

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of everyone involved in the Hockey Ireland community

CHAIRMAN’S FOREWARD

Trevor Watkins

As I reflect on the past year, I am delighted to report that we have made significant strides in various aspects of our organisation. Our grassroots initiatives have continued to thrive with the support of our four provinces and we are delighted to have increased supports available to clubs with new initiatives launching such as Hockey Unplugged and our initiatives on encouraging people from ethnic minority backgrounds to participate in hockey.

On the International stage we have continued to have strong representation from our Hockey Community, through increased involvement in EuroHockey committees and workgroups, as well as increased appointments of our Umpires and Technical Officials.

Our National Teams continued to do us proud on an International stage, with the Men’s Team winning the EuroHockey Championship II in Abbottstown, as well as securing a place in the ProLeague. Our Hockey ID team winning a bronze medal at the European Team Championship was one of the highlights of the year, as was the success of our Indoor National Teams both winning their respective European Championships. Additionally, we have continued to see increased involvement of Masters Hockey across the country at all levels.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of everyone involved in the Hockey Ireland community including our executive team and the leadership by our volunteers on boards and



committees. From the grassroots volunteers who dedicate their time to nurturing young people, to the elite athletes, umpires and technical officials who represent our country with pride on the international stage. Each and every one of you involved in administrating, coaching, officiating and playing and working in our sport plays a critical role in the success of our sport.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our funders Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, our main sponsors, SoftCo, Park Developments and EY, our partners EVAD and Sports Pro Travel, and supporters for their continued investment in the future of hockey. Your contributions enable us to deliver on our mission and drive positive change within our sport.

As we turn the page on another chapter in the history of Hockey Ireland, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, particularly with our Men’s Senior Team competing in Paris 2024 and the launch of our new strategy that will run until the end of 2026. We believe that together we will continue to push the boundaries, inspire the next generation, and elevate hockey to new heights.

Trevor Watkins

PURPOSE & PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

Hockey Ireland is the National Governing Body for the sport of hockey on the island

of Ireland and is officially recognised as such by Sport Ireland (SI), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), EuroHockey, International Hockey Federation (FIH) and the Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI). There are four affiliated branches that govern the sport at provincial level.

As an organisation, our role is to administer the competitive element of our sport, encourage lifelong participation at all levels. On a day-to-day basis we:

- Provide resources and initiatives that encourage participation through schemes like Pick up a Stick, Tricks4Sticks and Hockey Unplugged.
- Organise and administer education programmes in the areas of coaching, safeguarding and umpiring.
- Administer vetting for all clubs in ROI.
- Provide supports to clubs in the areas of safeguarding, grant applications and volunteer development.
- Organise representative level sport from Hockey ID, to U-16, U-18, U-21 and Senior Level.
- Provide competitive opportunities through our competitions structure with the support of IHUA and Technical Officials.
- Increasing the profile of the sport through communication and brand strategies.
- Building an organisation with expertise to assist the development of hockey island wide

Hockey is an inclusive, proud and vibrant all-island sport enjoyed by players across a long lifecycle.



OUR STRATEGY

The Hockey Ireland Strategic Plan 2021-2024 “Change the Game” had a very clear Vision, Purpose and Values as outlined below:

CHANGE THE GAME

VISION

Hockey, one of the ‘big 4’
Delivering progress by taking decisions and actions that exemplify professionalism, ambition, integrity, and proactivity. EDIT



AMBITION

Striving for high performance on and off the pitch.
Looking for opportunities rather than seeing limits. Taking committed, effective action to reach lofty goals.



PURPOSE

To lead the growth and success of hockey in Ireland
Delivering progress by taking decisions and actions that exemplify professionalism, ambition, integrity, and proactivity. EDIT



PEOPLE

Our people are our greatest resource.
Our volunteers, players, coaches, umpires, officials, administrators, staff, board and committee members are at the heart of delivering the hockey experience, and determining the success of our sport locally, nationally and internationally.

ACCESSIBILITY

A sport for all, for all of life.
People can participate in, and enjoy hockey equally regardless of age, ability, location, race, gender, religion and sexual orientation, served by a National Governing Body that is available to its membership.



COMMUNICATIONS

Expressing ambition and celebrating and connecting our hockey community.
Engaging, informing, representing and promoting hockey in a positive and timely manner, to build trust, support, credibility and recognition for what we are doing.



LEADERSHIP

Advancing our sport.
Delivering progress by taking decisions and actions that exemplify professionalism, ambition, integrity, and proactivity.



ENJOYMENT

A passion for the game, on and off the pitch.
Cultivating fun, engagement and a love for the game.



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

SECURE THE FUTURE

Develop a financially secure a commercially focused organisation that maximises public funding, sponsorship and revenue generating opportunities.

GROW THE HOCKEY COMMUNITY

Provide leadership in education and member services to drive growth in coaching, umpiring, infrastructure, clubs and participation.

WIN IN THE WORLD STAGE

Maximise the potential of our high-performance people and teams to put Ireland in a position to medal at all tournaments.

LEAD OUR SPORT

Lead with energy and integrity, operating to high standards in all areas to improve and advance our sport.

ENGAGE POSITIVELY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Communicate with professionalism and passion to build positive relationships and represent hockey with excellence.

BUILD THE HOCKEY BRAND

Establish the Hockey Ireland brand to become a national respected sport brand.

OUR DEPARTMENTS

COMMUNITY & PARTICIPATION

Education, Participation and Development have come together under the leadership of the Director of Community and Participation. The aim of this department is to work closely with our four provinces to:

- Deliver education in the form of courses, continued professional development to our own workforce of Volunteers, Coaches, Umpires and Technical Officials.
- Drive participation at community level, while placing emphasis on areas covered by the National Sports Policy, including Women & Girls, people with a disability, older adults, and those from lower socio-economic groups.
- Assist our clubs and schools through our development team, who provide guidance, aid with inquiries, and facilitate opportunities for funding and collaboration with other organisations.

PERFORMANCE

The performance department is led by the Director of High Performance. The aim of this department is to:

- Develop talent across the island of Ireland through the Interprovincial Series, supported by the provinces and the Junior Age Group (JAG) programme.
- Drive performance through the Senior team programmes up to and including the Olympics.
- Select all National panels and squads on an annual basis.

