

Girls' Hockey: 1st XI

Gina Woods

The Banbridge Academy 1st XI Girls' Hockey Squad started the season off with a bang, being named as the National Tournament Trophy winners for two consecutive years. The girls began the campaign to win the Trophy once again on Saturday 5th September, at the regional tournament held at Edenvilla, Portadown, where a series of 15 minute matches were played to qualify for the final stage of the tournament. It was a great start for Banbridge as they kicked off with a 1-0 score against hosts Portadown, during a hard fought match which resulted in Portadown reluctantly letting Banbridge into their circle. Next was an extremely challenging match, resulting in a 1-1 draw with Armagh Royal School. Another win followed for Banbridge, with a 2-0 score against Dungannon Royal. Hard work from the Banbridge forwards paid off as the first goal was scored through a penalty corner, and the second through great connection play between midfielders Emma Gregson and Ellen Reid. Finally, Banbridge played the last match against tough competition, Lurgan College. Both teams' defenders had their work cut out, with Banbridge's defenders Claire Liggett and Jayne Scott excellently clearing the ball up either side of the pitch, ending with a 0-0 draw. After playing hard all morning, Banbridge progressed to the final round of the Trophy, by points, to be played on Wednesday the 9th September.

Wednesday proved to be another successful day for Banbridge, as they won the semi-final 3-0 against Regent House. Banbridge relentlessly attacked Regent's circle to score all three goals in the first half, with Nadia Benallal scoring the first goal with a crisp reverse shot. Lauren McGaw slotted in a second goal with a deflection on the right post, and Sarah Russell picked up on an attempted clearing of the ball by Regent, to hit into the right hand corner of the goal. Banbridge faced extremely tough opposition in the final, as they battled for the Trophy with Strathearn Grammar. Both teams showed determination to win with an intense 0-0 score in the first half, with centre back Gina Woods having to mark tightly and cut out attacking



play from Strathearn's skilled forwards. Banbridge had centre pass to begin the second half, where Katie McKee showed skills that Strathearn couldn't defend, running the ball up the pitch to make a lovely reverse pass in the circle, finding Lauren McGaw to score the first goal of the match. Minutes later, Banbridge scored a second goal with fantastic passing between the midfield, Orla Thompson, Emma Gregson and Katie McKee progressing up the pitch to once again find Lauren McGaw at the right hand post to put the ball in the net. The final whistle blew, and Banbridge Academy had won the final with a 2-0 score, whilst conceding no goals throughout the tournament.

Glasgow Tour

Banbridge Academy's girls' hockey team set off on tour to Glasgow on Saturday 24th October, to take part in The Topflight National Schools' tournament, held at Glasgow Green Hockey Centre. This tournament proved yet again to be another success, as we competed against 15 other teams from across the UK. The girls started well with a 3-1 win over Kelso, with Banbridge continuously putting Kelso's defence under pressure. Minutes into the game a penalty corner was awarded to Banbridge, with Orla Thompson deflecting in a

shot from the edge of the circle to give Banbridge an early lead. Shortly after Banbridge received another corner, with Orla Thompson scoring again from a rebound off the keeper. With Banbridge beginning to feel comfortable with a 2-0 lead, Kelso took the opportunity to try and even the score by putting Banbridge under pressure, scoring and bringing it to 2-1. Banbridge's defence soon picked up the pace again with sweeper Charley Brush cutting the opposition's attacking play short, sending the ball up the pitch. To secure the win, Katie McKee made a great pass to Sarah Russell who was in the circle to score the 3rd goal.

The next match was against Ipswich, with another comfortable win of 3-0. The final match against King's Hospital proved to be tough as the team was feeling slightly tired, yet still determined. Banbridge's midfielders and defence still had to work hard with Gina Woods tirelessly blocking attacking play coming down the centre. An excellent save from Rebekah Hillis from a flick, encouraged the girls to keep up their efforts. The match ended with a 0-0 score, with Banbridge coming top of the group and progressing to the quarter finals of the cup on the second day of matches.



