

What Will Make the 2022 WMH World Cup in Nottingham So Special?

Those of us, who have played in Masters Hockey tournaments for a number of years, can testify that Masters Hockey tournaments are very special in one way or another. Even if your team loses every match and you are frustrated by the seeming lack of success, there is a magic about competing or participating as a player, or an official, or a manager, or a coach or a physio, or as a spectator. It is very difficult to quantify the impact of all the memories which have fully stimulated our emotions. It is only when you try to describe some of your experiences that you realise just how much happened and how the sensory overloads render recalling all the important little details a challenge! The impact does not lessen over the years and the memories are nearly always positive!

You are enveloped by a buzz, a camaraderie and an indescribable atmosphere that permeates your very being. When you watch hockey being played in so many different styles and approaches by so many colourful characters from all over the world, there is an overwhelming feeling of being part of something magical. Being part of the Hockey Family is not dissimilar to being with your own family back home. The time-gap between World Cups just disappears when friends you haven't seen for a few years greet you with a warmth and sincerity that induce hugs, handshakes and smiles, which take your breath away.

One of the things I love most is observing interactions that always surprise me, even though it shouldn't after all these years. Masters Hockey compatriots, with no common spoken language, successfully engage in conversations using gestures, smiles, signs and the odd word they have picked up, and they understand everything!

So, what else can we expect from Nottingham, apart from the joys and excitement of participating in one of the first ever WMH Masters Hockey World Cup tournaments and competing against the best players in the world at any particular Masters age group? Well, each host country offers completely different cultural and geographical opportunities and unforgettable memories, both on and off the field of play – read on.

Nottingham - England

The city of Nottingham in England has excellent hockey facilities, a full range of accommodation standards, excellent international and internal UK transport links (e.g.; high speed rail to Edinburgh and London for those who want to see more of the British Isles) and offers a blend of a modern vibrancy and history that includes the legends of Robin Hood, the Sheriff of Nottingham, Prince John, Richard the Lion Heart (Richard Coeur de Lion) and Sherwood Forrest.

The weather in August can be warm and is generally around 11 - 18°C, although there have been some days of up to 30°C in the last few years. However, English weather can often be very variable and so rain is likely to make its presence felt during the tournament!

Nottingham is considered to be one of the most ethnically diverse and tolerant cities in England where 42% of the locals identify themselves as having non-English origins. They are very friendly and the cultural mix is one of the reasons why there are lots of good eating places, offering attractively priced international cuisine!

Covid-19 is still an issue in the UK, but the vast majority of the population is vaccinated and the number of people requiring hospitalisation, having contracted the virus, is relatively low. Wearing masks is no longer compulsory, although WMH would recommend their use inside buildings. If everyone is careful, WMH does not anticipate the virus having a negative impact on the tournament, although anyone testing positive will not be allowed at the facilities or social events until they have a negative test. WMH is sure that all participants will accept this sensible approach to prevent being forced to withdraw due to a lack of healthy players.

There are good, well-equipped hospitals in the area and average ambulance response times to emergency calls (999) are generally under 6 minutes. As in most large cities, there are some areas to be avoided, but the hockey facilities are located in a meadow right next to the renowned universities and there are tram and bus stops at the gates. I have comfortably walked around that area and felt perfectly safe. Having played in tournaments at the same location, I have always found the atmosphere relaxing and friendly. The younger age groups will enjoy this multi-faceted city and there is no shortage of places to visit and things to see. WMH and English Hockey are confident that the Nottingham World Cup will be another special Masters Hockey experience!

Glenn Paton
WMH President