players are accessing hockey at multiple points – school, county, club & Talent Academy, to name a few, and it is important that they do not do too much.

These factors will be different for individuals, who all develop at a different pace. Coaches will take this into account and talk to the young person, the welfare officer and their parents when they think they are ready, and then the senior captains & coaches. When everyone is in agreement, the young player will be invited to the appropriate training session. Youth players may also raise their interest with their age group coach at any time.

Consent

It is important for youth Players and their parents to be aware of and accept that youth players will potentially be exposed to different aspects of the sport when participating in senior training sessions and matches.

We therefore require that the parents/legal guardians of all youth players (players who are under the age of 18 years old) who would like to participate in senior training sessions and matches complete an additional consent to confirm they are happy for their child to participate in adult hockey. Consent will be requested as an additional registration question in Teamo the first time your young person joins a senior section or team. Young players **cannot** play adult hockey unless specific consent has been given.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's participation in hockey, please do not hesitate to contact the team captain, section chair, coach or the club welfare officer Joanne Wilson

You can always message key team contacts through Teamo. Open the 'Club' section of the App. You will see your young person's teams listed under the 'Teams' section at the bottom. Open the relevant team page. All key contacts are listed in the 'Messaging' tab.

Who is responsible for my young person when they are at a match or training?

This is normally the Team Captain but could also be the Team Coach depending on the team. All our team captains and coaches are DBS checked, and either they or a nominated member of the team will be given all relevant medical information. This information is held in Teamo – please make sure that contact & medical information is up to date, and you notify the team captain, manager or coach of any specific issue they should be aware of when responsible for your young person.

The team will endeavour to support and help all young people at matches both home and away, however we are unable to supervise individuals at all times and would ask you as parents to be confident that your child is responsible enough to partake in such matches without constant adult supervision.

Parents/carers are reminded that junior players are not allowed on the pitches until the coach, captain or another responsible club officer is present.

Communication

When communicating with young people it is recommended by England Hockey that parents should be the main contact point. Where we have consent to contact a young person directly, adults and officers of the Club will only contact them when necessary for Club business. Parent will be copied in to all communications, and are automatically included in any chat involving their young person on the Teamo app.

Selection

We are committed to developing our young players and will do our best to give them the opportunity to play in a team at an appropriate level. However, please remember that when the captains and coaches are selecting teams, they have to balance what is best for your child's hockey development with the needs and expectations of every other senior and youth club member available to be selected that week, and the teams as a whole.

Parents and their young players should be aware that they may not be selected for a team straight away they are invited to senior training. When they are ready, they will be added to a team squad and asked to give their availability for matches in Teamo.

Players should also be aware that they are not selected to be a member of a particular squad exclusively. They may be asked to play up or down a team, or not to play at all on certain weekends, depending on the needs of the club and their own performance and development needs.

In general, when making selection decisions the club values not only ability, but a player's overall commitment and availability for selection, and the attitude displayed when representing CFHC on the pitch. Youth players will not be called upon to play in adult competitions until it is in the best interest of the youth player. If an adult team is short and the only option is a youth player who is not ready either physically, mentally or socially, then the adult team will play short.

Travel Time

Careful consideration will be given to ensure that the distance travelled is proportional to the likely pitch time for the young player. As a guide, it is suggested that players who will play less than half a game should not travel for longer than 60 minutes. Again, this is more likely to be an issue as young players develop and move up through the representative levels of the club, but would be discussed on an individual basis as appropriate.

Availability

Young players and/or their parents are expected to give their availability for matches and training in a timely fashion by marking their availability in Teamo. Being asked to give availability for a team doesn't mean that you will be selected. If you are not available for a match, please tell us why (you will be prompted to leave a note), and if you might be available for an earlier or later game instead. Further, parents or players are encouraged to mark their availability as far in advance as is practical, especially if aware of gaps in availability.

Parents or players will be required as a minimum to: -

- Inform their captain by Sunday evening after the week's game as to their availability for the subsequent weekend match (in Teamo).
- Respond promptly to any availability contact made by the captain ahead of the following weekend match.

Players and parents are advised that failure to confirm availability through any of these methods, and in a timely manner, may mean that an individual player risks missing out on selection for their regular team, or perhaps at all, on that date.

Will I get equal game time?

As much as is practically possible, peer group teams ensure that each member of the squad is given as equal as possible an amount of pitch time per match or per event to ensure every individual has the opportunity to develop. This is not the case in the majority of Senior Teams where more emphasis is placed on winning, and the needs of the team may be prioritised above an individual (adult or junior) player's game time. This is more likely to be an issue as young players develop and move up through the representative levels of the club into our performance teams. How young players learn from and respond to this is an important part of their hockey development. Where younger/inexperienced players are likely to get less game time, this should be communicated to the young person and their parents prior to the game to reassure them as to how that decision is formed. Less game time at a higher level can be useful to help the developing player see the higher levels and to assist their understanding of the game and also what is required.

When & where are senior training & matches?

Senior training runs throughout the week on weekday evenings at Loughborough Grammar School – the evening(s) you train depend on the team squad you are a part of. Matches are played on Saturday mornings and afternoons. Home matches are at Loughborough Grammar School or Castle Rock School.

Away matches are mostly played around the East Midlands area, although the M1s team can travel a little further in the Midlands.

