

Chairwoman's Report 2018-19
17th June 2019

Since our last AGM it's been a busy 12 months, with our national team preparing for the Asian Games in August after directly qualifying earlier in the year. This culminated in a ninth-place finish in the Asian Games where all teams, except Hong Kong, had entered into full time training in the months before the tournament, whilst our players continued to juggle training with work/studies. I would like to thank our national players, Arif Ali as head coach and Amy Lip as team manager for all their hard work, and congratulate Ika Lo in officially achieving 100 international caps at that tournament. We are now looking ahead to the next Asian Games and building on the earlier success. We are grateful to the generous support afforded to our athletes by the HAB Team Sports Funding and by our new sponsors Rutonjee and JDH.

In March we hosted our 5th Women's Invitational Hockey Tournament, which was held on the same weekend as the Men's international tournament and FIH sanctioned. The women finished third behind Shenzhen and Thailand. Our under 21 players will be spending the summer preparing for the Junior AHF cup in Singapore in September where we wish them every success.

I would also like to thank the organisers of the Masters Indoor Hockey World Cup, which was hosted successfully here in Hong Kong earlier this year due to their hard work. We are equally grateful to those who have continued to build on the momentum created by this event and organised an indoor women's league at HKFC this summer. Whilst the Women's Section Committee's focus is on outdoor hockey due to logistical and practical issues, we would welcome working together with others to help develop indoor hockey in Hong Kong.

This season saw the divisions restructured, with one division cut and the others expanded providing more hockey matches for all teams. We were pleased to see the premier division back up to 8 teams as we continue the committee's objective to bring back up the number of teams playing at a higher level. In order to help clubs plan for next season and for the HKHA to manage the use of pitches more efficiently, the outgoing committee considered the current season's competition results together with the promotion and relegation policy circulated to all clubs and determined the provisional divisions for the 2019/20 season. These should remain unchanged save for extraordinary circumstances.

Premier	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4
HKFC A	HKFC C	Valley C	Phoenix B	Shaheen C
Valley A	Shaheen B	HKFC F	Vets C	HKCC C
HKFC B	Valley B	HKFC E	Elite C	HKFC H
HKCC A	HKFC D	Swire A	LHT B	Recreio A
Coyotez	HKCC B	Skyers A	HKFC G	Khalsa A
KCC A	Antlers A	Elite B	Valley D	Valley E
Dutch A	KCC B	LHT A	HKU	Swire B
Shaheen A	Rhino	Vets B	Police	Ewis C
Vets A	Aquila A	Ewis A	Ewis B	Bauhinia Youth
	Elite A	Dutch B	Antlers B	Skyers B
	Phoenix A			

One important objective of finalizing divisions earlier is to enable fixtures for the 2019/20 season to be published earlier, enabling clubs to plan accordingly and avoid walkovers. As more money is being invested in team sports in Hong Kong, hockey faces increasing competition for the use of pitches. It has been noted by Council that walkovers have been given in the premier division in both the men and women's competitions. This will be looked at closely by both sections with a view to setting stronger penalties in such circumstances.

I would also like to thank Arif Ali and Amy Lip for running the Bauhinia Youth team in division 4 which has been introduced as a pathway team for our female youth players coming up through mini hockey. As we are not yet able to offer a competitive girl's youth league, this team offers young players who are keen to keep playing, but not yet ready to compete in the higher divisions, a chance to test the waters. The hope is that most of these players will then go on to play for other clubs who are able to offer these girls a pathway to the higher divisions and to help grow our pool of young players. With regards to our youth I would also like to thank Billy Dillon for his generous sponsorship of the newly renamed Guv Dillon Cup, with the sponsorship monies to be spent on our youth.

This season also saw us hosting the Premier Hockey 5s tournament where we invited a team from Shenzhen to join our 7 affiliated club premier division teams and used the FIH hockey 5s format. This was a great opportunity to test live streaming. Overall the feedback from players, umpires and spectators was extremely positive. I would like to thank everyone who helped make this happen, including Eva Thometz, Simon Chapman, HKFC and Jowie and we hope to be able to hold a similar event next season.

As you are all aware, the FIH introduced new rules earlier this year. These will be implemented in the new season. These include the removal of goalkeeping privileges for substitute players and playing quarters across all divisions. Consequently, the premier division will continue unchanged with 15 minute quarters and stoppage time for penalty corners whilst the remaining divisions will likely be 17 minute quarters with 2 minute breaks after the first and third quarter and a 5 minute break at half time, with no stoppage for penalty corners.

I would like to touch on a key section of Rhona's Chairwoman's report last season announcing the council's proposal to restructure the HKHA. As anticipated such a change did not happen overnight. However we are moving forward, with increased collaboration amongst both sections and more events being held together (such as the international tournaments and knock out tournament finals weekend). I would like to thank all clubs and their convenors for their continuing patience as we continue to work towards bringing the organization of the HKHA in line with other NSAs and to provide new opportunities for all our participants. Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing committee, everyone in the office, council members and all the clubs for all their support and patience in my first season as Chairwoman.

Leela Patel
HKHAWS Chairwoman