

HOCKEY HONG KONG, CHINA
WOMEN'S SECTION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
25 JUNE 2026
CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

This year marks another important chapter for our women's hockey community, with steady growth in participation, encouraging signs in our youth pathway, and some challenging moments on the international and governance front.

Since the 2022/23 season, we have been tracking three key indicators: average age, number of players, and the number of U21 players. The 2025/26 season figures are as follows:

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Average Age	30.66	31.86	32.60	31.19
No. of registered players	826	849	841	929
No. of U21 Players	188	188	169	199

We are pleased to note a significant increase in overall participation this season, with registered players rising to 929, up almost 100 players from last year and over 100 from the 22/23 baseline. This reflects a healthy and expanding league.

At the same time, the U21 cohort has grown to 199 players, our highest in the four seasons we have tracked. After a dip in 24/25, this rebound is a very positive sign that our youth initiatives are beginning to bear fruit.

The average age trend is also encouraging. After climbing steadily from 30.66 (22/23) to 32.60 (24/25), it has dropped to 31.19 this season. This suggests that while we have retained many experienced players, we are successfully integrating more younger athletes into the senior competitions, which is vital for long-term sustainability.

Overall, we are seeing a larger player base, a stronger U21 presence, and a slightly younger profile again after last year's peak.

These are exactly the indicators we hoped to see improve as our youth and development programs matured. This year, there was one more Bauhinia C team introduced into the league, and Bauhinia A finished top of Premier B. This is a particularly satisfying outcome, as it shows the pathway from youth into the senior league is working.

We see this as both a direct reflection of the U12 program introduced in 23/24, and evidence of the continued development and expansion of the Bauhinia structure, both in number of teams and in competitive performance.

Thanks must be given to all the youth coaches, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to deliver sessions, nurture players, and ensure that our young athletes are both challenged and supported. Their efforts are clearly visible in the data and in the results on the pitch.

Further to the feedback we received last year, we have continued to adjust the league schedule to finish as early as reasonably possible, while also reducing the gaps between knockout matches. The aim has been to maintain competitiveness and fairness, but improve player experience by minimizing long breaks that disrupt momentum, and avoiding an overly extended season. We will keep monitoring how these adjustments are received and will remain open to further refinements based on club and player feedback.

We are grateful for the feedback provided on the 5-a-side format last year. This season we have acquired new boards, which were used throughout the tournament. In response to last year's feedback, we have played with just one set of boards, simplifying logistics and set-up; and capped each division at a maximum of five teams, resulting in a shorter, more focused tournament and reduced waiting times between games.

The combination of the new boards and shorter waiting times has been very well received, and we are pleased that the revised format delivered a more enjoyable and efficient event for players and officials alike.

On the international front, the senior women's team had a demanding and mixed year. Over the 2025 summer break, the squad based themselves in Canberra, Australia, where they prepared for the upcoming events and participated in the National Games. We are grateful for this opportunity, which allowed the team to gain valuable international exposure, test combinations, and further refine their game.

In March, at the 9th Women's Hockey Invitational Tournament, the team produced a strong performance, finishing second and drawing with Thailand, a team ranked above

us. This result was a highlight and showed that the squad can compete closely with higher-ranked opposition when things come together.

Unfortunately, this momentum did not carry over to the Asian Games Qualifier in Jakarta, where the team finished 7th and did not qualify for the Asian Games. This was a disappointing outcome for players and staff, particularly given the progress and promise shown earlier in the year.

As a direct consequence of the result in Jakarta, the program saw changes in personnel, including the departure of the Head Coach, the national sub-committee, and the manager.

With Council now stepping in to oversee all aspects of the national program, including expenditure approvals, there has been a significant shift in how decisions are made and how responsibilities are shared. While a more centralized structure may bring greater consistency and oversight, it also raises important questions about how women's hockey will continue to have an equal say, priority and a clear voice in shaping its own future, especially when operation pathways, decision making and financial controls are taken away from the Sections. This is particularly important at a time when women's sport globally is experiencing unprecedented growth, investment and visibility. We look forward to how Council will address these questions as they announce the proposal to restructure the national setup.

Over the past decade, players, coaches, and volunteers have collectively made substantial progress in developing the women's game. It is important that, as structures evolve, the specific needs, perspectives, and ambitions of the women's program remain clearly represented within any new decision-making framework.

We trust that ongoing dialogue between Council, WS, players, and stakeholders will help ensure that this restructuring ultimately strengthens the foundations we have worked so hard to build.

It has been a quieter year for the junior national teams, largely due to the delay of the Junior AHF Cup and its clash with the Junior Asia Cup, which disrupted the competition calendar. Despite this, juniors continued to be a strong force in the domestic league; notably, Bauhinia A fielded a Hong Kong-eligible team towards the second half of the season and went on to finish top of Premier B. This shows that our homegrown youth players are not only participating, but increasingly leading at the highest domestic level. When we look at this alongside the increase in U21 numbers and the addition of another Bauhinia C team, it gives us confidence that the pipeline from junior to senior hockey is strengthening.

Acknowledgements must once again be given to the same dedicated group of people who continually support and sustain our game. To all our players, coaches, umpires, and officials for their commitment week in, week out; to the youth and Bauhinia coaches, who invest so much time and energy into developing the next generation; to our team managers, support staff, and volunteers, without whom leagues, tours, and tournaments simply could not run; to the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) Team Sports Funding and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for their ongoing support, which enables our athletes to train and compete at the highest possible level; to HKFC and all host venues for providing grounds and facilities that make our league and events possible; and to the clubs for their patience and cooperation, particularly as we continue to refine competition formats, scheduling, and development initiatives.

In conclusion, the 2025/26 season has been one of growth in numbers, consolidation in youth development, and reflection on our governance and international ambitions. We have much to be proud of: rising participation, a record number of U21 players, the continued rise of the Bauhinia teams, and meaningful engagement with feedback on league operations and 5s.

At the same time, the challenges faced by our senior national squad and the subsequent structural changes serve as a timely reminder that progress is not linear. It is crucial that, as we move forward, we safeguard the voice and interests of women's hockey and remain united in our commitment to a vibrant, competitive, and equitable future for our sport.

This will be my last year as Chairwoman, though I will stay on the committee for another year to ease transition. I have enjoyed my time on the committee and have countless people to thank; people who have put in a lot of time and effort to help improve Hong Kong hockey. Thank you to them all.

Eva Thometz
HockeyHKWS
Chairwoman