The senior league season starts in September, and runs until the end of March. Young players already established in senior teams may also be asked to pre-season training and pre-season friendly fixtures. These start variably through August and early September depending on the senior team you are currently playing with.

What about kit?

Young players will need a senior club playing shirt which is available to buy through the club kit shop – TAG sportswear' kit shop opening windows are offered throughout the season. These will be communicated in team groups/Teamo and social media.

Young players will also need a club playing number to order their shirt. Please email secretary.charnwoodforesthockey@gmail.com to obtain a club number for your young person, stating what section they are playing for.

Travel to matches

In general, it is the responsibility of parents to transport their young person to and from the club or activity, and to away matches.

However, the club recognises that sometimes it is necessary to ask for help with a lift to away matches, and we will try to help as much as possible. In most cases, there will be a match chat in Teamo once the team selection has been made. However we ask that it is the responsibility of the parent to make arrangements and not rely wholly on the captain who has a number of other responsibilities.

Please note that youth players should not make their own arrangements to travel with adult players; whilst we try and help as much as possible, parents are ultimately responsible for making the decision, and are responsible for making the arrangements for their young person. Adults and children will always travel in groups so that no young person travels alone with an adult.

Parents are expected to ensure their young person is dropped off and picked up promptly. U18s must not be left on their own at the ground.

Protective Equipment

We remind the parents/guardians of youth players playing in senior teams that it is their responsibility to ensure the young person is playing with the correct equipment, and it is not the responsibility of the club to provide any such equipment. However most teams should have spare masks for defending short corners, we do ask to consider buying your child their own if they are regularly involved in short corners.

It is club policy that any youth player playing in a senior team must wear a protective face mask when defending a short corner. If they cannot wear a face mask for any reason (this might be because they have not brought one as part of their equipment, they don't want to, or it doesn't fit correctly, etc) they will be asked to return to the halfway line.

Where goalkeeping kit/equipment has been borrowed from CFHC it is the responsibility of the junior player and/or their parent/guardian to ensure its upkeep and that it remains fit for purpose.

Changing

All players can use the changing facilities as much or as little as they wish. It is club policy that adults and youth players do not share a facility while changing, and the club will ensure that any young person(s) has access to a separate changing area if required or can access the changing room before or after the adults. Most youth players prefer to arrive changed and to shower at home.

The changing room is sometimes used as a de facto meeting room for team talks. In this case the coach or captain will ask any young person(s) to join the adult team members once everyone is changed.

Language and Behaviour

The club supports and is committed to the [England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour](#) and asks all players and parents to read it and support it. Every club member (parents on their child's behalf) is asked to confirm they have read and agree to abide by the '[club code of conduct](#)' as part of registration in Teamo when they first join the club, and again at the start of each season.

However, things can get tense in a match and while we like to think our members wouldn't engage in excessive bad language or behaviour, sometimes during adult matches things slip out. Please let a Club captain, Coach or the Welfare Officer know if your young person is exposed to this, or if anything makes you or your young person uncomfortable.

Match Teas

This is a long-standing tradition in adult hockey. The teas are good fun and are an essential part of building a good team ethos and spirit. We therefore strongly encourage youth players to stay for postmatch teas with the rest of the team. We chat about the game, vote a player of the match, celebrate our win (hopefully), or commiserate a loss!

The CFHC clubhouse at Moor Lane is licensed to sell alcohol, as are many of the clubs we play in away matches, and parents should be aware that there may be alcohol consumed by adult members whilst their young person is in the clubhouse. No alcohol will be served to any member under 18 years old.

Social Media

Facebook, Instagram & Twitter

Charnwood Forest Hockey Club communicates via a number of social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. CFHC recognises that whilst these technologies provide positive and effective opportunities, they are accompanied by risks if abused by users; these include cyber bullying, grooming young people, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content. CFHC follows the England Hockey guidance on social media use, [‘Think Before You Post’](#)

Youth players are welcome to follow us on these platforms, but should understand that it is CFHC policy that the Club will not follow them back, or respond to any Direct Messaging.

WhatsApp

The age limit for the use of WhatsApp is now 16 in order to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In addition, WhatsApp carries particular risks as it gives every group member access to the telephone number of every other group member. In some environments this may allow individuals to contact each other in a negative way e.g. bullying in a performance environment.

As a result of these factors, and because CFHC cannot guarantee that content posted by club members will always be appropriate, CFHC does not currently allow youth players to participate in CCHC senior team WhatsApp groups unless specific permissions have been granted by the parent and agreed to by the section chair, Captain and Welfare Officer.

What happens if my young person is injured during a match or training?

If the event of any illness or injury to your young person, the responsible Club Officer will take all reasonable steps to obtain emergency medical treatment on your young person’s behalf. If a parent or guardian is not in attendance, they will be contacted as appropriate. Minor injuries will be communicated at pick up.

Good practice dictates that any injury to a young person is documented by Club Officers. Incident forms (in electronic format) will be kept for a minimum of 3 years, or until the individual involved leaves the club, whichever is sooner.

Other Information

The England Hockey website is a good source of information about Safeguarding and Protecting Young People, and many documents are already accessible through the Charnwood Forest website. Please consult the England Hockey pages on the links below if you wish to know more:

[England Hockey ‘Safeguard’](#)

[England Hockey ‘Safe Hockey’](#)

Good luck for the coming season!