

**SPOTLIGHT
STORY
OF
THE
MONTH**



East District Youth League



Humble Origins

The East District Youth League was formed in 2007 as a 1-year trial.

The Structure:

10 U14 teams from clubs in and around Edinburgh took part.

Teams of 8 played on half a pitch.

They played fortnightly in a non competitive league format over 2 terms either side of the Christmas break.

Over 100 kids took part.

Its purpose:

To create a positive and safe environment to develop young players.

To allow young people to participate in hockey was the main focus of the league rather than winning.

Create an experience of friendly competition against other clubs.

Develop club-to-club relationships and share best practice.

The key driving force behind the East District Youth League is George Thornton, the East Youth League Secretary.



Tangible Success



The East District Youth league has gone from strength-to-strength and has reached its 10th year anniversary.

Currently over 600 youngsters take part in each round of matches. The league has shown steady manageable growth year-on-year. The format has adapted to suit the growing numbers.

The U12 league was introduced in the 2016/17 season and is thriving.

There is a clear pathway for the players to progress towards senior club and district sides. It has been the platform for senior internationalists such as Duncan Riddell, a participant at the very first event.

Rules and a Code of Conduct have been created and adhered to, teaching the kids and support staff positive behaviours. The safe environment with a focus on participation has encouraged the development of young and novice coaches and umpires to flourish.

The league has attracted further volunteers and participants into the sport.

It has supported the development of coach and umpire mentors.

Senior Scotland player Duncan Riddell shared his experiences:

“Having played and coached in the league I believe it’s all about making sure you get plenty of touches and are constantly involved in the action. You gain so much confidence from applying skills learned in practice into the league matches”

Image: The first ever East District Youth League winners featuring a young Duncan Riddell (bottom Left).



The Future is Bright



The season for 2017/18 will feature:

18 clubs & schools from East District and further afield from the likes of Kelso, Dunbar & Galashiels.

The clubs & schools will provide 66 teams:

U14s - 650 kids in 40 teams across 7 Leagues

U12s – 350 kids in 24 teams across 3 leagues

The Support staff each week:

40 Coaches, 16 Managers, 24 Umpires

Over 200 support staff will feature over the season to ensure the smooth running of the league.

A Different host club manages the event each week. This shares the workload and offers different clubs the opportunity to manage such events.

It is fully run by volunteers with club members and parent helpers at the heart of this success.

It remains a superb platform to develop a host of roles within the game; players, coaches, managers, technical officials.

George Thornton sums why so many people get involved:

“We get fantastic feedback from parents who tell us how much their children love playing in these matches, we have brothers and sisters in the same team. It’s a real family occasion”



**SPOTLIGHT
STORY
OF
THE
MONTH**



For more
information on accreditation
contact:
scott.madden@Scottish-hockey.org.uk