

Inter-City 5th Place Play-Off

Somerville HC v Southern Districts

The Somerville Premier men had plenty to play for on Inter-City finals Day. A win would secure the teams highest finish in 3 years and would cap a marvellous season under Player/Coach and international star Barry Middleton.

Against their old rivals Southern, the Somerville lads had had the better of the encounters this year recording 2 wins, 1 loss and a draw. This match was to ensure bragging rights over the friendly foe who were missing international regulars the Panchia brothers Aaron and Jarrod and Child brothers Simon and Marcus. Somerville were without regulars Jake Smith (Blackstick duty) Nick Finlayson (injury) and Clay Wilson (unavailable).

The match that ensued although closely contested at the start eventually had Somerville well on top. Guy Borren began the scoring for Somerville with a nicely taken field goal, this the only goal of the first quarter.

The second quarter produced some entertaining hockey as Somerville raced out to a 3 goal advantage thanks to Penalty Corner strikes to Lenny Powell and penalty corner specialist Dwayne Rowsell.

Into the 3rd quarter Somerville continued their dominance and Ollie Schnauer capped off a good game with a smart finish along with Barry Middleton before Southern International Kim Kingstone lept on a Somerville error to finish well at speed.

With a 5-1 lead heading to the final quarter the result never looked in doubt. Somerville continued to pepper the Southern goal and both Sam Norton and Sam Houston were denied on several occasions by the Southern GK. Somerville's Jerome VanRijn made no mistake with a very sharp reaction finish off a Penalty Corner rebound and Mr Mercurial Barry Middleton capped an enjoyable day with a classic top corner flick over the advancing GK.

Hockey organisers had scheduled this match after the Inter-City grand final and to be fair both teams were looking forward to heading to the bar or Eden Park for the Bledisloe Cup final so the match was not at the intensity of the previous clashes this year. None the less "a wins a win", the result completed an impressive year for the boys in Blue and White who have jumped from a disturbing 9th to a respectable 5th place in this country's premier 14 team club competition.

Without a doubt GB and England captain Barry Middletons input both as a coach and player has served to inspire some and rejuvenate others. The seasons results could not have come at a better time for the club as the senior players Ryan Archibald, Dwayne Rowsell, Brad Cosgrove, Jake Smith and Mike Ritchie were well supported by a group who now pose a threat to every Premier team. All players showed improvement but in particular Sam Houston rose to consistent levels not previously

seen. NHL striker Nick Finlayson was missed in the final weeks heading to the season finale with a significant knee injury but should be back on board for 2020. The team was buoyed this year by an enthusiastic and talented group of schoolboys Josh Irwin, James Stables and Ollie Schnauer. Irwin in his second season in the premiers shows real class, his NZ U18 selection is acknowledgment of a terrific year and bodes well for the club.

A season that began in February on the sunny beaches of Mt Maunganui had more than its fair share of jubilant moments ... a 17 goal thriller in pool play and a convincing 6-1 win over league leaders NSU will not be forgotten in a while ... roll on summer and 2020.

The club and team acknowledges the huge effort this year by coach Barry Middleton, assistant coach Simon Towns, trainer/statistician Monique Pitt and its effervescent manager Kerry Heard along with the clubs usual enthusiastic supporters.

Final Score 7-1 (Borren, Rowsell, Powell, Schnauer, VanRijn, Middleton 2)

2019 Team:

Ryan	Archibald	Rory	Kerr	Jake	Smith
Guy	Borren	Liam	Melville	James	Stables
Glyn	Clarke	Barry	Middleton	Robbie	Stuart
Brad	Cosgrove	Sam	Norton	Paul	Thomas
Nic	Finlayson	Leonard	Powell	Jerome	Van Rijn
Sam	Grenfell	Mike	Ritchie	Marshall	Wells
Sam	Houston	Ollie	Schnauer	Clay	Wilson
Josh	Irwin	Thom	Petitt		