COMMERCIAL & MARKETING

The Commercial and Marketing department is led by the Director of Commercial and Marketing. The aim of this department is to:

- Enhance brand visibility and recognition for Hockey Ireland.
- Cultivate partnerships with sponsors and other key stakeholders to generate additional revenue and support for the organisation.
- Utilise digital platforms and social media to amplify the reach and impact of Hockey Ireland's messaging, with the aim of widen hockey's appeal and drive attendance at matches and events.

FINANCE

The Finance department is led by the Director of Finance. The aim of this department is to:

- Manage the financial resources of Hickey Ireland effectively and responsibly.
- Develop and implement financial strategies that support the organisations goals and objectives.
- Ensure compliance and conduct regular audits and reviews to ensure transparency and accountability.

COMPETITIONS & GOVERNANCE

Overall competitions and governance is led by the CEO. The aim of this department is to:

- Efficiently manage and coordinate all aspects related to Hockey Ireland delivered competitions, ensuring smooth operations and adherence to regulations.
- Develop and implement policies, procedures and guidelines in a range of areas including governance and safeguarding.
- Establish and uphold high standards of governance, ethics and integrity throughout the organisation, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

CEO's REPORT

Anne McCormack



I write this after completing my first season as CEO of Hockey Ireland and reflecting on the journey both I and the organisation have been on during this time. Before officially assuming my role, I had the privilege of attending the EuroHockey General Assembly in Mönchengladbach, where I witnessed Anna Pim (Pegasus) present her remarkable initiative "At the Heart of the Game," earning her the prestigious Youth Leader Award at the EuroHockey Youth Forum. This event marked the beginning of an inspiring few days, meeting delegates from other countries, and schools, family and friends who had travelled over to support our Senior Women's Team, who finished fifth in the European Championships, securing their spot in the Olympic Qualifiers and the 2025 European Championships. Additionally, our HockeyID team achieved a bronze medal. Spending time with those who travelled and witnessing the sheer commitment and drive of our athletes and support staff showcased the depth of passion within our hockey community. This trip, along with watching our Senior Men's Team win in front of a home crowd in August, undoubtedly removed any apprehensions I had about transitioning from golf, the sport I had been deeply rooted in since childhood, to venturing into the unfamiliar territory of hockey.

Since assuming my position at the end of September 2023, my focus has been on strengthening the foundations of our organisation. While much of this work has not been visible to the wider community, it has been imperative in ensuring that Hockey Ireland is an organisation that people feel is transparent and trustworthy. We have conducted thorough reviews in the areas of governance and safeguarding, leading to clear action plans and significant progress. This progress includes the refinement

of several policies and procedures across the organisation, the development of a new Safeguarding Policy, new vetting procedures for clubs, and additional resources that we hope clubs have found useful and informative. Looking forward, we are committed to further enhancements and have scheduled work to review our Constitution and Bye-Laws, aligning them with modern standards.

Collaboration has been central to our endeavours over the past few months, as demonstrated by our extensive consultation with key stakeholders through initiatives like the Big Ask campaign and the Membership and Volunteering Think Tanks. The invaluable feedback received has informed the development of our new membership model for the 24/25 season, as well as a new strategy set to launch officially at our 2024 AGM. This strategy embodies our dedication to elevating standards across all departments and living by our newly defined core values of Attentiveness, Accountability, and Ambition.

During my visits to various clubs, I have been deeply inspired by the dedication and ambition exhibited by our community. From initiatives fostering inclusivity to ambitious plans for infrastructure development, the passion for hockey resonates across the community and is simply infectious. These stories underscore the transformative power of our sport, enriching lives and strengthening communities. Through these visits, I have met phenomenal volunteers who remain the backbone of our sport. We recognise the impact the pandemic had on volunteerism across the wider sporting landscape and are actively working to address this challenge by launching tailored resources and facilitated workshops for clubs to support them in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

I felt privileged to share the sidelines at the Olympic Qualifiers with so many who had

travelled to support our national heroes. It proved to be an extraordinary week for hockey across the island of Ireland, as evidenced by the volume of imagery we received from schools, workplaces, hospitals, and clubs hosting viewing parties, alongside the multitude of people tuning in from their homes. This occasion offered a fantastic opportunity for our sponsors SoftCo, EY, and Park Developments, as well as our funders Sport Ireland and Sport NI, to receive greater visibility and witness the profound impact their direct support has had on our players and their performance. The event also allowed us to showcase hockey to a wider population, as a sport leading in true equality, with both teams sharing the same pitch and receiving equal coverage as they pursued their Olympic dreams.

I have always believed that sport is much more than victories and defeats; it serves as a powerful force for connection and inspiration. That week certainly exemplified these qualities and elevated the profile of our sport across the island of Ireland. The dedication of the women's team leading up to and during the qualifiers continues to resonate beyond that week. For the men's team, despite facing setbacks in the past, they now look ahead to the Paris 2024 Games with renewed determination, and we look forward to everyone coming out to support them once again.



I feel a great sense of pride and optimism for the future

As I conclude my first season, I am humbled by the warmth and hospitality extended to not only me but also my family, particularly my two boys who have made many friends on the side of pitches over the past few months. I feel a great sense of pride and optimism for the future, hearing the many stories of people of all ages being retained in the sport due to the many physical and mental health benefits, has inspired more people (include myself!) to take up the game through initiatives like 'Mums and Others' and 'Pick up a Stick'.

Together, as schools, clubs, provinces, and organisations, we have much to celebrate and countless stories to share with not only our hockey community, but wider audiences. These stories will not only unite our hockey community but also amplify the unique essence of our sport to wider and more diverse audiences.

I would like to thank the subcommittees and Board of Hockey Ireland, led by our Chair Trevor Watkins, for their unwavering support for both myself and the ambition I hold for our sport. This ambition has led to extra meetings, extra reading, and the necessity to act swiftly in certain areas to enable us to be where we are today: an organisation that is stabilising, looking to the future with great hope, and with a well-defined strategic, operational, and financial plan in place.

Likewise, I want to thank my executive team, who have demonstrated resilience and adaptability amidst the myriad staffing and leadership changes of recent years. Despite operating in a challenging environment at times due to resource constraints, they have consistently exhibited their passion and dedication to our sport through their work. My goal as we move forward is to further enhance the support provided to staff, fostering greater collaboration within the team, and cultivating a culture that empowers staff to maximise their potential and excel in their roles.