The quarter final was against Salerno, and unfortunately in the first half Banbridge let their guard down and allowed Salerno to score three goals as they passed around Banbridge's defence and slipped it into the corner of the net, just beyond Alice Winson's reach. In the second half, the girls were fired up and determined to amend their mistakes. The entire team stepped up their performance, and an excellent cross from Katie McKee allowed Sarah Russell to make the deflection at the back post, scoring the first goal for Banbridge. A few moments later Banbridge were awarded a penalty corner, and a straight strike from Sarah Russell narrowed the margin to just one goal. The clock was ticking and any attacks made by Salerno were quickly shut down by the defence. Ellen Reid slotted a pass to Katie in the midfield, who ran up the pitch effortlessly beating numerous defenders and finally smashing the ball into the net from the top of the circle. The whistle then blew for full time with a miraculous comeback from Banbridge, to leave the scoreline as 3-3. Penalty run-ins would decide the winner and with Katie McKee, Orla Thompson, Emma Gregson and Sarah Russell all scoring and Alice Winson making incredible saves, Banbridge progressed through to the semi-final.

Glasgow High School proved tough competition, with their open set play testing Banbridge's defence, however the girls managed to cut their play short through strong block tackles. A save from a straight strike provided Katie McKee with an opportunity for a rebound, and she effortlessly slotted the ball in the corner by a reverse strike. Not long after, Glasgow High School received their own penalty corner. A well-worked set piece allowed them to even the score. Both sides fought hard with attacking play, but with just minutes left in the game, Lauren McGaw won Banbridge another corner. An organised set play allowed Charley to slap the ball into the back of the net, securing Banbridge's place in the final. The Rainey Endowed team

was the opposition for the final match of the day. Team passing soon saw Rainey in the Banbridge circle and despite excellent defending from the girls, Rainey scored a reverse strike. Banbridge responded to this and with play between Lauren McGaw and Orla Thompson, the girls were unlucky to get a touch from a cross. Another well-worked attack from Rainey resulted in yet another reverse strike goal. A goal by Sarah Russell in a penalty corner put Banbridge back in the game, but despite the girls' best efforts, the match ended with the scoreline of 2-1. Although they didn't win, Banbridge were still pleased to come 2nd out of the 16 teams in the competition.

Cup Matches

Our first Cup match was against Dalriada on a crisp November morning. Banbridge started brilliantly, defeating their opposition 5-0. After this tremendous win, the girls trekked up to Kilkeel and were determined to stay in the competition. From the beginning of the match it was clear that Kilkeel weren't playing to a high standard and the girls took full advantage of this winning 7-0, with goals from Emma Gregson, Orla Thompson, Lauren McGaw, Nadia Benallal and a hat trick for Katie McKee.

The girls realised that they were not going to continue with such ease when they found out their next match was against Wallace, but with a motivational team talk by captain Sarah Russell the girls were determined to be successful. The match began and the girls started to take the harder team in their stride as they scored 2 goals in the first half. In the second half the girls tried their hardest to keep the opposition at bay, but unfortunately Wallace scored within the first ten minutes. However, the girls didn't let this dampen their spirits as they bounced back to net another two goals with the final score being 4-1.

In the quarter final the girls were up against Lurgan College. We had heard about some of their individual players,

but as a team we wouldn't be deterred. The match began and the girls calmed their nerves by scoring a well-planned short corner. At half time the girls knew they couldn't let their guard down and still needed to work at a high tempo to keep ahead. However, Lurgan came back strongly, scoring on a counter attack and slapped the ball into the corner of the net. With everything even it was all to play for with each team trying their hardest to get another goal. The girls received a corner with a good run from Orla Thompson into the circle to hit a Lurgan foot. The ball was slapped quickly out by a Charley Brush and a straight strike by Katie McKee saw the girls into the semi- final.

