MEN’S SHINTY CLUB 2016/2017

The past year has been particularly encouraging for the Men’s Shinty Club in light of the mass exodus of graduating players last year. Daniel Hopkins (Captain) was faced with the unenviable task of rebuilding a competitive squad around a small core of experience players. Efforts to achieve this began with an intense week of pre-season training in early September and younger players soon stepped up to fill the gaps in the squad, ensuring that the club was competitive throughout the season. The new squad began to find its feet during the first tournament of the year: the Scottish Universities Rep Trials. After a heavy defeat against league champions Strathclyde, Glasgow and Edinburgh were pushed close before a frustrating last-minute goal in the final match against rivals Dundee cost the team its best chance of victory.

This illusive first victory of the season came in the first league match in which St Andrews had an opportunity to get revenge against Dundee for the Rep Trials defeat. In a fiercely contested match St Andrews held onto a narrow lead throughout, with a hat trick for Jack Rennison and a fourth for Rory Forbes securing a 4-3 victory. This was only possible thanks to a series of last-ditch tackles from Phillip Summers, Allen Harris and Felix Scott in defence and remarkable saves from Tom...
Hales in goals. Unfortunately, this victory proved the high-point of a league season that was marred by bad weather call-offs and teams failing to field teams. Only two other matches were played in the league with Fionn Kennedy’s goal securing a 1-1 draw against Robert Gordon University after a 5-0 defeat at the hands of a Strathclyde squad dominated by Premiership and National Division players. The team ended the season in fourth place in the seven-team league.

Compensation for the frustrations of the league were found in the three one-day tournaments that the club entered over the course of the second semester. The Edinburgh Sixes tournament in February demonstrated the progress made since the start of the season: two victories, one draw and one defeat saw semi-final qualification missed on goal difference. The Littlejohn Tournament in March was similarly promising with St Andrews securing a 2-1 victory over Dundee. Finally, the St Andrews Sixes tournament demonstrated both the playing and organisational skills of club members as the men’s and women’s clubs jointly hosted a highly successful tournament with fifteen teams entered and Aberdour retaining the Fingal Shield at the end of the day.

With a further exodus of talented players expected next year, the club can look ahead to another challenging year. However, the progress made over the course of the past year is a cause for great optimism. We all look forward to preseason training in September and the season ahead!
WOMEN’S SHINTY CLUB 2016/2017

What a year! This year has been one of the most successful years for the St Andrews Women’s Shinty Club. Despite losing a number of girls from the team the year before, the club worked hard and managed to recruit a number of new members to join the old girls for an action packed year. The Freshers’ Tournament was a highlight of first semester with all the new members playing a fantastic first game of shinty. Many of these new girls joined the current team to compete in our yearly league. The season was off to a great start with our first victory against Dundee winning 2-0 followed by another impressive victory (3-0) against Strathclyde. The semester ended on a high with a lovely Christmas Dinner and the girls celebrating an amazing semester of playing, practice and socializing.
Like the first Semester, second Semester was off to a bang with one of the most intense and competitive games of shinty of the season, the Glasgow Game - where the winning goal was scored in the final 10 seconds of play. Despite losing to Edinburgh, the club ended the year winning the league, jointly, with Edinburgh and Strathclyde. The team also competed in a number of tournaments from Dropkick Murphy’s and Little Johns to our yearly Sixes Tournament hosted at St Andrews entering two-to-three teams in each. We also had a player selected for the SSShinty National Squad and although she had to turn it down due to family commitments we were pleased for her selection nonetheless.

To end the year there was our annual Alumni weekend and a tour to Cornwall. Alumni weekend is always a fun, energetic and busy few days and this year was no different. Starting with the Alumni vs St Andrews game on the Saturday; both teams fought valiantly but the current team managed to active a fantastic victory (5-2), a great achievement as most of the Alumni players have been playing shinty for over 5 years while a large proportion of the currently team have been playing for less than 2. The Alumni game was followed by the annual Sixes tournament where many of the current girls participated in mixed teams with the Men’s Shinty Club. The season ended with a tour to Cornwall where the club played in a variety of competitive and mixed games against the Cornish Shinty Club as well as a Sixes tournament where one of the St Andrew’s Teams were runner ups. All the girls on tour played some of the best shinty of the year. This shows great promise going into the next year of St Andrews Women’s Shinty.