

From: Barry Holmes barryholmes@uwclub.net
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Dear All,

What a glorious day, should have been the first day of the Sussex Cricket leagues rather than the "almost end" of the Sussex Open League's season. There are still a couple of games to play, one of which will be Sunday 9th and the other - well it seems to be a secret.

The Kent Sussex play-off was completed today at East Grinstead Hockey Club, with Brighton 3s taking on Folkestone 2s. Folkestone got of to a flyer and took the lead with 2 goals within 15 minutes, putting the pressure on Brighton through the first half. However, Brighton set off quickest in the second half, getting back one goal and taking the game to Folkestone throughout the 35 minutes. Unfortunately while pressure led to close shots and short corners, it did not lead to the crucial goal and so Folkestone ran out worthy winners 2 - 1 (shame). My commiserations to Brighton who had a tremendous season and just failed to get the promotion they deserved, however they were great representatives of Sussex today, and I am sure they would have run out winners if there had been another 5 minutes. My thanks to Ian Anguige and Paul Shackman (Technical Director) for their organisation of the game.

For those who attended the Competitions Meeting, you will know that there are many issues affecting promotion and relegation this season and so no decisions for a while on all team movements and the make up of divisions for next season. At present we still could get 3 teams down into Sussex Open Division 1 from Kent Sussex Division 2 and we will may not have a final view on that until the end of April. We now know we will only promote 1 team from Sussex Division 1 and so we could see up to 4 teams and certainly 3 teams been relegated from Division 1. I have decided to try and promote 2 teams from each of Division 2 and 3. But this is not clear due to the teams who could be relegated from above and their impact of make-up of Division 2.

At present we can:

- Congratulate Southwick 1, Brighton Rocks and South Saxons 2, Chichester Chipmunks and East Grinstead Saints on promotion from their various divisions.
- Commiserate with Mid Sussex 1, Crowborough 2 and St Francis 1 and Littlehampton 1s and Crawley 3s and Horsham 5s for relegation from the various divisions.

Further movements will be worked out and advised as the final games and various challenges to teams though the South are completed.

My thanks to all those who attended the Competitions meeting last Tuesday. There was much to discuss and I have been left with much to ponder on for next season and directed to ask the South League for a number of changes to the management of the Leagues. I am sure I will present more on those issues as we move to next season. I will put the slides used at the Meeting on the Open League section of the Sussex Hockey Association website. A number of these slides are already out of date and some do require some explanation, but they do indicate the breadth of the discussion on the evening.

One area of discussion, not included on the slides, covered the Men's cup competitions. The finals will be held on the 22nd and 23rd April at Lewes Hockey Club. There will be a veritable cornucopia of hockey over the 2 days - so if you have time, I look forward to seeing you all there. However, the key discussion point on the men's cup was the requirement for a cup organiser for next season, John Murphy, the Sussex Chairman, took over the organisation of the Cups during this season, as one more of the many tasks he does on our behalf, but he is not able to continue. Therefore before we can even consider all of the options for next season's cup competitions we have to have an organiser. Therefore, please ensure your club is aware of the need for an organiser to put his or her name forward for consideration for this post, prior to the Sussex AGM.

The AGM will be held on 29th June 2017 at the St Francis Sports and Social Club, Haywards Heath. The County will be sending out details on the Agenda and any proposals as we get nearer to the AGM.

Congratulations to the top scorers in division 1. I was pleased that our top scorers represented the opposite ends of the age spectrum with Dave Matthews being the top scorer for the division with 28 goals, scoring a hat-trick on his last game of league hockey (claims his achilles tendons are his achilles heel, so time to retire from hockey). Not a bad way to bow out of a game he has graced for quite a few years. Second place went to George Mutschin, a youngster who may not be in his first full season of league hockey, but he looks very young. He scored a hat-trick last Sunday to get into second place, but could not add to his total in East Grinstead's last match of the season. There is a small cash prize for the top scorers and I will be in touch with the respective clubs to establish the best way to "splash the cash". (Will not be enough to change the player's amateur status, perhaps enough to buy a few soft drinks for their respective team mates!).

The teams represented at the competitions meeting considered that recording scorers was a worthwhile practice and we should try and make more effort to get the scorers in via the SMS service. Would be good to expand through the whole Open League - so perhaps a new task for the Secretary next season.

At the competitions meeting there was a bit of discussion on the start dates for the respective divisions and the issues therein, the number and size of our divisions and if it is possible to fit in some mid season breaks. However, one of the key requirements for any action, is for your clubs to let me know of any new teams they would like to add to the League or if any teams are to be withdrawn. I have heard from a couple of clubs, but still need written confirmation on their plans.

I NEED TO HEAR FROM CLUBS, IN WRITNG, BEFORE THE 1st MAY. I start work on next season's divisions then and will hope to have the draft divisions available by the end of June and certainly by 1st July.

Anyway that's enough for now.

The next newsletter will be out when we have some clarity on the probable divisions for next season — so do not hold your breath.

My best wishes to all

Barry Holmes

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