While the last few months have presented many challenges, they have also been the most rewarding of my career. Witnessing the impact our sport has on lives both on and off the pitch will always remain my greatest source of inspiration. I am proud to lead this organisation and I am fully committed to advancing our sport while fostering a culture of trust, connection, and open communication across all stakeholders. I believe that if we all prioritise the best interests of our game, regardless of club, organisation, or provincial affiliation and regardless of any historic issues, we can collectively achieve great things for our sport.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all.

Anne McCormack



COMMUNITY & PARTICIPATIONS REPORT

Over the past year, the community and participation department has continued to work towards the targets set out in the strategic plan to grow the participation of hockey in Ireland.

PARTICIPATION

Thanks to Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts Funding, we have been able to expand and grow our Hockey4All inclusion programme in 2022. 2 new clubs have added inclusion sections to their clubs, bringing the total number of Hockey4All clubs in Ireland to 19. We continue to work with LSP's and schools to deliver taster sessions, offering more children and adults with disabilities to try hockey for the first time. We also continue to delivering disability and inclusion coaching training to support clubs in delivering quality coaching to their members.

PICK UP A STICK

Pick up a Stick, supported by Sport Ireland's Women in Sport fund, ran across 34 clubs. This initiative focuses on getting women back into the sport, offering participants an opportunity to play hockey in a social fun environment. The programme was a huge success and will be rolled out again in future years.

We were delighted to introduce a new programme this year called Hockey Unplugged. This innovative initiative is linked to the goals set out as part of the Her Moves initiative. Her Moves is a no-judgement zone – where everyone can find an activity they enjoy in their own unique way. It's about having fun with friends and mixing movement with what teenage girls love.

TRICKS 4 STICKS

Tricks 4 Sticks is a tool our clubs can use where a qualified coach is sent into local schools for an agreed number of weeks. Representing the club, the coach delivers a fantastic high energy hockey programme and creates links to the club. At the end of the programme the pupils are invited to visit your club grounds whilst the school also receives a 'Tricks 4 Sticks pack' to encourage them to continue playing hockey. Over 1600 children have been introduced to hockey in this way in 2023.



CLUB & VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

In 2023, Hockey Ireland Development Officers supported clubs and volunteers through webinars, club meetings, resources and programmes. Support was also provided to provincial associations and volunteers. A focus in 2023 was put on helping clubs apply for the Sports Capital and Equipment Scheme. Other support included securing Dormant Accounts funding for Hockey4All for our clubs, leadership and diversity projects, Her Moves and Women in Sport Initiatives.

CLUBMARK

Clubmark underwent a review and revamp for 2023 with the aim to make the programme more inviting and supportive for our clubs to get involved in. The aim of Clubmark is to support, recognise and reward hockey clubs that want to achieve the highest of club standards. The Accreditation process has now been divided into three levels – BRONZE, SILVER and GOLD – with each of these levels focusing on 4 Key areas: Effective Club Management, Quality Coaching and Competition, Creating a Safe Environment, Safeguarding Members. For each of these levels of accreditation Hockey Ireland provides a toolkit with guidance, resources and support to build stronger clubs. 2024 will see an expansion of this programme, with a focus on workshops and networking.

One of our highlights of 2023/24 season was the celebration of 3 of our volunteers at the FIS volunteers in Sport Awards, Cathryn Knipe (Antrim), Sally Kavanagh (Waterford) and Ruth McDonagh (Wicklow). We also had representation from Anna Pim at the

Anna Pim received The Youth Leader Award for her EuroHockey Youth Festival project at the EuroHockey Youth Forum in Monchengladbach. Anna was nominated by Hockey Ireland as their female delegate and presented to the 35th General Assembly of the European Hockey Federation.

We continue to train and empower young people via our Young Hockey Leaders Award. 50 courses were delivered, giving over 1400 young people all over the island the opportunity to try coaching and umpiring. The programme helps to pass on skills, top tips and most importantly confidence so that Young Leaders can get back out to their clubs in order to put their newfound knowledge to use!



UMPIRING & OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the Online Rules test was launched, over 950 participants have completed the course and over 200 have completed the online Module 1, part of the Fundamentals of Umpiring Award. 189 of these have attended an online Q&A session with one of our top international umpires and 55 have completed a Module 2 practical session and been certified a Club Umpire.

In 2023, we continued the National Umpire Academy, funded by WIS, and also supported the introduction of Provincial Umpire Academies in 3 out of the 4 provinces. This programme focuses on development of umpires to a higher level in umpiring. Hockey Ireland, in partnership with the Irish Hockey Umpire Association, is delivering a Club Umpire Programme. The Young Umpire Programme was delivered in 20 clubs in 2023, with 330 participants taking part. Some changes will be made to the Umpire Pathway in 2024, these will be launched later this month.

COACHING

2023 Coach Education Courses:

Course	Course Run	Coaches	Sport Ireland Target
Fundamentals	36	484	475
Level 1	9	150	140
Level 2	1	14	1 Level 2 course
EHF Programmes	2	5	4

*Coach Education is run on a calendar year.

To date in 2024, 11 Fundamentals (196 coaches) and 3 Level 1 (45 coaches) have been run so far (May 2024). Level 2 is planned for June and August 2024.

EUROPEAN COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

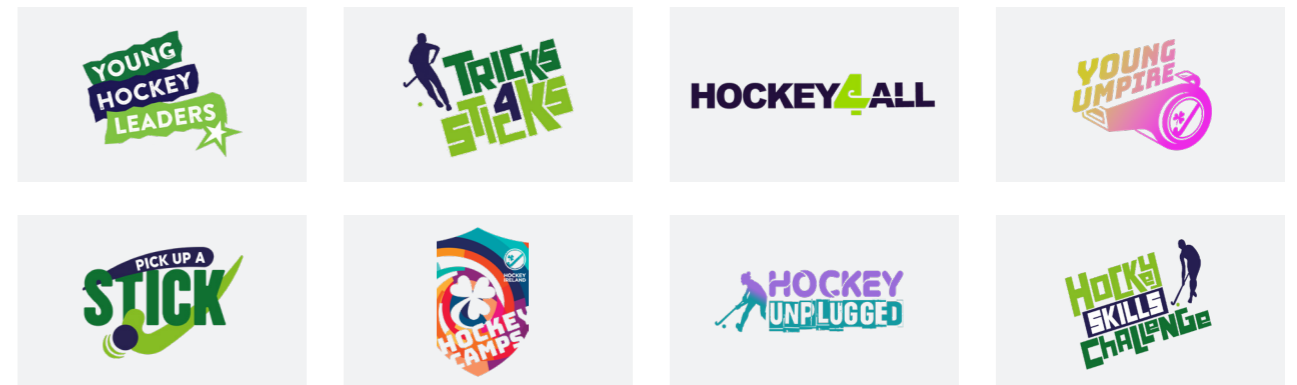
Hockey Ireland is invited by the European Hockey Federation to nominate coaches for their coaching programmes, 'Coaches 4 Europe' (C4E) and 'Top Coaches Programme' (TCP) on an annual basis. C4E is designed for developing coaches, while TCP is aimed at high performance coaches.

