



Avoca Hockey Club 2020/21 AGM Update

Paul Cronin: Club Development

31st May 2021

- 1) Newpark Pitch Replacement Project:
 - a) Sports Capital Grand Funding of €138k remains secured.
 - b) SportsLab Consultants appointed as project managers and the project was started, with initial surveys, high level project plan and cost option estimates complete. The next stage was to initiate the construction and supply tender process. The project was halted at this point due to the health restrictions imposed by the pandemic.
 - c) With the gradual re-opening we are looking at ways we can safely re-start the project.
- 2) Avoca HC 5 Year Strategic Roadmap:

If you recall we developed a 5 Year Strategic Roadmap which was ratified by the Avoca HC Board on 20th April 2020– we did mention this last year and many of you were involved. You would think that during the pandemic we wouldn't have made much progress but, the club team have been working away in the background and here are some update notes on some aspects of the plan:

- a) General Development
 - i. The strategy was launched 7th of May 2021 on Zoom with ~40 attendees. Positively received.
 - ii. During Covid the club team constantly tweaked our model to ensure that we could offer as much Hockey as possible, the series of camps in both New Park & Sion Hill, the free hockey in 2020 and the hockey that is being played now (May, June). We take our community wellbeing principle very seriously and hope that you recognise that we have tried to give our players and families as much of an outlet as we could. Much thanks to all of the schools we play at but particularly to Orla Condren, Principal of Sion Hill for facilitating both camps and the hockey in May/June which are outside of our normal operating agreement.
 - iii. We also did our best to offer some online fun: The coaching videos on YouTube, Online workouts with the legendary Emma Meir and the hugely successful 125km February Challenge masterminded by Cian Funge & Anne Richardson. We burst past the €12,500 target and, as well as giving our folk a reason to exercise, we gave real support to both Enable Ireland and the Laura Lynn Foundation.
 - iv. On the communications side, huge thanks to Al Robinson for getting our club App up and running in record time. We had a plan to do it but it became an urgent requirement and we could not have compliantly managed our way through the pandemic without it.
 - v. On the growth side, we 'emptied' our waiting list into Friday nights for primary age groups (for those who could take up Fridays) and the team will integrate these players with their age groups soon. It is worth noting that applications have increased again.
 - vi. In 2020 we ran Give Hockey a Go! where anyone could come and try Hockey for 4 weeks. As well as educating parents and helping grow the sport, this led to ~35 people taking up hockey in Avoca and we had formed a second Women's Vets side, a Men's 5ths and were looking at a Women's 6ths. The 2021 campaign is now open and filling up fast.
 - vii. The Memorandum & Articles have been reconstituted and the board restructured.
- b) Hockey Development:
 - i. Rudi Wortmann, Director of Hockey will be giving the comprehensive Hockey Update however, it is worth noting where that activity and some other items aligns to the Strategic plan:
 - ii. New Coaching Development pathway and approach designed and active – with a selection of new coaches in place and all put through both the club's own training classes but also all coaches have been through Child Welfare training and the Hockey Ireland Fundamentals training. To note, the coaching panel is young and it would be great to get more adult coaches or parents involved. Please contact Rudi or myself if you would like to help.



- iii. Team Balancing: In line with our conceptual club model, the top 2 Hockey teams (Women & Men) have been turned into a development and performance pool to strengthen overall performance. Additionally, (Not yet perfect) – all senior teams are to have a manager and coach. A ‘Leader Group’ policy has been developed to support how this will work and will be launched for next season.
 - iv. The retention of youth players in sport is a top ambition of the club, with particular focus on teens quitting hockey. Through both a survey and from talking to our parents/players, it was clearly identified that having to move to adult senior hockey in 5th year was of off-putting for some players. As such, Avoca Hockey Club both tabled the concept and sought active support of start u18 Hockey at the 2020 Leinster Hockey Assoc. Forum. This move has been a success and u18 Hockey for 5th & 6th years will be introduced in the coming season.
 - v. Some of you may have noticed that the recent Ireland Women’s training squad for the Europeans included 3 ex- Avoca youth players, with 2 of them travelling to the Netherlands with the final squad. To ensure that we retain these talented players going forward we introduced a bursary and development support scheme for youth players that secure places on the Ireland team for their age group. Five players received such support this season (Conor Murphy, Harry Dagg, Zoe Watterson, Lauren Moore and Erika Gallagher). The scheme is supported by a donor that wishes to remain anonymous. We have to remain as strong as possible at the elite level to secure promotion and early indications (The L1s had a strong 3 win start to the abandoned season) are that the strategies being applied are offering value.
- c) Fundraising & Sponsorship
- i. Under the 5 Year Plan a new fundraising team was to be built and a comprehensive fund generation plan was to align with our 125th Anniversary year. This plan was put in hold.
 - ii. During 2021, Avoca HC has been engaged with 2into3, a specialist consultancy in the not for profit sector. The 2into3 fundraising specialists are currently working with Avoca Hockey Club to develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy and model. We need to raise ~€200k initially to complete pitch and fencing refurbishment and my promise to our members and families – you will all get a chance to help – I commit to including everyone so there is no fear that you will be left out.
 - iii. General Communications
Overall Social media engagement is up by a factor of 4 over the last year.
 - Facebook: Around 1400 followers –
 - Instagram: Up from 856 to 966 followers –
 - Twitter: 1780 followers –
 - ClubZap implemented and YouTube channel in beta
- 3) General: I say this every year and here I go again.... As part of this role, I have to reach out and talk to people and that often involves me asking for help in one way or another, whether it is to take on a role or help with a particular matter. To fulfil our ambitions we are going to need a huge amount of support. Consistently throughout the season I have been struck by how generous and committed our members and parents are. We cannot do this without you. Thank you.

Paul Cronin

Reminder

The Key Messages from 2020 planning:

- Ambition to be Irelands Premier ‘Hockey for All’ Club
- Coaching, Skills, Team Performance – our members want to compete and succeed.
- Club Development and Facilities Development – our members wants to feel part of something and want a home.
- Will be delivered through three focussed planning and delivery teams, the formation of which has started:



- HOCKEY PERFORMANCE PLAN **'The Avoca Way'**
- CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN **'We Are Avoca HC'**
- CLUB FACILITIES PLAN **'Home of Avoca HC'**