

U12 Girls Whirlwinds-7s Friendly 27th November 2011

Woking 16 Staines 1

(Hannah B 7, Phoebe B 4, Alice 2, India 2, Macy 1)

As the girls have been playing so well we went for the slightly more risky attacking format to start with, leaving just one player at the back to shield our rookie goalie Catie, taking her turn in goal this week. We started with the warning that if things weren't working, one of the midfield would need to drop back to defence. To prove that the girls wanted to play attacking hockey & no-one wanted to have to drop back, Hannah slotted the first goal away after about a minute. Unfortunately, as I wasn't taking notes & there was far too much action to commit to memory, the detail's going to be lacking after this....

Things gradually got worse for Staines as the girls got into their stride & Hannah put another away with both Alice & Phoebe taking their chances also before the end of the first 3rd. 4-0 to Woking. Jaz in defence barely had a sight of the ball even on the 7 a side pitch whilst Hannah dominated the central midfield & a fair few other places beside. Helena & Phoebe pushed up as the distinction between midfield & attack became more & more blurred leaving Macy & Alice to move around up front in front of goal to try to find spaces to be in.

For the 2nd 20mins the girls were charged with attempting to work the skills they've been learning into their game, to create more space with better width and to use roll outs & V drags where possible. Helena took on the defensive roll & pushed up more with Jess picking up where Helena had left off pushing up and putting the pressure on down the left of the pitch & India taking on the forward's roll from Alice. Things started a little scrappier as the team readjusted until order was restored and some of the aims for the 3rd seemed to be starting to come through with Macy getting some good width and picking up balls & running into the space she found there whilst others were making more space for themselves with their roll outs and a few passes round the back to Helena came into play which allowed the ball to get out wide. The goal count in the 2nd 20 mins went up to 5 with Hannah & Phoebe both adding another 2 to the tally & Macy taking her chance to get a goal in too. Catie also had some input into the period of play putting her padded foot in the way of a couple of Staines breakaways but with Helena seeing off most attempts to get through.

The final 3rd we were looking for more girls to use their skills rather than run the ball into defenders' sticks. Despite the score-line and having rarely had the chance to play much attacking hockey, Staines were defending determinedly and putting their sticks down solidly in front of players running straight with the ball. With Jess moving to defence & Jaz picking up the left midfield as Macy & Helena took a rest and India & Alice took on the forward roles. With everyone pushing up in the final 20mins the girls had become rather blasé about their marking duties and only a determined run back to defence by Jaz prevented a Staines goal after Jess had found herself 2 on 1 somewhere around the halfway line. The 2nd time no amount of running could save the situation and Staines took their consolation goal to a large cheer from the assembled parents. In the mean time, penalty corners, some lovely runs and crosses from Hannah & Phoebe from the right and some good hassling from Alice & India in front of goal were putting Staines under a lot of pressure. Their resilience was showing signs of cracking and some heads were going down allowing Woking to put away another 7 before the end of the match, 3 more to Hannah, 2 for India & 1 each for Phoebe and Alice.

As far as I recall, most of the goals were pushed in by some determined following up during goal mouth scrambles or close up after some nifty dribbling. The Staines goalie was doing well against the full on hit at the goal and following up the rebounds or finding space behind the goalie was definitely the best way to get a goal. A few more passes would have created a bit more space in front of goal

and taking a little more care over passes on the pitch to make sure they were going to a Woking player would have topped out the performance but with that score-line, it's difficult to be picky. The girls enjoyed their romp in the sunshine and Catie will be relieved to be playing outfield next time, I have never seen goalie kit come off quite as quickly!!

Well done girls, a dominating performance but done in good spirit, thank you all for whispering the scores rather than rubbing it in to a valiant opposition.

Many thanks to Bill for his help with the tactics, motivation and all round hockey advice.