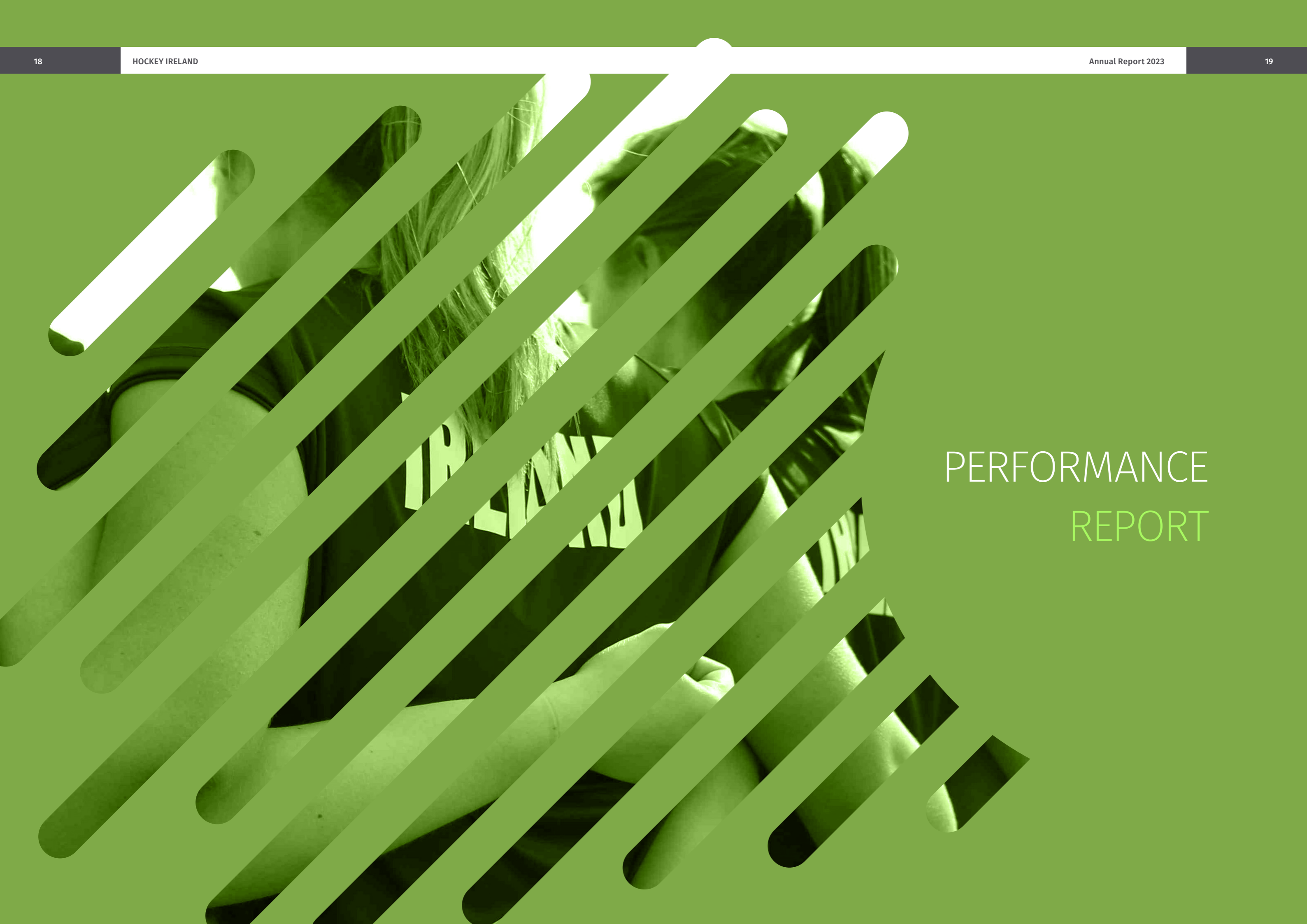
There are currently three Irish coaches on C4E and two on TCP.

LEVEL 3 COURSE - HIGH PERFORMANCE

In January 2024, Hockey Ireland met with Sport Ireland Coaching to begin the process of creating a new high core pathway course for coaches working at performance and high performance levels. This course is currently in development and is expected to launch in late 2024/early 2025.

OUR PROGRAMMES





PERFORMANCE REPORT

SENIOR MEN'S TEAM

The past 12 months have been exceptionally exciting for the Men's Senior Squad, marked by significant achievements and milestones that underscore their growing prominence in international hockey.

The team celebrated a triumphant summer by lifting the EuroHockey Championship II title in front of a home crowd in August. It also was a fantastic opportunity for our hockey community to come together with blitzes being held for kids, and an opportunity for club members to see their national heroes up close, as well as attract audiences outside of the regular hockey community. This victory has meant the highest number of ranking points available were achieved, positioning the team strongly for the European Qualifiers which will be hosted in Dublin in August. Ireland Men will compete against 7 nations, with the winner qualifying for the European Championships in 2025.

For the first time, the Men's Senior Squad gained a place in the prestigious FIH Pro League. This league includes the top eight world-ranked nations and an additional highly-ranked nation, typically the winners of a designated Nations Cup competition. Being ranked 11th in the world, competing against the top teams globally has presented a fantastic opportunity to further develop the skills and experience of our squad. Two series have taken place in India and one in Belgium, with a London leg to come in June.

A major highlight of the year was securing a place at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games by finishing third at the Olympic Qualifiers earlier this year. This qualification recognises the consistent development of the Senior Men's Team that has taken place under Head Coach Mark Tumilty and his assistant Neville Rothman. Paris 2024 will provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase hockey among Ireland's top sports, and to highlight and harness potential particularly for men's and boy's hockey in Ireland.



