

A large underwater photograph showing several players in a pool, wearing helmets and fins, competing for a puck on the bottom. The scene is dynamic with bubbles and movement.

# ***Underwater Hockey***

***Dive in and enjoy this explosive game of water and air. This supremely anaerobic team sport is fast, furious and most importantly fantastic fun.***

***All levels of experience are welcome.***

**HAVE  
A GO FOR  
FREE**

**WEST WICKHAM**  
  
**UNDERWATER  
HOCKEY CLUB**

The premier club in London  
and the South East  
based at  
Crystal Palace National Sports Centre

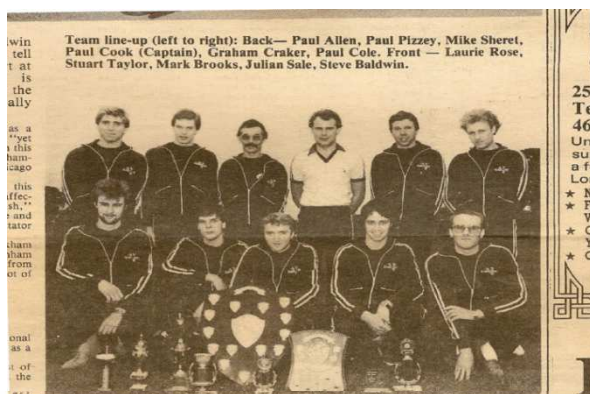


# introduction to Underwater Hockey

**Underwater Hockey or “Octopush” as originally named was devised by Alan Blake in 1954. He created the sport as a recreational activity to be played during the winter months and stop members leaving his newly formed Diving Club.**

The sport takes Hockey to a whole new dimension with the playing area being the bottom of a swimming pool. It's a truly unique sport requiring the use of snorkeling gear (mask, fins, and snorkel) combining swimming skills, good fitness, and breath holding as all the action is underwater.

The object of the game is to push the puck (specially designed and weighted) using a small short stick (“pusher”) into the opposing team's goal. A team can consist of up to 10 people, with 6 players in the water (at any one time) and others acting as substitutes.



**West Wickham - National Champions (1984)**  
**The Advertiser**

A recent development is the tag system used to substitute players during a game; similar to Ice Hockey. This results in fast, non-stop action which increases the speed and exhilaration of the game.

The sport is a great way to keep fit, taking swimming which is widely recognised as superior to maintaining good health and fitness to a whole new level through this truly unique team sport. The low contact nature makes it very safe, giving it a very broad appeal with men's, women's, and junior teams; with players from 8 years upwards.

## Development of the Sport

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Championship took place as early as 1968, however it was the 1970's and 80's that witnessed the 'first wave' of major expansion in the sport. In this period, 'scuba diving' (popularised by the late Jacques Cousteau) grew rapidly providing a catalyst for significant expansion of Underwater Hockey.

In addition to expanding in the UK, the sport was growing in popularity in Australia, Canada, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, United States, and South Africa.

In the last 25 years the sport has advanced beyond recognition into a truly global sport with well organised and run National and International events, and a World championship staged every 2 years.

## Key Facts

- 5,400+ UK registered players
- 110 teams (UK) & 1000+ teams globally
- The 1st World Championship (1980) had just 6 teams; the event in Eger, Hungary (2013) hosted 80 teams and over 900 players/officials.



# about West Wickham Underwater Hockey Club



**West Wickham Underwater Hockey Club** was formed in 1974 by a group of divers from West Wickham (BSAC) diving club. The club expanded and quickly established itself in the UK National Ladder (the Underwater Hockey League Table) and advanced through the rankings.

The club's proximity to London makes us an ideal choice for new players and those wanting to advance in the sport and bid for a place at GB level.

## **Club Profile**

- We are the largest club in London and the South East and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in the UK by membership.
- Our club is based at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, a premier UK sporting facility which was selected as the 'base camp' of the Brazil Olympic Team in 2012. Use of the Olympic pool is unique in our sport enabling us to offer multiple games to suit all players and abilities.
- We and our affiliated clubs provide superior geographic coverage for our sport in London and the South East with sessions at pools in Kent, Surrey, South London, and a newly established club in SE London.
- In addition to our men's 'Elite' team we have a broad spectrum of players, including a growing women's membership and a successful junior club for younger players; aged 8 upwards.

## club achievements



**Our club has a strong heritage and record of success in National and International competitions, providing numerous players for the GB squad and world championship events.**

- 25 years with a Top 3 ranking in the UK National Championships
- 12 players capped for GB Squad, playing in 1000+ games
- Selection of 6 players for 2013 GB Squad, plus 2 experienced team coaches

### **Club Captains and Leadership**

Our current and former club captains are testament to the quality and high standards of sport at our club; with an impressive track to include:

- GB Squad representation at 8 World Championships
- GB Squad representation at 10 European Championships
- 18 European Club Championships
- 40+ National Championships
- Coach for Men's and Ladies GB Squad
- County Junior Squad coach

Our current and former Captains are recognised for their depth of knowledge, communication skills, and team building abilities at all levels of the sport. Conversely, our Vice-Captain is acknowledged as one of the rising stars of our sport, capped in just his second year as a player.

## future plans and development

**Our men's 'Elite' team aims to continue building on its top ranking position over the next 3 years; with a target to win the UK National Championship by 2016.**

Strengthening our squad will include participation at National and International Club events. Our ambition is to at least double the number of capped players representing Team GB in the next 3 years.



### Increased participation opportunities

We plan to increase participation through the set-up of a new club in 2013. This club will be based at the Forest Hill Pool in the London Borough of Lewisham.

### West Wickham Junior Club

Establishing a junior section fulfills a long term ambition for our club. West Wickham Juniors has grown steadily in numbers; competing in the UK National Championships for the first time in 2010. Some players have also represented the South East of England at the National Junior Inter-Regional competitions

We see continued development and growth of our junior section as key to providing great recreational opportunities for youngsters, and as a foundation for producing talented players for our 'Elite' Squad and we hope Team GB in the future.

Our long term ambition is to win the National Junior Championships, whilst providing an environment where young people can learn and develop individual, team and life skills, within a fun and friendly club atmosphere.

This location increases our coverage of inner London, these plans being fully supported and endorsed by the Mayor, and key representatives of the local council.

*Through these development plans we aim to foster a broad community involvement in our sport, providing increased opportunities at a local level and encouraging a healthy lifestyle through sporting participation.*

find out more or play a game

*"It is all about encouraging young people to do things they have never thought about - whether it's taking up a new sport..." Lord Sebastian Coe on Olympic Legacy (2012)*



## to find out more or contact us

Website: [www.gbuwh.co.uk/westwickham](http://www.gbuwh.co.uk/westwickham)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WestWickhamUWH](http://www.facebook.com/WestWickhamUWH)  
Twitter: [@WestWickhamUWH](https://twitter.com/WestWickhamUWH)  
E-mail: [wwickhamuwh@gmail.com](mailto:wwickhamuwh@gmail.com)

All sessions offer 'have a go' opportunities, plus our junior club provide regular demonstration sessions for young people interested to try our sport. Simply follow the link on our website.

## our club and affiliates sessions

Crystal Palace, National Sports Centre, Ledrington Road, London, SE19 2BB  
Walnuts Leisure Centre, Lync Gate Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 0TJ  
Forest Hill Pools, Dartmouth Road, Forest Hill, SE23 3HZ  
De Stafford Sports Centre, Burntwood Lane, Caterham, CR3 5YX