

A feast of hockey for Grand Masters

The summer season of Grand Masters (Over 60) hockey is well underway in Europe. Lille were the first hosts and their annual Euroluc tournament was held at Ronchin in March. The Welsh Dragons beat the German Eagles 2-1 in the final to take the trophy ahead of teams from France, England, Scotland, Netherlands and Ireland. Second up was the now well established International Superveterans Tournament over three days at Tilburg contested by more than 40 men's and women's teams in age groups from Over 50 to Over 75 on the club's seven pitches. In the women's section the Belgian Old Panthers won the combined Over 50/55 and the England Roses were winners at Over 60 and Over 65, the England Angels won the men's O60, England Lions took the Over 65, LX Club England won the O70 and the Dutch NHC prevented an England clean sweep by beating LX Club O75 after a penalty shoot-out.

International competition is also well under way in preparation for the WMH Masters European Cup being held in Valencia in June and July. At the top end of the age groups England O80 defeated the Netherlands O80 1-0 at Tilburg on 27th April while at the same time the men's Celtic Cup was being contested at the Saint Germain club in Paris. The hosts, France, won the O60 group and Scotland took the honours at O65 and O70. On the other side of the world New Zealand hosted Australia in the Trans Tasman Challenge. In a best of three series of matches at O60, O65, O70 and O75 Australia came out on top in all four age groups with O60 and O70 being the most closely contested.

Also on the fixture list before the European Cup are Four Nations tournaments for men at Swansea and women Belfast to complete the preparations for the selected squads from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Grand Masters hockey continues to offer players at all levels the opportunity to combine keen competition with the enjoyment of playing age group hockey against long-standing international friends. People are now playing hockey at these older age levels around the world and later this year there will be an Asian Cup tournament in Hong Kong and a Pan American Cup in Buenos Aires, demonstrating that hockey really is a sport from cradle to grave!

Adrian Stephenson
May 2023