SENIOR WOMEN'S TEAM

The Women's Senior Squad has continued to train two days weekly at Sport Ireland Campus. This consistent part-time programme which has led to substantial progress particularly in the areas of the physical capacity and overall team cohesion and consistency.

As part of their preparation for the European Championships, the team played a capped match on home ground against Chile. Additionally, a development squad faced Italy, which provided an opportunity for emerging players to gain experience.

The highlight of the 2023 was the team's commendable performance at the European Championships, where they finished in fifth, equalling their highest ever placing. This achievement has secured them a spot in the 2025 European Championships and ensured they reached the Olympic Qualifiers earlier this year.

The team participated in the Olympic Qualifiers, narrowly missing out on qualifying for this year's Olympic Games with a fourth-place finish. Head Coach Sean Dancer finished his successful 5- year tenure here, with assistant Facundo Quiroga stepping up to lead on an interim basis. After the Olympic Qualifiers, the primary focus of the squad has been on preparing for the upcoming Nations Cup in Terrassa. A continued intensive programme will ensure the team is well prepared to compete for highly valuable ranking points and an opportunity to win promotion to Pro League 2024/25 season.



2023/24 PATHWAY REPORT

The pathway programme has undergone numerous changes, due to the inclusion of a dedicated resource through the appointment of a Pathway Manager. The main focus has been on placing players where their individual development is best suited. A more formalised regional training programme and a dedicated goalkeeping programme have also been introduced.

U21 MEN

After a period of inactivity, the U21 Men's program restarted in September 2023. Ashlin Freddy was appointed head coach, supported by Scott McCandless and team manager Emer Keogh. Following trials and consultations, national and regional squads were selected. The team travelled to France in October and England over Easter, preparing for the European Championships A Division in July, aiming for a top 6 position to qualify for the 2025 Junior World Cup. The squad integrated two U18 players, with others training regularly with them, and maintained regular interaction with the Senior team and regional groups.

U21 WOMEN

The U21 Women's programme resumed in March after being dormant for 8 months. Una McCarthy was appointed head coach, with Graeme Francey and team manager Lorraine McGowan providing support. After trials, the team visited England for matches. Many squad members participated in a pilot 'franchise' tournament at UUJ in October, and the program has been active throughout the year. The squad will play friendly matches in the coming months as part of their preparation for the European Championships A Division in July, with a top 6 finish securing a spot in the 2025 Junior World Cup. The team incorporated two U18 players, with others training with them regularly.

INTERPROVINCIAL SERIES

Following Interprovincial competition, a national panel was selected, with regional players also offered training and potential inclusion in the national group.

U18 BOYS

The U18 Boys programme ended 2023 with relegation from the A division after finishing 7th in the European Championships. New coaching staff, led by Brinsley Powell and supported by Joel Cathcart and team manager Will Bartley, was appointed for the 23/24 season. A February trip to England and Easter trip to Germany yielded positive results. Two players were promoted to the U21 group, with others identified for progression. The group combines regional and national training, preparing for summer competition.

U18 GIRLS

The U18 Girls programme also ended 2023 with relegation from the A division after a 7th place finish in the European Championships. The programme included competition in Europe at Easter and a June trip to Calais. New coaching staff, led by Simon Lowry with support from Sarah Scott and team manager Ruth McDonagh, was appointed for the next season. An October training camp integrated U18 players with U16 and senior panels. Two U16 players and an over-age player were included in the squad. Two players are now on the U21 panel, with others training regularly. The team has had international competition at Easter and is preparing for a trip to Spain in July, training, preparing for summer competition.



U16 BOYS

The U16 Boys team delivered positive performances at Easter and in summer 2023. Ronan Hickey continued as coach, supported by Denis Pritchard and team manager Barton Shannon. A February trip to England and an Easter trip to Poland yielded positive results. Some overage players remained in this group for development, with one recently moved to the U18 group. The squad is now preparing for a summer tournament in Cork.

U16 GIRLS

The U16 Girls had competition at both Easter and in summer 2023. Shirley McCay was appointed as coach, supported by Ross Hetem and team manager Anita Patterson. A February and Easter trip to England facilitated further player development, with few experienced players from the previous cycle. Two players are now on the U18 panel, with several participating in regional sessions. The squad is preparing for a summer tournament in Cork.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Significant progress has been made in this area, this is evident through squads being more integrated and working as a cohesive pathway rather than in isolation. There is increased contact time with players, primarily at the regional level which has been beneficial to all involved. Coaches are better supported, with many participating in the Hockey Ireland Elite coaching programme, gaining access to shared ideas and personal coach developers. However, challenges remain, including a lack of regular competition and sustainable financing for the programmes. Efforts are underway to address these issues for future seasons, as seen by a move towards multi-year and multi-faceted sponsorship, as well as a pilot of a collective funding model, from which many learnings and future actions have been identified.