The semi-final was against Sullivan and the girls stayed lively as they tried their hardest to get revenge on them, as we had played them in last year's final. Walking out onto the pitch, we quickly began our warm up, during which we were flattered by the bus loads of student coming to support us. The match couldn't have begun any better with Katie McKee taking pass back and skimming the entire Sullivan team, winning a short corner. A well-executed routine saw the ball go into the back of the net and Banbridge took the first goal. Unfortunately this was quickly equalised only minutes later by Sullivan. Going into the second half, we stayed positive and tried to gain control of the match. Unfortunately things didn't go to plan and with a well-planned short corner, we found ourselves chasing Sullivan as we were trailing 2-1. The last ten minutes were frantic as we desperately tried to score but it just wasn't our day. The sound of the whistle echoed in our ears and we realised we wouldn't be continuing on into the final.

The team would like to extend their thanks to all the students and teachers who supported us: to Mr McLoughlin for his side line support, to our coach Neil Madeley, and of course to Mrs Camblin who made the season both possible and a most memorable experience.



Girls' Hockey: 2XI

Louise Beckett (Vice Captain)

Last season the 2nd XI team, captained by Alex Adams, was successful in winning the McDowell Shield. Dr Dobson was appointed as the team's new coach and training proved to be very beneficial in building up fitness, sharpening basics and enhancing team spirit.

Playing the first friendly of the season, we started off well with a 1-0 victory against Down High with a goal from Laura Stewart. Despite setting off on the right foot, the next 5 games failed to match the first, with the team failing to score despite excellent play from midfielders Rebecca Huey, Rebekah Dougan and Emma McCrea.

A narrow 1-0 defeat against Coleraine Grammar in the McDowell Cup, despite great effort from Rebecca Dale, Ellen Wright and Beth Matson, resulted in the team entering the McDowell Shield.

The first round of the Shield was played at Grosvenor, where captain Alex Adams (scoring from a well-taken short corner) ended the game with a 1-0 victory for

the squad. This success continued to the second round against Omagh, with Laura Stewart ensuring another 1-0 victory for the team.

Our quarter-final was perhaps the most challenging match, as we faced a strong Rainey side. The majority of the match was played in our own defending half, with the opposition applying heavy pressure on the defence. Despite the numerous short corners taken against us, the defence made up of Louise Beckett, Hannah Jordan, Rebecca Dale and Claire Waring denied them any goals. After extra time, we went to penalty strokes, with the team coming out victorious with a 4-3 win, with goals from Ellen Wright, Rebecca Huey, Alex Adams and Emma McCrea.

For the semi-final, we faced a physical Methody side at Lurgan Junior High. Despite having some short corners, we couldn't convert them into goals and before we knew it the match had reached full time. After scoreless extra time, the match fell to the all-familiar

penalty strokes yet again. Our practice from the previous round helped secure the 3-2 win, with Rebekah Dougan, Alex Adams and Rebecca Huey scoring.

The final was played against Foyle and Londonderry at Joey Dunlop Sports Centre. Despite the long drive, spirits were high as we began the match. Both sides had equal possession throughout the game, but ended the half scoreless. After some encouraging words from the sideline, we began the second half with more energy. More pressure was placed on the opposition's defence during the second half, but they defended so well that it looked like the match was to go to extra time. However in the final seconds of the game, Alex Adams got a touch from an excellent pass from Sophie Mount to score the game's only goal and to secure the victory for Banbridge.

A big thank you must go to Dr Dobson for all of her work throughout the year and we hope to continue our success into next season.

Girls' Hockey: U15/16

Hannah Jordan (Captain)

SUMMARY

- Matches: 14
- Won: 5
- Lost: 6
- Drew: 3
- Total goals: 26
- Player of the year: Caitlyn Lyness
- Top goal scorer: Hannah Jordan (Captain)
- Most improved player: Megan Mackay
- Coach: Dr Dobson

The Under 15/16 Girls' hockey team had a very successful season in 2015/16. Despite having low numbers of players throughout the season, we reached the quarter finals of the Gibson Cup, which we lost very narrowly on penalty strokes, much to our disappointment.

