

## **MASTERS (VETERANS) HOCKEY IN NEW ZEALAND**

### **Country**

New Zealand

### **Initiative**

Hockey New Zealand

### **Contact person**

Suzy Monds

### **Philosophy**

To provide hockey opportunities for all ages and levels

### **Project start**

Major season November to April

### **Activities**

- **Local competitions**

Many Associations in New Zealand now run a local Masters Competition which starts after the main winter season and finishes in October. Many of the Masters players are involved as Coaches, Managers or Umpires during the main season and these months allow them a window of opportunity to play with their own peers.

- **National Competitions**

Every March a National Competition is held. This tournament has grown to be the largest national tournament in the Hockey New Zealand Calendar with 58 teams entered for the 2006 tournament. The tournament moves around the country and has become a major festival over the past few years with many social activities organised. It has also become an accepted pathway for umpires and coaches as international teams are selected from these tournaments.

- **International Competitions**

New Zealand selects national teams every year in most of the age bands. There is a regular Trans Tasman series which alternates its location between New Zealand and Australia.

The Pac Rim tournament involving Asian teams as well as Australia and New Zealand is the other major international event that our teams look forward to participating in yearly.

### **Target group**

The Women's age bands go from 35+, 40+, 45+ and 50+ while the Men's competition covers 40+, 45+, 50+, 55+.

### **Number of participants**

Over 1000 participants attend the National Tournament in March. However, the number of participants taking part in local competitions is far greater

### **Format**

The National Tournament is played using full artificial pitches with 11 aside.

Local competitions vary with many starting with 6 aside competitions both mixed and single sexed and moving to inter Associations 11 aside matches leading into National tournaments.

Some Masters teams will continue through the winter season entering teams in a social club grades

### **Approach**

Differs from Association to Association meeting the needs of the local community. However, Masters sport is very big in New Zealand encouraging people to stay active longer and this is reflected in the growth of this sector.

There are many multi sport masters event s held throughout the country all year and hockey is always a sport represented in the competitions.

### **Teaching / coaching**

Masters players are supported within their own regional Associations by their Regional Development Managers who run sessions for them. For many it is an opportunity to try new techniques.

The appointment of Coaches/Managers for Masters national teams follows the same procedures as any other NZ Coach Position so:

1. It can be seen as part of the recognized HNZ Coach Pathway
2. Processes are in place e.g. selections are fair and transparent, reporting occurs
3. Maintenance of quality standards and expectations regarding philosophy of playing style and structure are guaranteed

### **Administration**

Each local Association administers Masters within its structure. Many now have dedicated Committees so that the competition requirements reflect the local needs. As more people participate there has been more demand to develop guidelines as to how run Masters effectively. Many Associations will also help with funding applications to help their players get to tournaments.

### **Support from NA and other institutions**

Masters receives support from Hockey New Zealand in that there is a dedicated Masters Council. This Council has an administrator who works from the Hockey New Zealand Office. This position reflects the growing importance of this sector within our sport. The administrator organises all the tours, appointments of Coaches and Managers and getting out all the nominations for the tournaments. The draws are organised at the national office.

### **Financing**

Local support and from the individuals themselves.

### **Challenges so far**

The rapid increase in numbers and how to cater for everyone as a new trend has been the rising number of people new to the sport who have taken up playing at the Masters levels. National Tournament has increased to a point that it almost requires a venue with 3 artificial pitches and so this is restricting the venues but there is a reluctance to see the competition broken up into sexes or age bands at different locations as it would spoil the festival approach.

### **Future activities**

The Masters Council is very proactive at continuing to look for ways to continue to support the growth and desire to play in this level

### **Tips for NAs**

Need to support this movement as this is the group that will also help as volunteers – coaches, managers, umpires and administrators. They need to be valued within the hockey fraternity

