

# Boys' Hockey



## 1st XI

*Matthew Stevenson (Captain)*



We began 2023-2024 with a strong preseason block, building momentum toward the All-Ireland Schools' Tournament. Special thanks to Mr. Duffin for leading weekly strength and conditioning sessions, preparing players' bodies for the rigorous hockey schedule. Confident performances in friendly games leading up to the All Irelands' matches kept team morale high as we played impressive hockey, continually improving and refining our skills.

### **All-Ireland Schools' Tournament**

The tournament presented us with some challenges, particularly with scoring goals. The tournament started with dominant performances against Sullivan Upper and King's Hospital, but goals were scarce in both fixtures. The final group stage match was our closest of the season, ending in a draw against Newtown School, who had a formidable Spanish goal scorer. This draw meant the group winner was decided on goal difference, with Newtown edging us out by one goal. This was a disheartening exit from the main competition, despite our dominant play. As a result, we entered the subsidiary competition, the Herbie Sharman.

We regrouped and set new goals for the final day of the competition. The semi-final against local rivals Friends' School Lisburn mirrored previous games, with us controlling possession and scoring multiple goals in the second half, securing our place in the final. Facing St Andrew's in the final, we started strong with an early goal and maintained pressure. Despite St Andrew's equalizing early in the second half, we prevailed in

run-ins to win the Herbie Sharman Perpetual Trophy.

### **McCullough Cup**

After a brief two-week break, the McCullough Cup began with a new group stage format and Mr Jess had us invigorated and ready to go. We displayed dominance and control in the group games, comfortably advancing to the semi-finals despite a tough match against RBAI, which ended our unbeaten streak. We topped the group on goal difference, leading us to face Friends' in the semi-final. This one-sided match saw us maintaining possession and momentum, securing a spot in the final against Wallace. The final was tightly contested, but we capitalized on our opportunities to become McCullough Cup winners, with Lukas Moles earning Man of the Match for his performance and assisting on the winning goal.

### **Burney Cup**

Following the Christmas break, the Burney Cup marked the final competition of the school season. Early in the new year, the team was plagued with injuries, affecting our tactics near the opposing goal. Despite this setback, we maintained control and dominance in the initial cup games, playing great flowing hockey. As a high-ranked team, we received a bye to the Quarter-Final, where we faced a strong Bangor Grammar side. We neutralized their short corner threat by maintaining possession and dominating the match, conceding only one goal while scoring six. This secured our place in the next round against Sullivan, where we again demonstrated dominance, albeit without a

flashy scoreline due to Sullivan's excellent goalkeeping.

The final was our third match of the season against old rivals RBAI; the only team we had lost to. In the late evening at Stormont, a great crowd witnessed a thrilling match. RBAI came out strong, converting two short corners into goals in the first half. After a big regroup and refocus at halftime, Banbridge shifted the match's momentum but couldn't break down opposition in the third quarter. In the last quarter, our persistent pressure resulted in a clinical goal, energizing the crowd. The final ten minutes saw chance after chance for Banbridge, but despite our efforts, we couldn't find the equalizer. The final whistle blew, and Banbridge had to settle for second place in the Burney Cup.

The season was filled with a lot of highs and a few couple lows, showcasing our team's resilience and skill. We achieved significant victories, winning the Herbie Sharman, McCullough Cup and making the Burney Cup Final. It is a true showcase of the talent and commitment of the team.

### **1st XI Squad:**

Denver Golbey, James McCoy, Jack Fleming, Matthew Stevenson (Captain), Ben Thompson, Aaron Baxter (joint vice-captain), Ben Walker, Max Nicholson, Harry Taylor, Theo Milligan, Daniel McKee, Matthew Spence (joint vice-captain), Lukas Moles, Joshua Baird, Josh Osborne, Josh Brownlee, James Evans, Joshua Cash, Adam McKee, Adam Ewart and Charlie Taylor.

# Boys' Hockey

## 2nd XI

*Noah Lutton (Captain)*



In order to sum up the season, we need to start off at the end of last season. We finished last season unbeaten winning both the Prior Shield and Dowdell Cup with a strong team consisting of eleven Year 14 players. We started preseason in August, wondering how we were going to fill the void created by the departure of these players, as well as some players moving up to the 1st XI.

We started with a very young team made up predominantly of Year 12 boys and the season began strongly as we rode the wave created the season before going unbeaten up until December, when we suffered our first

loss of the season in the Prior Shield semi-final against a determined RBAI side (despite having beaten them twice 3-0 earlier in the season.)

Then came a long Christmas break where we only played one match in two months, with training being on and off due to weather. We returned without our swagger and lost three matches in a row until we came to the Dowdell Cup quarter final, against a ferocious and physical Bangor Grammar team. We had no choice but to perform, and turn our form around, and the match finished 3-1 to Banbridge Academy.