Unfortunately, we started off the season with a shaky start, by losing 2-1 to Down High at Havelock. But despite this minor defeat, we immediately got back out to after-school practice and we were determined to win our next match. Much to our delight our hopes were answered, as we redeemed ourselves with a fantastic and memorable 5-0 win against Larne Grammar. This match really boosted our confidence, as we worked well as a team, and didn't concede a single goal. Goals were scored by myself (Hannah Jordan), Charlotte Campbell, and Holly Hanna.

However our victory was short lived, as we then drew with our fellow U14 team, up on the top pitch. In this match, we were short on players, but we still worked well as a team to keep the pressure on the opposing team.

Shortly after, we played one of our best matches against Grosvenor Grammar school, which ended in a 6-0 triumph. In this match our training began to pay off, as the defence played very well and refused to let the ball reach Rebekah in the net, and the attack scored 6 great goals by Megan Creighton, Caitlyn Lyness and Hannah Houston. The next match was against Lurgan College's 2nds and despite fighting hard and consistently, we came away with a goalless draw.

Gibson Cup matches were up next, and we went into the competition feeling confident that we would come away successful. Our first round match, against Armagh Royal, was very eventful with poor weather conditions and an Armagh player receiving a broken jaw. But we gave it our all, which resulted in a 3-0 victory, with goals from Rebekah Dougan, Caitlyn Lyness, and Holly Hanna. Next we faced Wallace, who were a very strong and skilful team.

We started off the match well, with good interchanging passes, but Wallace got a very lucky goal in the last minute, resulting in a 1-0 defeat. Thankfully, as it wasn't the knock-out stages of the Cup yet, we went on to win 1-0 in our third round match against Wallace's B team with a goal from Rebekah Dougan.

Luckily we got through to the quarter-finals against Methody. Unfortunately I was unwell, so Charlotte Farson (vice captain) stepped up and did a great job at captaining the team. The girls played brilliantly as a team, and applied constant pressure on the opposing

team. With excellent defence from Isabella Innocenzi, Megan Mackay, Becky McKeown, and Claire Liggett, and goal keeper Rebekah Hillis, we did not concede any goals. Despite the attack trying their hardest to get the ball into the back of the net, efforts were not rewarded and it ended in a scoreless draw at full-time (and extra time), and went to penalties. These were courageously taken by Rebekah Dougan and Claire Liggett, who scored two goals each. With some excellent saves from Rebekah Hillis, Methody narrowly clinched the win, 5-4. Despite not making the semi-final, we were all extremely proud of our achievements throughout the tournament.

During the Cup competition we played several friendly matches, which ended in several wins and defeats. We lost 1-0 against our fellow 2XI's team, but we then played excellently against Regent, which resulted in a 6-0 win. We were then defeated 4-0 by Strathearn, with only 10 players on our side. Next we faced Armagh Royal twice, which ended in a scoreless draw and a 1-0 loss.

I would like to say a special thank you to several players from the U14 and 2XI squads who played for us when we had low numbers, and also to all of the girls who came out to hockey practice and played amazingly throughout the season. I would also like to thank the Downshire bus company for bringing us to all the venues, and a huge thank-you goes to Dr Dobson, Philip Brown (Bruno), Sheree and Mrs Camblin, for helping to coach and umpire.





Girls' Hockey: U14/U13/12

Gemma Hassan and Ellen Reid

The Girls' hockey season got off to a great start with wins against Down High School (3-1), with goals from Megan Creighton, Gemma Hassan and Hannah Houston and also a 5-1 win against Larne Grammar, with goals from Megan Creighton, Ellen Reid, Gemma Hassan (2) and Emma Cousins.

