

# We're Coming Home....at 90!



Rotherham Hockey Club, which celebrates its 90th anniversary this year, is delighted to announce that it will be returning to Rotherham to play home fixtures at a brand new hockey facility which is taking shape at West Bawtry Road, Rotherham.

The club, founded in Rotherham in 1927, has had a number of bases in the town during its long history but, following the closure of the Firth Rixson Aurora sports ground and clubhouse, 4 years ago, and due to a lack of suitable alternative venues in the town, was forced to relocate to Westfield Sports College in Sheffield for all playing and coaching activities and home games and to The Belfry public house for post-match hospitality.

Back in 2015 the Rotherham Advertiser reported upon the demise of suitable facilities within Rotherham and the lack of investment in the local area despite other legacy successes following London 2012 Olympic Games.



However, all this is set to change as the Club's management committee has worked hard to secure a partnership which will provide a home for the Club, in Rotherham, for years to come. The new facility, which is on the site of the old Aurora sports ground, is part of a joint venture with Sheffield Hallam University.

The handover to SHU will be in August when the pitch will be ready for the coming 2017/18 season with league matches due to start end September 17.

In addition to a dedicated artificial hockey pitch, which will meet England Hockey's standards for top-flight hockey, the new development will include disability access to pitch side, refurbishment of spectator stand, welfare facilities, floodlighting, landscaping and car parking. The club will also make use of the excellent Graham Solley Pavilion at the nearby Sheffield Hallam University Sports Park for changing rooms and post-match hospitality.

This move back home to Rotherham provides the club with a first-class base from which to focus on its core activity of providing competitive hockey for men, women, and young people whilst at the same time implementing the club's objectives of promoting the game through education, involvement of the local community, and player development for all ages and abilities. Since 2004 the club has held the England Hockey "ClubsFirst" status and are now working towards Sport England "clubmark" accreditation. This is a universal accreditation scheme which is a nationally recognised award that can demonstrate Rotherham Hockey Club are continually working to minimum operating standards for community hockey providing higher standards of welfare, equity, coaching and management.

Phoenix Ladies Hockey Club, who are a single team club playing in the Yorkshire League, have also agreed to be partners in this venture and will be using the facility. It is also expected the new facility will provide opportunities for Sheffield Hallam University students to join the club as players, coaches, umpires, volunteers and extramural roles linked in with their studies such as sports science. The facility will also be used for competitive British University and College Sports Hockey matches.

Plans are underway to mark the official opening of the facility, however, in the meantime Rotherham Hockey Club are already organising hockey events during September.

This will be a double celebration for the club as the news comes during its 90<sup>th</sup> year of existence which will make this an even more memorable move back home.

**Club Chairman and veteran player James Swinscoe** said *"Rotherham Hockey Club are delighted to be involved in this joint venture. We have worked very closely and collaboratively with Sheffield Hallam University to bring hockey back into the Rotherham Borough, thereby providing tremendous opportunities for both Rotherham Hockey Club and its wider audience. We are very excited about the future"*

**Youth Co-ordinator and veteran player Dave Woodward** added *"Since the closure of the Firth Rixson Aurora Sports Club and forced move into Sheffield our membership has declined and our outreach work in local schools has suffered. We have worked hard to get back to a new site in Rotherham. The scheme will be a major boost to both our club and the University and will provide a first class facility that can be enjoyed by all those involved in the sport and help us achieve our targets in developing the sport to all but especially young people"*.

**Jon Warden, Kier site manager for the project,** said: *"We're extremely pleased to be delivering this new facility for Sheffield Hallam University and Rotherham Hockey Club, through the Scape minor works framework. When complete, this new centre will provide top-class hockey facilities for the area and we're all looking forward to seeing the first match played here later this year."*



Picture: Youth Co-ordinator Dave Woodward (right) during construction at the new facility along with Kier Construction Northern Site Manager Jon Warden.

