

# Field Hockey Tours: An insight into whether Malta should still invest in the British market after Brexit

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor's Degree in International Hospitality Management (Hons.)

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## Abstract

Studies conducted by the NSO between January and June 2018 have shown that 291,911 tourists' arrivals originated from the United Kingdom. Reasons for travel to Malta included leisure, business, education, religion, health, and sport. The United Kingdom placed first in other sectors of the study as well; being in total bed nights and total expenditure, which was €213,301 million. (NSO, 2018)

Several organizations, together with the Maltese Hockey Association have been organising Field Hockey Tours to promote Malta and its sports facilities, mainly towards the British market. Currently Malta has five clubs participating in the national league, that is: Qormi Daikin, Floriana YoungStars, Sliema Hotsticks, White Hart and Rabat Depiro.

Britain has a long-standing field hockey legacy and with 841 registered clubs playing in 68 different leagues across the UK, which is surely in the top league by volume. (England Hockey, no date). The English national team currently ranks in seventh place in world ranking with Malta in the 50th place. (Hero FIH Rankings, Outdoor, 2018)

Brexit could affect tourism in many ways. Malta, being in the Commonwealth may stand a better chance than other countries within the European Union in attracting sports tourism from the UK, and most definitely field hockey. Both hockey federations in the United Kingdom and Malta should remain in contact after the Brexit vote to ensure that both countries keep their strong relations.

The topic of field hockey tours was chosen due to the authors extensive interest and participation in the sport. The subject was related to try and establish the affects Brexit will pose on field hockey tours. Notwithstanding that most of Malta's field hockey tourism originates from the United Kingdom, it is strongly believed that not enough is being done to attract the full market potential. After Brexit, prices for travel and accommodation for British tourists may increase, and British participation in local hockey tournaments may be negatively impacted. This may result in a disastrous landscape for the Malta field hockey game. Given the importance in size of the British market when compared to other supply countries, Germany is next in line with just a handful of participating tours per year.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 The Maltese environment

The “*Maltese are known for their determination, passion and competitive nature.*” (Clifton Grima, 2019). Despite Malta’s geographical size, an increasing number of different sports disciplines are registering progress in their fields. Thus, the government believes that Malta has the potential to be playing at the highest of levels, but due to our limited resources, we must strive much harder and aim much higher. In 2019 the Maltese Government took on an ambitious project called “*Aiming Higher*” which strives to encourage the Maltese population to become more physically active and attain better sports competencies.

Sports tourism proves to be very demanding within certain disciplines which include football, rugby, and water polo. These sports have the busiest calendars within the year due to various international competitions happening year-on-year. Due to their busy schedules and better financing, they attract reasonable volumes of foreigners who visit the island to participate and/or follow friendly matches, which are organised prior to international major sporting competitions/events.

Year-on-year football has been confirmed as being the number one sport in Malta, by the Maltese sports authorities. It attracts amateur to best in class national teams. Figures in 2018 showed that 74% of males played football at some point in their life and a further 22% stated that they still play the game. (N.A., 2018)

### 1.2 History of field hockey

The modern game, as it is played today with eleven players on each side was started in England in the mid 1800’s. The first formal field hockey club, called Blackheath Football and Hockey Club was formed in 1861. Field hockey kept on progressing as a sport throughout the British colonies, and teams such as India, Pakistan and Australia were formed because of the British colonies. The expansion in such countries have resulted in field hockey being the second largest team sport in the world. (Fih.ch, n.d.)

### 1.3 The history of field hockey development in Malta

Hockey was introduced on Malta in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the British services. The main pitches were in Corradino close to their maritime base in Cospicua. Originally it consisted of two sand field hockey pitches, a cricket field, and a pavilion. The Corradino complex was officially opened by the Duke of Edinburgh on the 17th October 1888.



Though the Corradino complex still serves as the Malta Field Hockey Association base, little investment has gone into the premises since its opening. Unlike most sports, field hockey remains ill funded by the central government and therefore the Malta Hockey Association continues to struggle to make ends meet and invest in improving the facilities. Given this state of play, participation numbers have been dwindling throughout the years for various reasons. Teams from the Civil Service, Banks, University Students, Teachers, and other social clubs which were organised played in the National League since 1968. (Hockey Association Malta, N.D.)