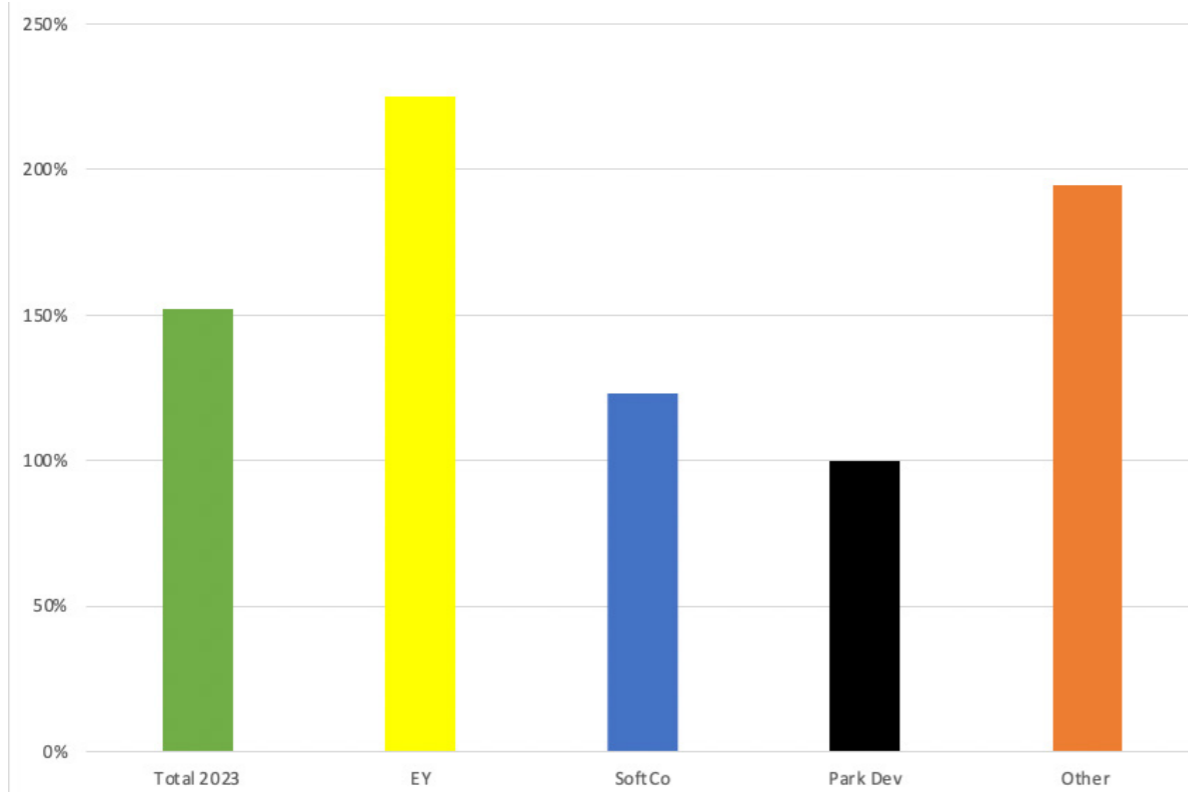
COMMERCIAL,
MARKETING &
MEMBERSHIP
REPORT

COMMERCIAL

Hockey Ireland’s commercial programme made strong progress in 2023. Following a period of instability and sponsor frustration, we were able to firstly stabilise, and subsequently grow our sponsorship volume and value.

2023 saw a 152% increase in sponsorship income versus 2022, driven both by an increase in the total number of contracted sponsors as well as an increase in investment from existing sponsors. In total, Hockey Ireland welcomed the support of 51 contracted sponsors, including our key Tier 1 partners SoftCo, Park Developments and EY. We also welcomed our new kit partner, Mizuno.

Our key partners all extended and consolidated their agreements with us including SoftCo, who added to their support through the Goalie Club initiative, EY who joined our international programme on a multi-team and multi-year basis in addition to their support of our domestic league, and Park Developments who took the lead in sponsoring our Hockey4All programme in addition to their support of our IRL Women.



152% YOY Sponsorship Increase 2023 Vs 2022

MARKETING

Critical to the commercial success has been the coordinated and steady improvement of our Marketing efforts. Our focus has been on doing the basics brilliantly and getting ourselves more organised and more creative to better tell our stories.

In 2023 the Hockey Ireland brand and visual identity underwent a review and relaunch, making our visual presentation more consistent, modern and exciting.

Supporting PR, we reconnected with the media through updated contact databases and better quality, more relevant and timely content, stories and news updates. In 2023 we had a full year of independent formal media tracking enabling us to report to sponsors Media Value of EUR 3.3M and cumulative Media Reach of 103M.

Social Media was significantly upgraded with a comprehensive plan of content capture and distribution allowing us to increase audience reach and engagement. Our channels are now better managed, and content is more attention grabbing, better reflecting the excitement of and community around our sport.

All our social channels continue to grow. On Facebook we posted 397 times with a reach of 441k. On Instagram, we posted 393 times with a reach of 115k. And on Twitter/ X our 30k followers served up 3.05M impressions. We also launched and started to build our following on TikTok to ensure we are not just engaging existing fans but addressing new audiences in new channels.

Finally, in 2023 we launched Hockey’s first ever podcast ‘Hockey Mondays’, providing us a long form vehicle to deepen our engagement with all our fans, avid or casual.

MEMBERSHIP

Total reported Membership numbers Season 2023/24 versus 2022/2023 are slightly lower at 24,666 versus 24,954 against a perceived backdrop of an increasing participation in our sport. The registration of our Seniors is up 10% this season versus last, but Junior registration has seen a total reported reduction of 13%. Across the Provinces, total registered numbers in Ulster are up 4%, down 5% in Munster, down 2% in Leinster and down 4% in Connacht. The planned relaunch of our membership model for the 2024/25 season seeks to address this trend in registration numbers and provide us with a full and accurate account of those playing our sport.

	23/24 Total	22/23 Total
Ulster	6,350	6,080
Munster	4,862	5,118
Leinster	11,912	12,151
Connacht	1,503	1,566
Other (Int/Ump)	39	39
TOTAL	24,666	24,954
Senior	10,078	9,200
Junior	13,162	15,158

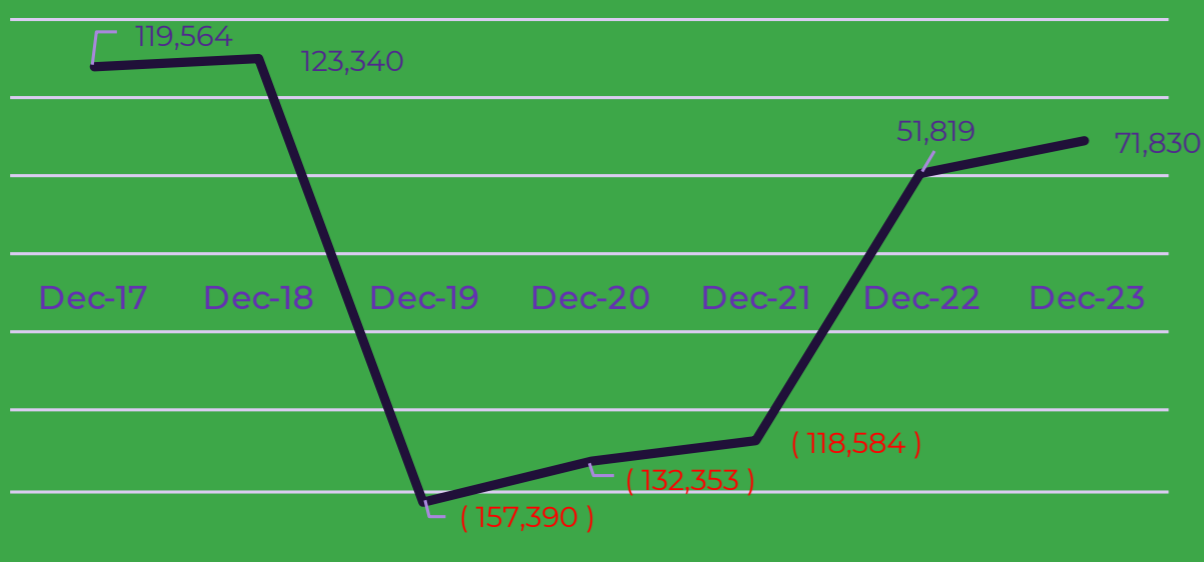


FINANCE REPORT

This report aims to provide an overview of our financial activities. Full details of our finances can be found in the Directors Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023. Which can be found on the Hockey Ireland website.