**Richard McGloin, Director of Commercial Services at Sheffield Hallam University,** said: *“This is an excellent opportunity to help invigorate sport and physical activity levels in the Rotherham area and we are proud to be able to work with Rotherham Hockey Club to enable them to play their home fixtures in the town. Not only will this new development allow the club to increase their outreach programmes in the local community, it will also provide Sheffield Hallam University with the opportunity to expand our hockey programme but also give students the opportunity to develop their coaching and sports science skills, in partnership with Rotherham Hockey Club, as part of their studies.”*

**Gary Limbert, Facilities Relationship Manager at England Hockey,** said *“England Hockey are proud supporters of Sheffield Hallam University and Rotherham Hockey Club, both the University and Hockey Club have worked tremendously hard to bring hockey back to Rotherham with the development of a dedicated artificial hockey pitch which puts Hockey at the centre of the local community”*

England Hockey has invested over £2 million in the past four years to Protect, Improve and Develop existing and new Hockey pitches. In addition £8.2 million of partnership funding was raised to support £10.2 million of investment into hockey AGP facilities nationally.

Since the Women’s gold medal success at the Rio Olympics nationally clubs have seen their membership grow by nearly 10%, since the 2012 London Olympics the number of U16 play the sport has increased by 80% and Rotherham Hockey Club itself is enjoying growth in its junior membership.

This development is consistent with England Hockey’s facility ‘vision’ where every hockey club in England has appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for all players. To this end, Rotherham Hockey club will be running ‘Back2Hockey’ sessions for those looking to start hockey and are actively promoting ‘ways to play’ looking to introduce a new format, small sided midweek league!

**Mr Tony Billson, Chairman of The National Hockey Foundation**, stated *"The National Hockey Foundation is pleased to have been able to support this exciting project. We are constantly seeking to assist clubs like Rotherham HC which are in a position to enable the growth of the game and in particular to encourage young people to get into the sport"*

Rotherham Hockey Club would like to thank Westfield Sports College in Sheffield for the use of their pitch over the last few seasons which has allowed the club to continue with its games programme and to the Belfry Public House for hosting.

In addition the Club would also like to thank all the external funding partners Sport England, England Hockey, The National Hockey Foundation, as well Sheffield Hallam University and the generosity of the clubs own members and supporters for contributions received to help fund this venture.

September events include:

**HOCKEY FEST - Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September** - open to all "Hockey Fest" in association with England Hockey. 12 noon to 16:00 open to all players and non-players of all ages to join in. Nominal charge for non-members. ALL WELCOME – games, skill tests and fun activities Refreshments throughout the day.

**YOUTH TOURNAMENT - Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September** - junior training 10.00 to 12 noon, then Youth Tournament at U12 and U15 boys and girls or mixed from 12 noon to 16.00 with invited clubs. Registration 11:30. Refreshments throughout the day and trophy presentation.

**RHC 'CLUB DAY' - Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September** – mixed inter club tournament for men's and Ladies and Development Teams over 13's to Veterans past and present including guests who have contributed to pitch funding with buffet afterwards 11:30 meet.

**SHOWCASE EVENT - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September** showcase events to celebrate the opening of the new pitch and the clubs 90th Anniversary we will be holding invitational matches for Veterans, legends and past masters followed by buffet at Graham Solley Pavilion.

RHC Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team v invitational team

RHC Mens 1<sup>st</sup> Team v invitational team

RHC Legends v Yorkshire President's XI

North over 70's v England over 70's

For more details and times of all our activities and for news regarding the opening celebrations you can follow us on Twitter @RotherhamHC or visit our web site [www.rotherhamhc.org.uk](http://www.rotherhamhc.org.uk) and please do join us on Facebook.

The club is continually looking for new membership across all age ranges and abilities so why not get involved. Should you wish to enquire about joining Rotherham Hockey Club or enquire about our various sponsorship opportunities / packages please contact David Woodward 07774 231206 or the club secretary Graeme Hogarth via our website.

Should you require any further details regarding our announcement you can also contact our Communications Officer at [richard.haigh@rotherhamhc.org.uk](mailto:richard.haigh@rotherhamhc.org.uk)

Pictures of the new facility taking shape.



Picture: Shock pad layer being installed and new surface delivered



Picture: Shock pad layer being installed to England Hockey specification



Picture: Ariel Photo showing the new dedicated hockey pitch marking out lines.



Picture: England Hockey standard surface with dedicated hockey pitch markings and floodlighting.



Picture: sand dressing the new pitch



Picture: sand dressing the new pitch



Picture: view from the old Aurora club house



Picture: New security fencing and spectator barrier and players access



Picture: Fencing, landscaping and new floodlighting

**END**

Author: Richard Haigh – Communications Officer 07742 605042