## 1.4 The Maltese Hockey Association

Maltese hockey really and truly makes very little contribution to the country's sports tourism sector as the annual participation numbers are very low. This could be the case since Maltese hockey is not so popular, and the Maltese sports authorities have not promoted the sport overseas. Due to the past lack of focus and limited resources, it is very evident nowadays that the sport is facing very challenging times.

The Hockey Association and its board of management have changed since a couple of years ago. Since then, the hockey game has progressed due to the many efforts of the new association president and the team he has surrounded himself with. In fact, the national team has once again been formed and participated in a Euro Hockey Challenge III tournament in Gibraltar in 2019. In 2021 the national team is once again scheduled to play in another Euro Hockey Challenge IV in Malta.

Although the level of Maltese hockey remains to be improved, the association's continued assistance is surely contributing to raise the bar. It is evident, that such encounters will continue to foster local hockey. Given the commonality of the language and the long-standing relationship with the British market, it is only natural for HAM to establish stronger links with the British market.

## 1.5 Importance of the British sportsman

Due to Malta's legacy and historical close ties with the United Kingdom, the British sportsman has to some extent influenced what sports are followed in Malta.

In fact, looking at the World Fame 100 there are many very familiar faces which are very important role models to the Maltese people. The list includes Gareth Bale (Football), Wayne Rooney (Football), Anthony Joshua (Boxing), Sir Andy Murray (Tennis), Lewis Hamilton (F1), Harry Kane (Football), and Sir Mo Farah (Running). These personalities are all very popular in their sports disciplines and act as role models to everyone who follows them. (Sean Nevin, 2018)

Given the lack of media attention given to hockey, one struggles to find the discipline mentioned in such lists. Two English players who play for both England and Great Britain should have a place within this list. Sam Ward and Maddie Hinch are the best players within their respective teams. Sam Ward is an Olympian and a Commonwealth World Games bronze medallist whilst Maddie Hinch has one Olympic Gold and was named the world's best keeper three times.

These British sportsmen are very popular within the Maltese Hockey scene. In fact, most Maltese field hockey players aspire to go and play in England for a few seasons as it is one of the best leagues in Europe.

## 1.6 Brexit

Brexit was formally agreed on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2020 and have till the end of 2020 to negotiate a package with the European Union. In the interim period and taking advantage of Malta's strong ties with the UK through its Commonwealth association, it is imperative that the island tries to take the lead and negotiate sports cooperation agreements.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Field hockey is a sport which is not supported with much literature, both in digital and hard copy format. Most of the data collected was through the Maltese Hockey Association's online page where they have provided readers with in-depth information to the sport. Other information regarding the UK and their federations were obtained from England Hockey's in-depth online page. Statistics were brought from Statista, which is an online portal for market data.

The literature investigated included a series of historic data which was related to field hockey, both within Malta and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, insight was gained into Malta's tourism sector and how sports tourism has evolved over time. The government has a key role within the development of sports tourism and the schemes it offers within sports and thus such literature was deemed important to the study. Brexit was the main topic within the study and therefore it was given its due importance and prominence, especially when relating to the perils it will have to sportsmen in the future with regards to the Kolpak Chaos.

Finally, Malta's sports tourism was brought into the picture to relate to the issues presented and methods of how these could be solved. Focus to the twinning project recently embarked on by the Maltese Hockey Association was brought to close off the literature review.

### 2.1 Malta's tourism development

By 1971, 50% of tourists to Malta were of British nationality. In the 1980's this figure increased to 75%. The British found Malta as being a good respondent to the demand of low cost, self-catering accommodation, with a favourable exchange rate. Subsequent schemes are available to support tour operators within the UK who had been encouraged to promote the Island to British visitors. (ITR,1996)

The Maltese tourism industry has been heavily dependent on the British tourist for the past decades in terms of hospitality revenues. The British have always been attracted to the Maltese Islands, but this can also pose a challenge on Malta's tourism industry since local tourism is heavily dependent on just one market.