RESERVES

In 2022, we were pleased to return to a position of positive reserves, marking a significant improvement in our Balance Sheet strength. Furthermore, in 2023, we implemented a new reserves policy. Targeted reserves have been set at €0.35 million, representing approximately three months of minimum operating costs. We are committed to increasing our reserves to meet this target over the coming years.



REVENUE

We are proud to report significant revenue growth over a four-year period, enabling increased reinvestment in hockey. Grant funding reached €3 million in 2023, with grants being ringfenced for their respective initiatives. However, it is important to note that our organization remains overly reliant on grants as a source of funds. Our sponsorship efforts have emerged as our second-largest revenue stream.

MEMBERSHIP & AFFILIATION FEES

While membership and affiliation fees constitute a vital revenue stream, they have not yielded the expected income based on known player numbers. To address this, we are planning to relaunch our membership model for the 2024-25 season.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

€ 000's	High Performance	Pathway Teams	International Tournament Hosting	Participation & Core	Total Hockey Ireland
Grant Income	1,736	122	205	928	2,991
Sponsorship	241	216	6	77	540
Other Income	13	253	207	650	1,123
Total Income	1,989	591	418	1,655	4,654
Total Expenditure	1,966	662	418	1,587	4,634
Net Surplus / Deficit	23	(71)	-	68	20

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we move forward, we recognise the need for a higher proportion of our revenue to stem from multi-annual sources, providing flexibility to allocate funds in alignment with our strategic goals. By diversifying our revenue streams we improve our financial sustainability which in turn will ensure continued growth and success for Hockey Ireland.

We thank our members, partners, and stakeholders for their ongoing support and commitment to the financial health of our organisation.



COMPETITIONS REPORT

The 2023/24 season has been another year for Hockey Ireland, with numerous competitions showcasing the talent and dedication of our teams across various levels. This report provides high level details on the season, with full match reports available on the Hockey Ireland website.

EY 1 LEAGUE

After an exciting season of hockey across the country, Banbridge were crowned the winners of the EY1 Men's League, with Loreto winning the Women's League.

EY 2 LEAGUE

Avoca overcame Pembroke Wanderers in a shoot out to become the EYHL Men's Division 2 champions, while Ards were crowned EYHL Women's Division 2 winners after overcoming UCC.

EY CHAMPIONS TROPHY

A fantastic weekend of hockey took place in Banbridge, with the finals being live streamed using Hockey Ireland TV for the first time.

For the women's final, it was extremely close with Róisín Upton's penalty stroke one second from time earned Railway Union a spot in Europe as the Irish women's national winners as they overcame Loreto 1-0.

On the men's side, Banbridge retained the title and will return to the Euro Hockey League's next season as they defeated Lisnagarvey in front of their home crowd.

IRISH SENIOR CUP

The Irish Senior Cup continues to be the World's oldest club hockey cup. Railway won their first Women's Irish Senior Cup title since 2013, beating Catholic Institute 1-0. Lisnagarvey emerged triumphant over Banbridge with a 3-2 score line.

IRISH JUNIOR CUP

Both finals required a shoot-out to separate the sides, with Railway Union overcoming Loreto to win the Women's Irish Junior Cup, and Corinthian beating Lisnagarvey to take home the Men's Irish Junior Cup.

IRISH HOCKEY TROPHY

Kilkeel scored 6 goals against North Down to secure the Men's Irish Hockey Trophy, while Lisnagarvey won in shootouts to overcome Glenanne.

HOCKEY CHALLENGE

Bangor held their nerve in shootouts to overcome Kilkeel in shootouts to win the Women's Hockey Challenge, while Weston proved the stronger side beating Limerick 4-2 in normal time to claim the Men's Hockey Challenge.

ALL IRELAND SCHOOLS BOYS CHAMPIONSHIP

16 teams compete in these finals, with four pools, winner of each pool plays in the semi-final and final, with the remaining teams playing friendly. Wallace High School were winners in 2023.

KATE RUSSELL ALL IRELAND SCHOOL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Each of the five participating teams games to play before the final positions were decided. The Royal School Armagh were crowned the Kate Russell All Ireland Schools Champions.

JOHN WARING ALL IRELAND SCHOOLS BOYS COMPETITION

Each of the top 6 schools competing in a round robin one day event, with the team with the most points being crowned the winner. Cookstown High School won the 2024, John Waring All - Ireland Schoolboys Final.

JUNE SMITH ALL IRELAND SCHOOL GIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP

The June Smith is competed by the winner of each regional Minor Cup competition. Banbridge Academy were crowned the 2024 winners.

NATIONAL INDOOR FINAL

Consist of four men's and four women's clubs with the winners progressing on to represent Ireland. The men's winners in 2024 were Three Rock Rovers. Railway Union were crowned winners for the women.

INTERPROVINCIAL SERIES

The Interprovincial series were held between September and November 2023. The format allowing coaches to develop players over a longer period. This led to more players being involved in the competition and players being selected nationally that developed later. Ulster and Leinster shared the spoils in the Inerpros this season taking home two titles each.

On the girls side Ulster dominated the U16 event overcoming Leinster 4-0 in the final. Not conceding a goal throughout the tournament. Leinster were victors at U18 level taking the title with a win over Ulster on Run ins.

Matches were played in several venues across the island and were well supported both by the public and the umpiring community. On the boy's side Leinster won the U16 category ahead of Ulster, whilst positioned were reversed at U18 level. All matches on the boys side were competitive with all three provinces gaining some element of success.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

EUROHOCKEY CLUB TROPHY II

UCD were crowned the EuroHockey Club Trophy II champions, following a 4-1 victory. This will mean that 23/24 season EY League winners Loreto will be playing in the higher level tournament in the 24/25 season.