There was a wait of over a month to play the semi-final, against Sullivan Upper. The match drew a large crowd at their school pitch, subjecting both teams to more pressure to perform, with Banbridge gaining a lead in the first half. The Sullivan faithful spurred their team on to make a late comeback minutes before the end, reducing both teams to penalty run ins at full time of which Banbridge were victorious.

The joy and excitement continued on to the final at Havelock Park against Wallace High School. As in the semi-final, Banbridge started the game strong and scored early with a drag flick before dominating the play for the first half. However, Wallace made a late comeback pushing hard in the second half as they scored their own drag flick to level the game with two minutes to go. Wallace then won the penalty run ins leaving Banbridge Academy 2nd XI trophy-less and ending on a loss for the season. However looking back on the season, to cope with a young brand new team consisting of players who had never played together before, teamwork, dedication and team spirit really shone through providing hope for the remaining players to go on and succeed in their later years of school hockey.

We would like to thank Mr Miskelly for his coaching and dedication to the 2nd XI.

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### *Mr M Miskelly*

The 2nd XI started the season having lost a lot of our squad from last year, but with some promising Year 12s coming through we were hopeful of another successful season. We competed in both the Prior Shield and Dowdall Competitions again this year.

We made the Prior Shield semi-final after finishing top of the group. In the semi-final we came up against a strong RBAI team who had been bolstered by the addition of some 1st XI players. Despite having beaten them in several friendlies, we struggled to perform in the semi-final and were knocked out.

In the Dowdall we made it a stage further, making the final after beating Sullivan Upper in the semi-final in a penalty shootout, after a 1-1 scoreline at full time. The final was due to

be played at Havelock against Wallace, who we had yet to meet this season. With nothing separating the sides after full time, this too went to a shootout and, unfortunately, we lost out despite some amazing saves by our goalkeeper Jack Flemming.

I want to pay credit to the Year 14 leavers and their contribution to school hockey through the years. I wish them the very best for the future.

• **Noah Lutton** – Our Captain this season, led by example producing some great performances and scoring some superb drag flicks.

• **Daniel Reid** – A key man in our press, with his huge reach, capable of scoring some great goals on his day.

• **Adam Ireland** – Our talisman upfront who has a knack of being in the right place at the right time.

• **Caleb Briggs** – He missed out on the final last year due to injury and it was great to have Caleb attacking down the right side. He was Mr dependable for all shootouts.

• **Josh Cash** – Our 2's wannabe; even though Josh had made it to the first squad this season, it was great to have his skill and commitment in our Cup games.

There is no doubt of the benefit that being involved in team sport brings to both our physical and mental health. I encourage the guys to continue playing as long as they can and look forward to what next year brings.



# Boys' Hockey



## U15

*Ross McCombe & Shaun Ward (Co-Captains)*



For Banbridge Academy Boys' Hockey U15s, the ups and downs are extraordinary. We started the season with a grudge match against Wallace High School and they unfortunately defeated us 3-2. This set our season to a tough start, which we slowly improved on. From a close 6-5 win against Campbell, with Max Murphy scoring an outstanding 4 goals, our matches throughout the entire season were always close but our spirit and teamwork was never in doubt.

We've had a few unusual fixtures this year, including playing Markethill High School 1st XI and Banbridge HC Ladies 1st XI. Towards the end of the season (with the help of Mr Walker, Mr Barlow and Mr Witherow) we looked promising as we aimed for success in the Richardson Cup.

Our first Cup match saw us travel to Bangor Grammar School. It was a well fought match with good play from both sides, but

unfortunately we didn't take any of our chances and lost 4-0. All hope was not lost as we had drawn Sullivan Upper School in the Richardson Plate. After a very tight match the match ended 2-2, we saw some amazing saves from Archie Knott and some well-taken goals during the shootout competition as we sealed a 4-3 win on run-ins. In the final we faced off against Grosvenor Grammar School. After one of the best performances of the season, we beat Grosvenor 10-0 to claim the Richardson Plate and finished the season on a high. Many thanks to Mr Barlow and Mr Witherow for guiding us to the victory.

### **Squad:**

Archie Knott, Oliver Wakeling, Jay Nicholson, Isaac Steele, Shaun Ward, Adam Liggett, Charlie Patterson, Matthew Patterson, Daniel McKee, Ross McCombe, Charlie Taylor, Oscar Niblock, Max Murphy, Owen Dobson, Harvey McBride, Ben Greer, Thomas Chapman, Will McGrann, Harry Gough, Andrew McQuiston.

## U14

*Daniel McKee (Captain)*

Our season started strong with a win over Wallace High School, setting up a promising season ahead. We then faced Cookstown High School, who were arguably one of our biggest competitors after unfortunately beating us in the final of last year's Bannister Bowl, and we managed to secure a draw. We had a very long winning streak after this, beating many strong teams such as RBAI, Sullivan Upper, Bangor Grammar, and Campbell College.

