

Kit Strategy

April 2017

NESTON SOUTH WIRRAL
HOCKEY CLUB

Introduction

Dear Member,

The purpose of this document is to communicate plans for the long-awaited introduction of the new playing kit and to outline our general strategy for kit moving forward.

In recent years there have been a number of frustrating issues with regards to kit.

- The ladies section has been waiting for several seasons to source kit that is consistent across all teams.
- Whilst vital in ensuring we are able to pay for high quality coaching, each new sponsorship deal results in potential changes to playing kit for some or all teams.
- Many of us have had also had cause to fashion extra numbers on teammate's shirts in order to deal with number clashes caused by the variety of old playing shirts being used.

We hope that the strategy we are putting in place will avoid any such issues in the future and will enable us to ensure that every player is able to 'look the part' when representing the club. Looking professional is part of a winning mentality and we believe that a coherent approach across the sections will help to promote the Neston South Wirral 'brand'.



The following document represents a great deal of hard work by several members of your committee and includes the following sections;

- Current status
- Longer term strategy and kit fund
- Ordering of non-sponsored, blue kit
- Ordering of pink, sponsored playing shirts
- Strategy for squad numbering
- Key timelines

We would particularly like to thank Richard Bourne from Sportsville for his patient advice throughout the planning process and, in advance, for his hard work in getting everything ready for the start of the new campaign.

We also welcome your comments and suggestions. It is always difficult trying to keep everyone happy when fundamental changes like this occur but we will remain open to constructive criticism so please do get in touch with your queries or concerns.

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Some or all of us will also be available in the bar from 7.30 on Monday 24th April to field any questions you might have. We'll also look to arrange some 'try on' sessions during the summer league games so you can check for sizing and again have the opportunity to raise any concerns with us.

We look forward to seeing you all sporting the new gear for the first game of next season!

Current Status

We announced that we would be switching to a new supplier before the start of last season, and the main driver for this was that O'Neills were unable to supply suitable ladies kit. Kim put in a lot of work in sourcing and designing a completely new range of playing and training kit that would be consistent across all sections within the club.

Adidas have been selected as our preferred manufacturer because, apart from the quality and fit of the garments, they run on a 4 year design cycle (which mirrors the Olympics). This means that the design of the playing shirts is unlikely to change until 2020. We are hoping that our relatively conservative choice for the blue kit (i.e. training kit, shorts/skorts and socks) will mean that we are virtually unaffected by any design changes from Adidas– an important factor when considering the cost implications for members.



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The O'Neills ordering site is in the process of being shut down and will be replaced by an online ordering platform run by our new supplier, Sportsville of Greasby (giving players the option of trying kit on before placing an order).

At the time of writing we have just heard that a new club sponsorship deal has been agreed. The terms of the deal mean that all playing shirts will bear the sponsors logo and there is an expectation that, wherever possible, **any shirts bearing previous sponsor's logos will no longer be worn.**

Strategy

Many of you will be aware that a lot of effort goes into securing a decent sponsorship deal because it is vital in providing the funding we require to sustain the quality and breadth of our coaches. It may seem strange but little or no money is available from the kit sponsor to go towards providing kit!

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible for a club of our size to negotiate a 3 year sponsorship deal and most sponsors wish to have their name/logo on ALL of the playing shirts, not just a single team.

This situation means that potentially all teams might need to update the pink playing shirts when each new sponsor comes on board and, if we're lucky, that probably means every 3 years maybe sooner.

Although the playing shirts are relatively inexpensive when compared to hoodies, training tops etc. we appreciate that it may be difficult for some players to update their shirt every 2 years, particularly where the whole family plays.

We therefore need a long-term strategy to enable us to manage these changes in order to keep our sponsors happy and to look professional on the pitch whilst reducing the burden of cost where possible.

The first part of this is simply to make sure everyone knows in advance when things might change so that they can decide when to purchase or when to wait. Moving forward, blue kit can be ordered at any point as it is unlikely to change much from cycle to cycle but all players are probably going to need a new shirt every 2/3 years.

We propose to start a kit fund with the aim of being able to heavily subsidise any future purchases made by members. This fund will be added to throughout each 2/3 year cycle through fundraisers and novel sponsorship opportunities. If possible the fund could also be used for special event kit e.g. commemorative shirts when teams reach national finals etc.

Hopefully the kit fund will also allow the kit manager to keep a small stock of spare shirts to avoid new members having to wait too long for a shirt if they join after the initial order window.