EUROHOCKEY CLUB TROPHY I

Loreto faced tough opposition in the EuroHockey Club Trophy 1, while Lisnagarvey overcame reigning champions Cardiff & Met 4-2 in the final to win the Men's EuroHockey Club Trophy I. Additionally, the following awards went to Lisnagarvey players.

- Player of the tournament: Oliver Kidd
- Goalkeeper of the tournament: James Milliken
- Top goalscorers (6 goals): Oliver Kidd, Andrew Williamson

EUROHOCKEY INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP II

Ireland's Indoor Women's team beat Lithuania in a thrilling final to take gold at the EuroHockey Indoor Championship II in front of a home crowd at the Kingfisher Stadium in Galway.

Additionally, the men secured victory with an exciting 3-1 win over Denmark, with two penalty corner goals in the last three minutes.

Both teams have secured their place in the 2026 EuroHockey Championship.

We are sincerely grateful for the dedication and hard work of the various competitions workgroups who have ensured the successful delivery of these events. We also extend our gratitude to the club coaches, managers, and players who train tirelessly throughout the season.

The season has been marked by numerous exciting matches, and we appreciate the support of the IHUA and Technical Officials, as well as all those who hosted our finals this year. Your collective efforts have been instrumental in making this season a success.





GOVERNANCE REPORT

GOVERNANCE

This section provides an overview of the governance framework and practices implemented by Hockey Ireland. Our commitment to high standards of governance is essential to achieving our mission and maintaining the trust of our stakeholders and that we meet the requirements set out through the Governance Code for Sport.

As detailed in the CEO report, significant effort has been invested in reviewing our governance practices and identifying areas requiring updates. A great deal of work has already been completed by our Governance Committee and integrated into the organisation's culture, with a work plan in place for the remainder of the year.

COMMITTEES

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring good governance and adhering to our governance action plan, we are conducting a comprehensive review of all subcommittees and their terms of reference.

Throughout 2023, various committees operated on behalf of our Board as outlined below. To achieve the optimum strategic outcomes, some key areas of responsibility were temporarily shifted to the direct oversight of the Board (with specific Board members working directly with the CEO between meetings) during the calendar year. We extend our gratitude to all of those involved in these efforts, particularly volunteers on the Board sub committees and other ad hoc review groups who have supported these important efforts throughout the year

Governance Committee: Overseeing the structure, processes, and practices of the organisation to ensure alignment with legal requirements, ethical standards, and stakeholder expectations, thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: Oversees financial reporting, internal controls, and risk management to ensure accuracy, transparency, and compliance with regulations and best practices.

Competitions Committee: Oversee the planning and delivery of all Hockey Ireland run competitions.

High Performance Committee: Oversees the implementation of programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing athlete performance, including talent identification to optimise performance at national, and international levels.

HR: Oversees the reviewing of policies and practices relating to human resource management.

Coaching Committee: Oversees the promotion and development of hockey throughout the island of Ireland and improving the quality and standards of coaching through the qualification, development of coaches and tutors in line with National standards.

Marketing & Communications: Oversees the development and monitoring of the Hockey Ireland communication policies and procedures.

Participation: Oversees the purpose of developing and overseeing the implementation of the National Development Plan.

Umpiring and Officiating: Oversees the development of an umpiring pathway.

Welfare: Oversees the implementation and monitoring policies and procedures for the protection of young people participating in hockey, in particular ensuring compliance with all applicable legislation.

Games Disciplinary Panel: Reviews and adjudicates on all matters referred to them, in accordance with the Hockey Ireland Games Disciplinary Procedures.

4PAC: Responsible for ensuring effective communication between Hockey Ireland and the four provinces.

Inez Cooper is the Vice President of EuroHockey, the following people sit on EuroHockey committees:

Youth Leadership Committee: Anna Pim

Athletes Committee: Johnathan Bell

Coaching Committee: Inez Cooper & Shirley McCay

Officials Committee: Tom Goode



SAFEGUARDING REPORT

A central goal for Hockey Ireland is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills from grassroots to elite performance. Promoting a child centred ethos goes hand in hand with identifying and eliminating practice that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in youth hockey.

At the end of 2023, we reviewed our Safeguarding policies and procedures in conjunction with Sport Ireland and Sport NI, and have since launched the new Hockey Ireland Safeguarding Policy, this is available on our website. In the coming weeks, we will communicate with Provinces and Clubs and provide them with template policies and procedures and will continue to provide regular access to training and education.

Our Board of Directors all attended specialised training for Boards, delivered by Sport Ireland and Sport NI and we continue to make Safeguarding Workshops available to clubs.

The vetting process and procedures were also enhanced at the end of 2023, which has been clearly communicated to clubs. This change of process has seen a significant increase in the number of vetting forms processed as see below:

Total vetting processed in 2023: 367

Total vetting processed Jan – May 2024: 527

As we look forward, our aim is to offer transparent guidance and support to our Provinces and Clubs while maintaining adherence to legal requirements.

We are particularly grateful to all those that hold the positions of Club Children's Officers and Designated Liaison Person within the Provinces and Clubs who help to ensure the clubs safeguarding obligations are met.



ANTI DOPING REPORT

Hockey Ireland remains commitment to upholding the principles of fair play and integrity within the sport. As part of our ongoing efforts to promote clean competition, we continue to prioritise anti-doping education, testing, and compliance across all levels of the organisation.

Throughout the year, Hockey Ireland has conducted comprehensive anti-doping education programmes targeting athletes, coaches, and support staff. These programmes aim to raise awareness about the dangers of doping, the importance of ethical behavior, and the rights and responsibilities of athletes under the World Anti-Doping Code.

We have collaborated with Sport Ireland to deliver informative workshops, webinars, and educational materials, ensuring that all members of the hockey community are equipped with the knowledge to make informed decisions.

In line with our commitment to fair play, Hockey Ireland continues to conduct doping control tests at various competitions and events. These tests are carried out in accordance with the Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and Sport Ireland.

We remain vigilant in ensuring compliance and our athletes' relevant personnel are regularly briefed on their obligations under the Anti-Doping Code, and we maintain open channels of communication to address any queries or concerns regarding anti-doping matters.

For further information regarding anti-doping policies and procedures, please refer to the Anti-Doping section on the Hockey Ireland website.



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