The percentages of tourists visiting Malta from the UK has now decreased from about 75% in the 1980s to about 40% albeit in volume terms, this market remains significant. The dependence on one target audience was and still is a concern. One of the biggest issues of depending on just one country to provide you with tourism is that some local catering and lodging establishments have catered for the low-cost British sector. The British, especially the elderly and student segments are a price sensitive target audience, and with the recent increase in prices, some have moved to lower cost destinations like Spain and Turkey instead. Mass tourism in Malta has contributed to stress in the infrastructure such as scarce water supply, traffic congestion, increase in waste disposal and general waste management. These

issues will not help the island to attract upmarket/niche tourism and potentially threaten tourism's long-term sustainability. (Government of Malta, 1990)

The Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands states that, *"Malta has now reached the point at which tourist infrastructure is destroying the very features which attracts tourists in the first place."* (Government of Malta, 1990). To address these challenges, Malta has been pushing forward to change its approach by upgrading its facilities such as hotels infrastructure, and to diminish its reliance on mass tourism. In line with this strategy, Malta is marketing niche tourism that reduces peak summer traffic into the shoulder and winter months. One such market is surely sports tourism.

## 2.2 Development of sports tourism in Malta

The Malta Tourism Authority had been suggesting as from the 1990s that sports tourism should not be the focus for tourism in Malta, but instead should promote cultural tourism. This policy, according to Boissevan (1993) has been responsible for addressing the seasonality issue Malta started facing as from the mid-1980s. During the 1980s and early 1990s, 70% of tourist arrivals were during the summer periods, and by the year 1992, 40% were visiting between the months of June and September. (Boissevan, 1993)

Nowadays the Malta Tourism Authority is supporting many local sports events and activities and has recently reached a sponsorship agreement with a famous football club Manchester United. This partnership will see the club promoting the Maltese island to fans within Old Trafford stadium and merchandising. (Malta Tourism Authority, 2019)

Malta has many advantages as to why it should promote sports tourism, one of which being its central location within the Mediterranean Sea. Malta could become a central hub and link to mainland Europe for sports tourism. Also, Malta has strong existing transit links with countries such as the UK, Italy, Germany, and France which may give it the competitive edge.

Malta being a British colony until the mid-1960s, has ample resources, as the British built many of its sports infrastructure utilised today such as the Marsa sports grounds, the Corradino Hockey Complex, and the Hibernians Stadium. Even though many large sporting events cannot be feasibly held in Malta, because of the size of venues, there is still a high demand for other smaller sporting events, such as training camps and three-day leagues. Due to Malta's legacy connection, mild climate and its proximity to the UK, Malta has a competitive edge over most its competitors in the tourism industry as it can attract all year long sporting events.

Given the island's small size and the obvious land scarcity, developing new sporting facilities is getting increasingly difficult as it is not easy to find free large tracts of land and secondly the cost of land is prohibitively expensive. Thankfully, the British built the National Hockey complex in Corradino which is more than adequate in size and can be further developed to meet modern needs including space to fit a minimum of another two full sized 11-a-side pitches within its premises. The biggest single limiting factor remains finance.

Hockey in Malta is a private sports entity, and this means that funding must be sourced through private aid. Pippo Psaila, former Maltese National Football coach described the lack of funding as *“a gross lack of culture for sport”*. (Bull and Weed, 1999)

## 2.3 The Maltese government’s role within sports tourism

The Maltese government has been on the forefront in researching how to improve the local sport tourism sector. In 2012, Dr Mario de Marco had formulated a draft consultation paper outlining a strategy which Malta should take into consideration between the years 2012 and 2016.

If one does not include diving as a sport throughout the paper, sports tourism for the year of 2006 showed 29,261 participants. Up until 2010 there was a significant 33.4% decrease in the yearly sports tourism figure. The Nationalist party at the time noticed that a reform must be worked upon to ensure that sports tourism as a niche market, gains momentum. Dr De Marco also noted that sports tourism *“generates a demand for a particular type of accommodation, namely the dormitory type, which is not available in Malta”*.

