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**Stockton Hockey Club**

**Captain/Manager Match Day Protocols Proposal**

**Intent**: To ensure a club-wide consistent and organised approach to delivering the Stockton Hockey ‘brand’ to improve the enjoyment and well-being of all players and other stakeholders.

**Implementation:** All role-holders (across all club sides) to adopt, follow and maintain a specific and robust protocol for match days moving forwards.

**Impact:** Intended outcomes including, but not limited to:

* Increased levels of participation by metrics of both time and numbers.
* An improved sense of belonging amongst players.
* An improved sense of club identity.
* Increased consistency across teams allowing players moving teams to more easily settle into teams.
* Improved optics to opposition players, spectators, parents, prospective members.
* Improved on-field outcomes.
* Fewer on-field game-day injuries.

*The following is a draft suggestion of match day protocols for captains and managers written with the full awareness that there are protocols and process which are supplementary to this – purely as an attempt to formalise a consistent matchday approach for the reasons and rationale expressed above and therein. It refers to captains and managers with the full awareness that some team captains occupy managerial roles.*

**In all cases, captains, managers, and any players/members in positions of responsibility (or standing-in to) positions of responsibility should, at all times, exemplify and model the expectations that the club has for its members.**

**In-role, they are club representatives and should act accordingly, in a manner which exemplifies well-mannered professionalism, enthusiasm, fair-play and respect for all.**

## Match Day Protocols

1. **Planning**

For home games, captains/managers should:

* Adhere to league guidelines for communication.
* Communicate with other clubs and their officials in a polite, respectful and courteous manner
* Communicate with the relevant role-holders in organising pitch, umpires, match officials and teas for home games.

In advance of Match Days, captains/managers should:

* Set and communicate a meeting time for games which must be a minimum of 45 minutes prior to centre-pass; allowing time for the following protocols. (For away games, transport communication should facilitate an appropriate meet time.)
* Be prompt for their own meet times.
* Make players fully aware of the meet time, kit requirements, and expectations for player conduct prior to the game.
* Be fully aware of the identity of the players they have selected.
* Contact players new to a particular team to establish a rapport and specific protocols - e.g. “We’re looking forward to you joining us, (example) is the exact location we’ll be meeting, and I’ll meet you there.” Where younger players are concerned the same should be in place with parents/carers.
1. **Match Day - Preparation**

Where captains/managers are unavailable (due to umpiring or match official duties) to perform these duties, they should arrange for another nominated senior player/member to compete them.

At the meet time Captains/Managers should:

* Warmly greet all players and address players by name - demonstrating an awareness of their identity. This is of particular importance for players new to the team/club - extra effort should be made to welcome new players and introduce them to other players by name.
* Conduct a short team meeting with their full team prior to a warm-up. This is an opportunity to discuss tactics, plan, starting line-up, and other details of the forthcoming game.
* Ensure that players are properly kitted and equipped for the forthcoming game.

After the meet:

* Approximately 30 minutes before the start of the game, Captains/Managers should lead their team in a physical warm up (another senior player can be nominated to lead this warm-up) - playing captains are expected to be fully involved in this warm-up and model full and proper participation. (Non-playing mangers are encouraged to observe and support the warm-up through presence and positive reinforcement.) Physical warm-ups should contain a variety of activities which include dynamic stretching, cardiovascular exercises and mobility exercises. Captains/managers are encouraged to make physical warm-ups engaging. (Suggested activities linked below)
* Approximately 20 minutes before the start of the game (after a thorough physical warm-up) captains/managers should lead the team in a game-specific warm-up. (Allowing breaks for player hydration and any kit adjustments) – the game-specific warm-up should involve players practicing skills and scenarios for the game. Small-sided games and drills which involves players having multiple touches are encouraged. This game-specific should fully involve all players including the goalkeeper and playing captains should take part fully, (with an acceptable hiatus for the coin toss etc.) modelling expectations. (Suggested activities linked below)
* As the start of the game approaches captains/managers should encourage their team to work in collaboration to clear the pitch of balls and any surplus equipment.
* With two minutes to go to the start of the game (signalled by the umpires) captains/mangers should lead a team ‘huddle’ near the centre of the defensive half of the pitch upon which the team is starting the game. All players (including those not in the starting line-up and the goalkeeper) should be in this huddle. The captain/manager should lead the team in some final words of encouragement before a short team chant of “Stockton” after a three count.
1. **Match Day - During the Game.**

Captains/managers should model the club expectations for players at Stockton Hockey Club.

Playing captains should play in a manner which exemplifies well-mannered professionalism, enthusiasm, fair-play and respect for all. Communication with the opposing team and with umpires and match officials should exemplify the club’s ethos and values.

Captains/Managers should encourage their players to meet the expectations of Stockton Hockey Club players and advise them appropriately. (Issues with behaviour and discipline should be referred to the relevant club officer or member of the committee as per club policy).

Communication between captains/managers and players should always be respectful and constructive. Captains/managers are encouraged to be overwhelmingly positive (unless dealing with infringements of player guidance or failure to meet player behavioural expectations) recognising that individual constructive criticism should only be completed in a structured, sensitive and effective way in an ‘off-the-field’ setting.

Half-time:

* At half-time in the game, captains/managers should gather their players in order to near the dugout of the pitch and deliver a team-talk.
* Captains/managers should take charge of the team-talk and can manage team discussion by nominating other players to speak. Captains/managers should remind players that they are all expected to be respectful and constructive.
* Captains/managers are encouraged to make positive comments and praise the efforts and achievements of their players during the first half. Young players, in particular, should be provided with praise and positive reinforcements of their efforts. It is the duty of captains/managers to ensure that players are made to feel that their efforts are valued.
* Constructive criticisms or tactical comments should be aimed at the entire team and not single out individuals unless delivered in a positive, instructional, coaching manner. (Suggestions for appropriate language can be found below).
1. **Match Day - After the Game**

Captains/managers should remain an exemplary proponent of the club’s expectations for players and members, no matter the circumstances or result of the game.

The captain/manager should:

* At full time initiate a traditional three cheers for the opposition.
* Model the courteous handshakes with oppositions players, coaches, and the officials. Providing praise and giving thanks. Captains/managers should encourage their team to do the same.
* Once players have had a moment to get a drink (and/or move bags from respective dugouts if necessary) initiate a post-game team talk, a short distance away from where other teams/players are.

It is the responsibility of captains/managers to ensure that the post-game team-talk follows the constructive and positive guidelines which apply to pre-game and half-time team-talks. Captains/managers should:

* Ensure they provide praise and positive reinforcement particularly to young players.
* Provide some sort of positive reflection on the game and encourage a collective team ethos.
* Give some preparatory information about the following week’s fixture, encourage attendance at training and encourage timely and regular use of club communication systems.
* Attend post-match teas and encourage their players to attend for post-game teas.
* For home matches, Captains/managers should ensure that the opposition team and umpires are aware of where teas are available and invite them to attend.
1. **Match Day - Teas**

After-match activities should be conducted in the same professional and positive manner which meets the expectations of role-holders and players of Stockton Hockey Club.

Captains/Managers should:

* Invite opposition players and officials to eat first.
* Speak with politeness and respect to all players, spectators, umpires, opposition players, coaches.
* Organise paying for teas.
* Wish the opposition and umpires a safe journey and best wishes for the remainder of their season upon their exit.
* Write (or nominate another senior member) to write a match report and update the scores and match details in the relevant locations as per league and club guidelines.
* Keep a record of result and details of the game.

## Appendices TBC

1. Physical Warm-Up
2. Game-Specific Warm Up Drills
3. Suggested Coaching Phrases