leisure insights

JUNE 2002

Trends in hockey©

- The modern game of field hockey evolved in England in the mid-19th century and is now played on every continent
- Hockey was played as early as 1900 in private girls schools in Australia and the Victorian Hockey Association was formed in 1906
- Hockey Australia has approximately 150,000 registered players from 850 hockey clubs. Hockey is also played extensively through Australian schools (around 25% of schools play hockey). Total participation is estimated at 760,000
- Hockey Victoria has approximately 26,200 players, of which 12,200 are registered. These registrations include 7,200 seniors and 5,000 juniors
- In 1975, a synthetic surface was used for the first time in international hockey at the '8 Nations' Field Hockey tournament in Montreal, Canada.
- In Melbourne, hockey has become a game which is played almost exclusively on synthetic surfaces. There are 26 centres in the metro competition and a number of private schools also have synthetic facilities. The transition has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of pitches used in Melbourne
- Few clubs have had the funds to develop their own synthetic pitches and have tended to work with a school or university and then received additional government funding support. Facility development costs are now in the order of $1 million for single pitch developments
- Rural centres with synthetic surfaces are Albury/Wodonga, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton and Geelong. Others are being investigated are Swan Hill and Mildura
- Conversion to synthetic surfaces has resulted in significant fee increases. Typically a senior player would pay $350 for club membership and a junior, $150
- The sport has grown by some 10% overall in the past 10 years – certainly the change to synthetic has not caused any great increase. Juniors have increased slightly as have veterans. The largest increase has been in the private schools and many of these players are not registered with the VHA
- The scheduling of competitions is changing to meet the needs of players, and fewer pitches. There is an increased demand for midweek night competitions
- There is an increasing number of synthetic hockey pitches being designed to accommodate other sports such as tennis (eg Albert Park, Presidents Park Werribee), lacrosse and gridiron (eg McIvor Reserve, Spotswood). Where tennis is a joint use, there is a compromise made in terms of the thickness of the shock pad under the synthetic grass carpet (ie it is thinner)
- Most synthetic surfaces are lasting from 12 to 15 years
- On average a synthetic hockey pitch can sustain up to 20 times the amount of use of a natural turf field per year.

@leisure is currently completing feasibilities studies on synthetic sports facilities (including hockey) for the Cities of Swan Hill, Mildura and Hobsons Bay.

Please note that the information provided in **leisure insights** is copyright and may not be reproduced without consent. Recipients should not act on the basis of the material contained herein. It is of a general nature only and may be liable to misinterpretation in a particular circumstance.

@leisure