Due to the lack of sports tourism which persisted at the time, the MTA held back from increasing its marketing efforts to try and improve substantially sports tourism on the Maltese Islands. Proposals by the government included special licensing for school and colleges to host foreign sports teams. (de Marco, 2012)

The Kunsill Malti għall-Isport (KMS or National Sport Council) in 2007 issued a policy relating to the issue of Sports Tourism in Malta. Statistics related to international sporting events brought by visitors to Malta, issued by the said council noted that as an organisation, they generated over 15,000 self-paying bed nights at an average Lm15 (€34.94) per tourist. Even though the statistics presented are outdated today, this comes to show that up until 2012, which is the last figure presented, the governments interest in sport tourism over the years has been lacking. (Kunsill Malti għall-Isport, 2012)

During the late 1980s one would have thought that such policies would have been taken into consideration as the government had tackled problems relating to diversification, niche markets and seasonality. (Lockhart, 1997) The Maltese government has tried to work on an effective tourism policy in the past, but the only considerations taken were the principles of effective tourism planning.

The tourism sector and the sport sector throughout the years have developed at different rates. If the government wants to ensure that the policies relating to sports tourism are effective, only one ministry should take the lead to work to promote sports tourism. The current responsibility lies between two ministries. The tourism sector lies within the Ministry of Tourism whilst sports is taken care of by the Secretariat for Youth, Sport, Art, and Culture within the Education Ministry. Malta has several policy documents relating to sports and tourism as being one entity, but the integration of both sports and tourism sectors never really

happened. Luckily for Malta, the issue is not major due to its very small size. The sports sector has continued to grow, and many opportunities have been created. (Bull and Weed, 1999)

## 2.4 Field hockey in Malta and the UK

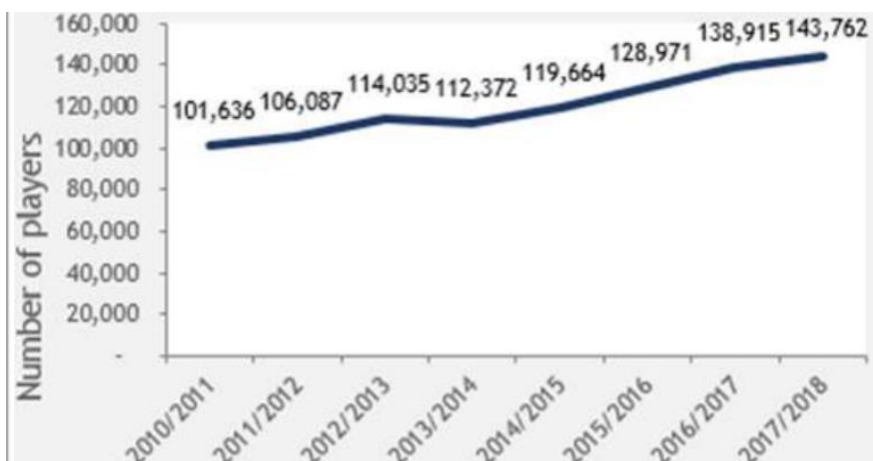
Today there are only five field hockey teams in Malta, surely not a healthy situation for the future of the sport. One of the teams (Rabat Depiro) is the veteran team which consists of all those players who have retired from the other four teams. White Hart, who until a couple of years ago did not offer a challenge, in recent years have seen major improvements following an investment in younger players and a more rigorous/disciplined training regime. This has proven to be successful as the team currently sits in joint third place with Floriana Youngstars. The latter are a group of very talented players who play inconsistently together. They have all the possible attributes to be competing with the top two teams but due to lack of teamwork and discipline they find themselves slacking behind.

The top two teams which are always neck to neck are Gree Hotsticks (better known as Sliema) and Qormi Daikin. Throughout the years, Qormi has been consistently better than Sliema, although their styles of play are very similar. In fact, the latest Maltese National Field Hockey team consists of mainly Qormi and Sliema players with only two Floriana players making it to the list. Qormi Daikin have dominated the field hockey scene in Malta for the last decade winning various trophies from junior levels up to senior level.

Given that field hockey in Malta continues to be an all amateur sports, progress continues to be a slow process. Issues being faced include finance, availability of players who either work full-time or are full-time students. These issues continue to limit progress particularly when competing at an international level.

Hockey in England *“is the second most important by volume of followers, team sport within British College University Sport”* (Statista, 2016). The latest study on *“the number of people playing hockey in England amounted to 143,762 monthly participants in 2018.”*

Figure 1: Field Hockey participants in England



Source: Statistica.com, 2018

During the same study done by Statista, figures showed that hockey participation numbers are on the increase with a 3.5% increase year on year. Figure one shows a steady progression from season 2010/2011 up until the year 2018 (till when data is available). The growth is of about 40,000 players across the United Kingdom over 7 seasons.