Key Points

- Pink shirts are likely to change every 2/3 years with each sponsorship deal
- Blue kit will remain basically unchanged for the foreseeable future
- Kit fund to be started in order to assist with costs for subsequent shirt changes

Blue Kit

The blue kit is now available to order via sportsville.co.uk. There are several points to consider before placing an order;

- Items such as track jackets are bespoke and therefore not kept in stock by Sportsville (lead time is 6-8 weeks).
- As these items are made to order (and there is a minimum order quantity of 6) we will **initially** operate a series of ordering 'windows' to avoid delays and disappointment.
- All items (except socks) include an embroidered club logo
- Blue kit does not carry a sponsor's logo so will not need to be changed with any new sponsorship deal
- **Any orders over £60 will receive a 5% discount.**
- Sounds obvious but please make sure you order the correct size – you can call in to the shop in Greasby or try before you buy. We also hope to organise some try on sessions at the club to coincide with the summer league games.



Order Window closes Expected Delivery

31st May 2017

Early August

30th June 2017

Early September (last delivery before season commences)

31st August

Early November

30th September

Early December (last delivery before Christmas)

Orders can be placed at any time after 30th September but you may have to wait longer until the minimum order threshold is reached. Please plan your purchases with this in mind. We will send reminders as each window is due to close.

Pink Playing Shirts

Pink Playing shirts will also be available via sportsville.co.uk but again there are some key points to consider.

- Cost of adult playing shirts includes number and embroidered club logo
- Each shirt will also bear the sponsors logos
- **Any orders over £60 will receive a 5% discount**
- The club will receive £2 for each shirt sold which will be used to start the kit fund (used to subsidise future cost of shirts)
- It is expected that the current design will be in place for 2/3 years minimum.

For pink shirts there will only be one order window prior to the 2017/18 season and this will close on June 11th.

Any orders placed after this time cannot be guaranteed for delivery in time for the start of the season. You can order a pink polo at any time after this point but you may have to wait until the minimum order threshold is reached before Sportsville can place their order with Adidas.



We would like to be able to keep a limited supply of standard size shirts in stock so that any new starters who arrive after the deadline can get a shirt quickly – this very much depends on the initial success of the kit fund (which will get a head start if as many current members as possible get their order in early!).

Squad Numbering

League hockey requires players in each team to have an individual number but this is something we have struggled with previously. It is commonplace to see NSWHC players using tape to add an extra number 1 onto a shirt in an attempt to create a unique number!

We intend to introduce a system of squad numbers which will be managed centrally in order to avoid duplication within a team.

We understand that this could be a potentially controversial move as players often become very attached to a number that they may have worn for several seasons (in some cases throughout their career). However, the size of the club and the success of the junior section means that players often move between teams and younger players often progress rapidly through various teams – all potentially leading to clashes if we do not control the way our numbering works.

We therefore propose a system which we believe is fair for all but provides a degree of choice rather than just using a random allocation.

Senior members will be contacted shortly via a google form in order to request their preferred number from those available within their squad for the forthcoming season. Most players will probably want to stick with their current number and we therefore expect to be able to accommodate the majority of requests with no issue.

The form will, however, ask players to choose what they wish to happen in the event of multiple requests for their chosen number. Players may choose to enter a 'Dutch auction' in order to bid for their preferred number or elect to receive a random number.

If you choose to enter the auction you place a one-off bid for that number (in addition to the cost of the shirt - minimum bid =£5). The highest bidder wins and will use that number indefinitely. Unsuccessful bidders will be allocated a squad number at random (and of course will just need to pay the standard shirt price).

By entering the auction process you agree that if you are successful you will make a donation to the kit fund to the value of your bid (in addition to purchasing your shirt of course!).

Squad Numbering (continued)

Each of the Men's and Ladies senior squads will use numbers 2-99 plus selected 3 digit numbers as below. 3 digit numbers can often look a bit awkward on a shirt due to the lack of width but by using only the following combinations we should be able to get around this and still have enough numbers for our purposes;

101, 111, 121, 131, 141, 151, 161, 171, 181, 191

110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119

211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711, 811, 911

Goalkeepers will all wear number 1. We are in the process of sourcing suitable goalkeeping smocks and will be in touch with individual 'keepers shortly.

There is no requirement for individually numbered shirts for Beavers and Badgers games so **the squad system will not be applied to the junior section**. Shirts will be supplied without a number so that if a player subsequently moves up to play in a senior team they can be allocated a senior squad number and this can be added to their shirt retrospectively. Any junior members who are thought likely to play in a senior team during the 2017/18 season will be included in the initial process for allocating senior squad numbers.

Of course, if any junior player particularly wishes to add a particular number to their shirt this can be arranged through Sportsville. Please be aware though that in this case a new shirt may be required if that player subsequently moves up to play in a senior team.

Timelines

Key implementation dates for the project.