The team played very well throughout the season and won the majority of their matches. The team put 100% effort in throughout the season, both in training and in matches. We also welcomed Ellie Humphries onto the team and she played an important role, as did everyone else in the team.

This season was tough as we were also involved in the U14 Junior Cup, which involves a lot of schools around Ulster. We played a set of matches

against Clounagh Junior High School, Killicomaine Junior High School, Armagh Royal and Lurgan Junior High School.

The first round was against Clounagh Junior High School, which we won with a final result of 6-0, with goals from Megan Creighton, Gemma Hassan, Ellen Reid, Emma Cousins and Hannah Houston.

The second round was against Killicomaine, which was 1-1 at full time with a goal from Megan Creighton and then a goal from Gemma Hassan, which brought the final result to 2-1.

In the quarter-final we played Armagh Royal and this was both a tough and competitive game, but the team stayed strong and worked together

resulting in a final result of 1-0 to Banbridge.

The semi-final of the Junior Cup was a very physical game. Throughout the whole game every player on the pitch gave 100% effort, with some good breaks up the pitch, but we just couldn't produce a goal. Lurgan took every chance available, and although our defence played to the best of their ability and held the Lurgan attackers off for as long as they possibly could, the Lurgan forward line showed exceptional skill and achieved a 3-0 win against us. This meant we would not progress on to the final.

The girls played amazingly throughout the entire season and each player fully deserved their place on the team, applying 100% effort at all times.

Lynsey Orr (U13 Girls' Team)

The U13 Girls' Hockey Team had a successful year of hockey, including many wins and very few draws and defeats.

The girls all put 100% effort into showing up to every training session and trying their best! Each girl was very committed and attended every early Saturday morning match. The U13 girls bonded well, working together and starting to settle as a team.

We played many friendly matches, which included Killicomaine Junior High, Lurgan Junior High, Dungannon Royal and Armagh Royal in the Cup.

The match against Killicomaine was tough as both teams were very strong and the game was played on gravel, which the BA team was not used to. At the end of the first half, the score was 0-0 but BA came on strong and got a goal from Katie McDonald. The game finished with a score of 1-0.

Our quarter-final game was against Lurgan. Both teams played very well leaving the game 0-0, which finally resulted in strokes. Strokes finished 6-5 to BA! We were through to the semi-finals!

Our semi-final match was against Dungannon. BA excelled in this match

with a positive outcome of 3-0, with Lynsey Orr scoring two goals and Alex Gardiner scoring one. We were then on to the finals!

Against Armagh Royal in the final, both teams gave their all. At half time the score was still 0-0, but Armagh came on strong and scored, meaning that they won. The BA girls were very upset but were congratulated on the achievement making it so far.

Thanks to all of the coaches and everyone who helped out. A big thanks also to the team who showed up at training and always tried hard.

Zoe Hylands (U12 Girls' Team)

The girls' hockey Season got off to a good start, with many enthusiastic hockey players participating regularly. In fact, there were so many girls attending practice that we had to be split into two groups to make it work.

We were very lucky to have coaches such as Mrs Camblin, who was always at matches and who supported us throughout the whole season; Miss Crockett, who taught us many good skills and tactics and also Brad Logan, a South African and Banbridge hockey player

who helped us improve those skills and made us stronger. As time went on you could definitely see an improvement in strength and skill. The season started with 11 girls going to Strathern and winning 2-0. Many matches followed and while we lost a few of these, we were also victorious on many occasions.

As the season progressed, with lots learned and achieved in training, a strong and devoted team of girls were picked to go to Grosvenor Grammar to play a series of matches. There were two

days of matches to see who would play in the final. We played on the second day. The matches were very competitive but also very enjoyable. Unfortunately, we did not get through to the semi-finals but we were very close. The girls were all sad about this but they held their heads high and were proud to be playing such a beautiful game.

Captain and goalkeeper Zoe Hylands also got a chance to play for the U13 team. She took part in their Cup, helping them to the finals.