An interesting factor within this figure one is the sudden increase in participation in 2012 which may be due to the London 2012 Olympics. Unexpectedly, the next season saw a decrease of about 2,000 participants, but this trend was reversed in the following years, when there was a further growth of about 16,000 participants over two seasons.

During the 2016 Olympics, the GB Women's team won gold, and this took hockey as a sport to another level within the UK. With the Women's World Cup taking place in London in the summer of 2018, it had driven UK hockey to further growth. The competition, which was hosted by the UK for the first time, attracted several local clubs and universities. Judging by the number of visitors who bought tickets (120,000) for The Women's World Cup, one can surely say that the event was a success. A study revealed that 50% of the attendees were first timers at an international England hockey event. (England Hockey, N.D.)

Great Britain's women team have been successful in the previous nine years. They have won bronze and gold during the summer Olympics of 2012 and 2016. The UK has also been successful in registering over 10,000 new players with new hockey clubs. Jason McCracken, CEO of the International Hockey Federation stated that,

*"We are delighted to hear about the huge demand for tickets for the Hockey Women's World Cup London 2018. As part of our 10-year Hockey Revolution Strategy we are constantly striving for all our events to be 'Big, Bold, Packed and Loud', and with 100,000 ticket applications as part of the public ballot it is clear that the competition at the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre next summer (2018) looks likely to be all of those things and more."*

Commercial Director for England Hockey Jonathan Cockcroft continued by saying that,

*"This level of demand is truly unprecedented, and we are delighted to be in this position, especially with England games, quarter final, semi-final and final all sold out after a very well-delivered marketing campaign. In particular, we are very pleased to have reached so many people who have never been to our events before. We are also seeing increased demand from brands who recognise the size of the platform, and we are hugely excited about the opportunities ahead for our sport". (englandhockey.co.uk, 2018)*

Whilst field Hockey participation in the UK, has been constantly on the rise, Malta has been suffering a lack of interest in this field of sport from both participants and governing bodies. The latest EHF documents showing player participation across Europe shows Malta as having a slight decrease in the number of players between 2014 and 2016. Such numbers could be seen in figure two:

Figure 2: Registered field hockey players in Malta

Player Growth		
	2012	320
	2014	355
	2016	348

Source: ItalHockey Facebook, 2017

Hockey in Europe has had a positive increase of 20% from 2012 to 2016, growing from 595,473 registered players to 765,411. The only countries to have registered a greater decrease in number of players than Malta are Luxembourg, Slovenia, Moldova, Serbia, and Estonia. Malta has currently dropped a place in the FIH World Rankings and currently ranks no.51. In the European Rankings Malta has also dropped another three places due to a poor performance in Gibraltar in the summer of 2019. (fih.ch, 2019)

## 2.5 How could Malta be a possible field hockey destination?

Field Hockey in Malta is one of the least common sports played on the island. When compared to the major sports of football, rugby, swimming, and water polo which are played in Malta, hockey does not have any representation in terms of participation numbers. This is not the case abroad as countries like Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Australia have field hockey included in the school/university/national curricula. Universities in the UK have hockey teams' sports tours organised on a regular basis. The aim of such tours is to include both sport and team activities. Tours are organised for university students to go on holiday together to strengthen their friendships and network whilst playing their preferred sport against other foreign clubs.

Malta has great potential for attracting foreign university hockey students due to the relatively mild climate all year round. Meanwhile, Malta's location in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea makes it an ideal destination particularly now that it is well connected via aviation and daily sea links. Being part of the European Union also helps due to the borderless travel and commonality of the currency.

An important factor for students who travel is the price of the cost of living where they visit. Fortunately for Malta, the cost of living is not much different from the United Kingdom and therefore affordable for most students who visit the island. The Germans who also visit the island on the other hand find Malta to be slightly more expensive. In fact, Malta's cost of living index for 2020 is forecasted to be 67.46. The cost of living for Malta in general is slightly higher than that of the United Kingdom which has an index of 67.28, and that of Germany with 65.26. The fact that the index of the three countries is so close, travelling to the Maltese Islands is ideal as students would not be travelling on a restricted budget. (Numbeo, 2020).