After Christmas we remained a strong team, but unfortunately took our first loss of the season when we faced Campbell College for the second time. Despite this, we continued to work hard in preparation for the Ferris Cup. In the first round of the Ferris Cup, we drew Wallace High school and after dominating the game we came away with a 2-0 win - a steady result with high expectations for the rest of the Cup Campaign. We faced Sullivan Upper in the quarter final, resulting in a 3-0 win. A great result and a triumph to the work throughout



this season, ensuring a spot in the semi-final.

In the semi-final we played RBAI, a strong side who we had previously beaten at the beginning of the season. It was a superb game of hockey full of great individual skill and team play. After being down 2-1 we pushed through and managed to bring it back to 2-2 then went 3-2 ahead, but with only minutes to spare RBAI managed to scrape a goal which unfortunately brought us to penalty run-ins. After great saves and great goals from both

sides RBAI came out on top, thus ensuring our bitter end to a wonderful season. But, we will continue to work hard and train for next year's season making sure we do ourselves justice in the Richardson Cup.

**Squad:** Oliver Wakeling, Jack Martin, Adam Liggett, Isaac Steele, Henry Farrell, Patrick Hart, Teddie McCandless, Jai Heasley, Daniel McKee, Jay Nicholson, Oscar Niblock, Ben Greer, Owen Dobson, Harvey McBride, Cameron Jones, Noah Laird.

# Boys' Hockey

## U13

*Reuben Cowan (Captain)*



Overall the team had a consistent season. We had an equal amount of wins and losses throughout the year, but at each match we got more experienced and developed more as a team. There were three significant matches throughout the season, with the first being a trip to Royal and Prior School in Raphoe to play their U14. This was Mr Witherow's old school so we wanted to destroy them, but sadly came out on a 2-1 loss.

In the Bannister Bowl we played Bangor Grammar School, who we had already beaten and lost to earlier in the season. After a draw the game came down to penalty run-ins.

We dreaded these and we lost, but we still had the opportunity to play in the Bannister Plate. This match was against Grosvenor Grammar; we knew we could beat them and we kept playing the ball through the middle, but their strongest players were there too. The game ended 2-2 and went again to the dreaded run-ins, but sadly we came second again even though we were the stronger team. The season was good but we were up against slightly stronger teams in the Cup matches. The player who stood out most throughout the season was Nihal, as he was resilient and never dropped his head. From the start of the season to the end he has made excellent

progress with his play.

Thanks must go to all the players who consistently turned up to all the training sessions and gave their best at each match. Thanks also to Mr Witherow and Mr Walker for coaching and supporting us. Here's to next season!

## U12

*Teddie McCandless (Captain)*

The Year 8 Boys' Hockey Team got off to a slow start. Our season didn't commence until mid November with a number of friendly 8-a-side games against teams such as Friends' School, Royal & Prior School Raphoe, Wallace High School and Campbell College. It was not only encouraging to see so many boys take up a sport that they enjoy, but their improvements were clear to see throughout the season.

The highlight of our first year of hockey together was without doubt our trip to Oxford. Twenty boys travelled for the weekend and participated in the Oxford Rover U12 Tournament, held at Tilsley Park. This was our first taste of competitive hockey as a team and we played five matches against teams from all over the United Kingdom. As a team we outperformed our expectations and earned a well deserved silver medal and we'll

all take fond memories from our experience.

We are looking forward to building a successful team throughout Year 9 as we play regular weekly matches. On behalf of all of the boys I'd like to thank all our coaches for their efforts and commitment throughout the entire year. Much appreciated!





# Boys' Hockey

## Year 8: Oxford Trip





# Boys' Hockey

## Awards Dinner



*Hockey Year 14 Leavers*



*Hockey Special Award Winners Adam McKee, Owen O'Campo & Matthew Spence*

The annual Boys' Hockey Awards Dinner was held in the Halfway House, with over 100 people celebrating another great year of schoolboy hockey. Head of Hockey Mr Walker praised the players for their huge efforts throughout the season and Mr McLoughlin thanked the staff and coaches for their dedication to each team. Former Irish international hockey player Matthew Bell presented the awards and spoke to the players about the importance of good team-mates and how they have helped him throughout his career.

### **U12:**

Most Improved Player – Leo Kearns  
Player of the Year – Teddie McCandless

### **U13:**

Most Improved Player – Nihal McAvoy  
Player of the Year – Reuben Cowan

### **U14:**

Most Improved Player – Henry Farrell  
Player of the Year – Adam Liggett

### **U15:**

Most Improved Player – Matthew Patterson  
Player of the Year – Max Murphy

### **2nd XI:**

Most Improved Player – Ollie Small  
Player of the Year – Noah Lutton

### **1st XI:**

Most Improved Player – Josh Osborne  
Player of the Year – Ben Walker

### **Other Awards:**

Oxford Cup – Owen O'Campo Lawson  
Clubman of the Year – Matthew Spence  
Top Goal Contributor – Adam McKee



*Hockey Senior Award Winners Ben Walker & Josh Osborne*



*Hockey Awards Special Guest Matthew Bell presents a copy of his book to Mr McLoughlin*