

BACK TO HOCKEY CASE STUDY
JEN SLATER



ENGLAND
HOCKEY

JEN'S STORY

Jen, author of Eclectic Cake fitness blog, attended her first Back to Hockey session since playing Hockey at university.

Taken from her blog (<http://eclecticcake.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/back-to-hockey.html?m=1>) Jen describes first hand her experience of the session hosted by Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club.



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JEN'S SPORTING BACKGROUND

When I was in primary school, after the tiny outdoor swimming pool was thick with algae and finally deemed unfit for use, I really didn't look forward to P.E. classes. The options were country dancing, where I was always paired with Daniel who had creepily sweaty hands, or netball. I enjoyed neither.

Then, for just one day, we were introduced to hockey. Suddenly, this girl – who always tried hard but rarely excelled with physical activity – was actually displaying some kind of sporting skill! For the first time I felt comfortable using my body – it somehow felt natural to chase a ball around with a hooked stick – and I thoroughly enjoyed the feeling.

Hockey was the first organised physical activity I did out of choice. It taught me how to move, revealed what it felt like to be strong and, perhaps most importantly, showed what it meant to be part of a team. But after playing through secondary school and the first year of university, the novelty had worn off and my eyes began to wonder...lacrosse, cheerleading, canoeing...I guess that's where Eclectic Cake really began.



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THE SESSION

I was warmly welcomed to a session with [Hampstead & Westminster Hockey Club](#) at [Paddington Recreation Ground](#) by plenty of keen players (old and new) and the promise of post-training brownies (apparently something to look forward to at each session). After discovering I could still at least hold a stick, we started with simply passing the ball between us before moving on to some slightly more complicated drills. One in particular was just as challenging for the brain as it was for the body but this was perfect for getting agile enough for a mini game later – I'd forgotten how quickly you have to think and move.

Of course, the aim of the game is to score goals, so we tested ourselves against a goalkeeper made of cones. Although she wasn't a great mover, I've never been great at scoring and she certainly kept my balls away from glory. I was even less successful in scoring after we added a real-life defender. I did finally score. It may have been in an empty goal but the thump of the ball hitting the backboard was hugely satisfying.

Finally, we put our refreshed skills to the test in a 5-a-side game. I thought I was fairly fit before agreeing to play midfield in the quarter-pitch mini match but the short sharp bursts in different directions were far more draining than a long plod. It will do wonders for your fitness! I mostly chased after the ball like a loon but the few touches I got made me realise just how much I miss hockey. I shall definitely return...



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PHOTOS



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TELL US YOUR BACK TO HOCKEY STORIES...

Is your club running Back to Hockey sessions? Tell us your Back to Hockey story and it could feature as one of our Back to Hockey case studies!

- Perhaps you have a great story about an individual player who's joined your Back to Hockey sessions?
- Maybe you've found a unique way to promote your sessions which other clubs could replicate?
- Have Back to Hockey sessions increased the number of women at your club?

Send us your stories and accompanying photos, videos and press clippings to:

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