Safety is an important element for students as well. Due to higher instances of terror attacks around Europe, students are choosing relatively safer countries to visit. In fact, during a conference in Pisa it was stated:

*“However, worried about possible terror threats, a high 41% of international travellers might change their travel plans for 2018, with 33% considering shifting to an alternative destination they see as safer, according to World Travel Monitor® figures. But the real risk on an international trip is from crime or health problems, a speaker explained at the Pisa forum.” (Buck and Ruetz, 2018)*

Besides the many advantages, Malta also has a few disadvantages when being compared to other destinations. The main issue in relation to the sport is the lack of facilities at the Corradino Complex. While, given that the level of Maltese hockey still needs improving, is in itself a limiting factor, as only aspiring teams consider organising training camps in Malta, with more professional setups choosing other more established jurisdictions. Having said this, the Maltese Hockey Association has been working hard on improving the local game, mainly by investing in the national team. This includes coaches training, improved frequency of the national squad training sessions, friendly matches, and more frequent competitions. The Maltese National Hockey team has since played two international tournaments and after many solid performances managed to improve its ranking to the 21st position within Europe. (Fih.ch, 2017)

## 2.6 Has field hockey in Malta developed into a tourism niche?

Field Hockey in Malta is still not so popular in view of limited investment to promote the game. The fact that Malta has no paid professional hockey coaches is a limiting factor. This will pose a very difficult situation in the future within the senior teams due to there being a lack of mature players with the necessary skills and stamina.

If one looks at the past five seasons in Malta, it was evident that there is a lack of foreign hockey clubs/universities participating on tours. One of the reasons for such a lack of participation is that hockey within Malta is not promoted enough and elevated on the same standing as football. Foreign teams are not aware/informed enough that field hockey is played in Malta unless they research or request information through any of the travel agencies.

The 2015/2016 season saw no foreign teams coming to Malta on tour. Due to some connections the Maltese Hockey Association had with Canterbury Hockey Club during the season 2016/2017, they were invited to come on tour to Malta in March of that year, for the first time. Given their positive experience, one year later, during the season 2017/2018, Canterbury Hockey Club had revisited the island on tour once again. The Maltese Hockey Association hosted other teams that season which were JDX hockey club at senior level and Lewes Old Gram School at Under 14 level. Season 2017/2018 proved to be a very successful one in terms of English hockey team participation.

During the 2018/2019 season, there was again a lack of interest from UK teams. During that year only one German team visited the island on tour. Season 2019/2020 was also another quiet year for foreign field hockey participation in Malta, because only one English team visited the island in February.

Evidence of foreign participation are shown within figure three below:

Figure 3: Evidence of foreign participation

October 2017											
CATEGORY		COMPETITION		TIME		TEAM 1		VS		TEAM 2	
SAT	14	SENIORS	FRIENDLY	17:00		JDX				SLIEMAHS	
										0	7
TUE	17	UNDER 13	GIRLS AND BOYS MIXED	18:00		LEWES OLD GRAM.SCHL.				SLIEMAHS	
										0	3
WED	18	UNDER 14	GIRLS AND BOYS MIXED	18:00		LEWES OLD GRAM.SCHL.				QORMI	
										0	3

October 2018											
CATEGORY		COMPETITION		TIME		TEAM 1		VS		TEAM 2	
SAT	13	FRIENDLY	VETERANS	16:00		HAM SELECTION		vs		WACKER MUNCH. (GER)	
										0	3

February 2020											
CATEGORY		COMPETITION		TIME		TEAM 1		VS		TEAM 2	
MON	17	UNDER 18	INT. FRIENDLY	18:00				vs		BRISTOL GR.SCH. (ENG)	
WED	19	UNDER 18	INT. FRIENDLY	18:00				vs		BRISTOL GR.SCH. (ENG)	
FRI	21	UNDER 18	INT. FRIENDLY	18:00				vs		BRISTOL GR.SCH. (ENG)	

Source: Hockey Association Malta, 2017, 2018, 2020

Sports Tourism is one of the niche markets which has been earmarked to grow in recent sports authorities' strategies over the past years. There are various journal articles which show that sports tourism is being recognised throughout the world as an important sector to the tourism industry. This sector has many economic advantages which many destinations have recognised its importance and are actively promoting their country and its respective facilities as a unique sports destination.

