



The Future of Masters Hockey in the South of England 2025 Onwards

Over the past three years since the restructuring of hockey in England to Areas, London Hockey has worked hard to develop a structure for Masters hockey across the London, South Central and South East Areas. The player pathway for Masters hockey is bright as more and more players want to stay in the game and there's an increasing number of activities on offer, from leagues to tournaments, cup competitions and summer leagues and pay and play.

Clubs across the whole region differ widely in their age demography. Those with few masters aged players may enter the MO40 even though their team may well include O50s and O60s. Other clubs with a larger pool of players across age groups can field a team in multiple age groups. In addition to the 'pure' Masters teams that play in the current South Masters League, there are a number of teams that wish to play on a much less competitive basis and indeed include sons and youngsters that they wish to help develop as they move up into the numbered club sides.

What are the aspirations for Masters Hockey? Where do we want to be in 10 years-time?

- A highly visible structure that inspires, attracts and engages all masters aged players.
- Quality competitive leagues to more casual or friendly leagues.
- Manageable travel distances with more teams in more local leagues?

To help clubs get Masters teams out, we need a simple Masters structure that accommodates both highly competitive teams and the not so competitive or more casual/improvised/friendly teams.

A simple structure for all comers

Masters hockey has evolved, and we currently have a sound performance-based structure with the best teams in premier leagues across age groups with feeder divisions. There is capacity for

more teams in Area divisions but there is also room for a different type of Masters hockey - the more casual/social or development/improvised-based hockey.

Principles to accommodate all players and teams

1. Inclusivity.
2. Competitive matches, which should be fun and sociable for all.
3. No top end age.
4. Manageable travel distances.

We would like to propose an extension to our current structure and offer players and clubs a greater choice. Any player of any standard should be able to see a pathway for themselves in Masters hockey whether they want to play in highly competitive best v best age group leagues or would just like to play with similar aged players in a lower division where a league may be competitive, or in a friendly casual masters or conference style league perhaps with their sons, where the league is essentially a set of fixtures,. Here results would not be the key driver, and there would be flexibility on match day for levelling up, umpiring and developing youngsters and where the Game Management System (GMS) is as a simple results service.

We can generate fixtures for all varieties of leagues, publish them in July and offer full support for match day and future fixtures changes and management. We would welcome league admins to join our league management group to support the management of their teams joining the league.

We would like to invite new teams from across the three Areas, and particularly those in the Wessex Supervets Fixtures Alliance and the Southern Counties Hockey Conference to become part of one Masters structure in the South of England.

One Masters hockey structure, that offers

- **Age Group Competition.** The current leagues at O40, O50 and O60, with regulations on the minimum age of players that encourages new players into the age groups. No top end age. Promotion and relegation.
- **Casual Masters Competition.** Minimum age 35 for the adults with more flexibility to allow clubs to raise teams e.g. allow small numbers of juniors to facilitate fathers and sons playing together and or some women. No promotion or relegation, though movement to other leagues would be possible. No top end age. A Conference of teams.

To conclude:

- A Masters hockey pathway that provides opportunity for players aged 35+ to aspire to,
 - from the best players in the land to those wishing to play more casually.
- Brings all masters teams into leagues or groups of varying levels of competition under one
 - umbrella structure across the three Areas in the South of England.
- Has simple qualification regulations appropriate to the level or degree of competition.
- Joint delivery group management.
- Fluidity between Casual or Conference and Age Group leagues and vice versa.
- An opportunity for play off competitions for promotion to the top divisions, which can be
 - used to promote Masters hockey more widely.
- A model for growth into a national structure.

If you would like to discuss this proposal further, please contact one of the Area League Delivery Group (ALDC) listed below.

Team entries will be sought for the age group leagues M40/M50/M60 or into a Conference Division for 2025-2026 with entries by May 1st 2025.

Once all team entries are received, the leagues can be shaped to best suit.

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