

**2016 FIH Masters World Cup, Canberra, Australia - March 28 to April 7, 2016:  
Tournament Report to USA Field Hockey Board of Directors Meeting, May 3, 2016**

The third biennial FIH Masters World Cup was held in late March / early April 2016 at the National Hockey Center in Canberra, Australia. Over 50 Masters National Teams from 14 nations attended the event. This is down from previous participation in Rotterdam, Holland, in 2014, when about 70 teams took part, and is probably a result of the travel times from Europe and the extra cost. Men's and women's teams participated in the Over-40, Over-45, Over-50, and Over-55 age groups, with an additional Over-60s event for women. The impressive National Hockey Center in Canberra has three FIH international standard water-based turf fields adjacent to one another with grandstands for spectators: these fields were kept busy all day for 9 days given the size of the event. The proximity of the fields to one another and to the central clubhouse, coupled with the event being for both genders, led to an excellent atmosphere.

Despite the distance and cost, the US was again able to send four teams to Canberra. These were two women's teams at Over-40 and Over-45, and two men's teams at Over-40 and Over-50. Squads of 18 for each team were selected at trials held on the East and West Coasts in 2015. At Canberra, the two women's teams and the Men's O-40s played in single leagues where all sides played one another at least once, while the Men's Over-50s played in an 8-team competition with two pools and cross-over / classification games.

**Women's Over-40s**

The Women's Over-40 team played in a strong six-team league that included masters' powerhouses England and Australia; Wales; New Zealand; and Australia II. In league play, Team USA lost all of their games but not by a margin greater than three goals even to England, Australia and New Zealand. The team lost a heartbreaker 0-1 to a very late goal by Wales, despite dominating throughout and having a shot saved on the line by a defender (many thought it went in, including the writer of this report..). The team came back from being 0-1 down in the 5th / 6th place classification game to beat Australia II 2-1 and finished a very credible 5th.

**Women's Over-45s**

Team USA played in a four-team league with South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. In view of the small size, each team played one another at least twice. As with the O-40s, the team unfortunately lost all its six league games but again never by a margin greater than four goals. The highlight for the team was the bronze medal (and third) game against South Africa. The match finished 1 -1 and so went to penalty shoot-outs. Team USA displayed an amazing strength of nerve to win the shoot-out 4-1 and claim the bronze medal. It was a delight to watch them receive their well-deserved bronze medals on the podium.

**Men's Over-40s**

As with the two women's competitions, the men's O-40s age group consisted of six strong teams including England, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Australia II. A relatively new squad with few returning players from Rotterdam, the team unfortunately struggled to gel against teams that had been playing together as a unit for many years. Despite losing all its games, Team USA was not over-powered by anyone, and suffered a particularly difficult 1-2 loss to Malaysia.

## **Men's Over-50s**

It really was a case of what might have been for the Men's Over-50s. The core of this team has been together since the first Masters World Cup in 2012, and it finished a superb 5th out of 14 teams at Rotterdam in 2014. This year in Canberra, the team competed in Pool A with Germany, New Zealand, and Malaysia. Both the first two games against Malaysia and Germany ended in draws despite Team USA being in winning positions. This meant the team finished third in the pool and had to play Australia in the quarterfinals. The team lost 0-3, but held Australia scoreless for three of the four quarters. In the classification games, Team USA beat both Canada (2-0 - the first "unofficial" North American Masters Championship match) and South Africa (1-0) to repeat its 5th place finish from the last Masters World Cup.

## **General Conclusions and Thoughts**

Canberra represented a coming-of-age for the USA Masters' program. All teams were competitive and never outclassed. The Women's Over-45s winning the bronze medal and the Men's Over-50s repeating their 5th place result (and retaining their world ranking) were the highlights.

One of many other benefits of this World Cup was the exposure that our athletes got to the wider world of hockey. While we have a number of dual nationals on our teams who have played the sport in clubs and leagues outside of the US, many others (they are high school, college and Futures coaches too) saw for the first time the extent to which the game is played worldwide by both genders. This is a good thing as we try to widen and develop the adult game in the US.

On to Madrid, Spain in July 2018!

Simon Gray  
USA Masters' Program  
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