Sports participation numbers have been on the increase in Malta over the years. This steady increase is important for the potential development of sports tourism. Sports tourism may play a significant role to improving a destinations tourism industry. (Bull and Weed, 1999)

Currently field hockey is not a niche market for tourism in Malta, but with the right strategies in mind, collaboration between the Maltese Hockey Association and Sport Malta, and support from the government schemes, hockey facilities can be improved for the benefit of local hockey teams. This will put Malta in a better position to promote this sport to foreign teams.

## 2.7 What is Brexit?

Brexit is the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The latter is a coalition of 27 (excluding the UK) European countries who together form an economic and political union which allows free trade and movement between its member states. The United Kingdom was the first member to formally leave the European Union on the 31st January 2020 after joining in 1973.

In June 2016, the United Kingdom decided that they formally wanted to leave the European Union. 52% of those who voted were in favour of leaving the EU block. Once the result was announced, the then prime minister, Theresa May, triggered Article 50 (formal process to leave the European Union). The original date chosen by the UK parliament to leave the EU was the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019, but Theresa May did not get the required backing for the terms offered by the EU by her MP's and therefore the exit was delayed twice. After failing to be backed up for the third consecutive time, Theresa May resigned, and Boris Johnson took over the government in 2019. Mr Johnson immediately set the new deadline to the 31st January 2020, negotiated the terms to discuss a deal after 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and got the necessary UK parliament approvals.

Theresa May, throughout her time in government focused mainly on achieving Brexit with a deal with the European Union. May kept on persisting that a deal was needed for Brexit to be successful and that would mean that the prices would be controlled. Now that Boris Johnson is in government, a no-deal Brexit is said to be far more possible.

Economist Stephanie Fabri is predicting a possible increase of around £225 (€284.02) per person to the cost of holiday to popular EU destinations due to flight prices, cost of hotels, insurance fees and mobile roaming tariffs. The figure announced by Ms Fabri is in relation to when the UK is no longer negotiating a deal with the European Union. Until the end of 2020, prices for travel are expected to remain the same. The uncertainties of such increases could affect travel after such negotiations are terminated.

## 2.8 Perils of Brexit towards the British sportsman

Worries for sports clubs include a narrower trade deal which might be imposed due to Brexit. Professional sports clubs are hoping that the UK would not be affected by stricter measures on the acquisition of professional sports athletes. The ideal outcome for athletes, owners, managers, and fans would be that permits from within the European Economic Area would remain untouched and unaffected after Brexit. (UCFB, 2019)

The barriers for athletes and sports professionals to gain entry to the UK are likely to discourage many EU professionals from seeking such a move. Dr Borja Garcia, Senior Lecturer in Sports Management and Policy at Loughborough University believes that the government will continue to support and spend its money on its elite athletes.

*"I think it's quite possible that it won't affect the amount of money that the government will put into elite sport, for example the Olympics. As we saw with London 2012 and with Rio 2016, medals are useful for soft power and this is a moment where they are going to need that. The government seemingly wants to portray (the country) as a new superpower and this success would play into that narrative." (Garcia, 2020)*

The 2012 Olympics were marketed towards the British sportsmen to encourage sports at amateur level and this may result in drastic positive changes in the sports sector within the UK. The government was *"committed to creating a lasting legacy"* by encouraging participation within amateur sports teams as stated by Claire Milne. Dr Garcia though contradicted the argument presented by Milne and the efforts of the government and noted that unfortunately investment within amateur and youth levels was limited. Dr Garcia continued by noting that *"sports participation has not increased in the way that was advertised ahead of the 2012 Olympics."* (Milne,2016) (Garcia, 2020)

## 2.9 Kolpak chaos

The issues relating to Brexit are creating uncertainties with regards to the Kolpak rule especially within the UK. The Kolpak Rule is an agreement done between the EU and other countries who potentially would want their athletes to play within the EU. African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries have signed this agreement. These non-EU countries' sporting season takes place during Europe's offseason. Teams which make use of the Kolpak agreement include South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia.

There has been no major issue with regards to this agreement since inception. Since the start of Brexit concerns were raised by foreign athletes who are not of EU nationality. There has been no communication on how their contracts will work after Brexit.

As it currently stands, the UK is trying to arrange a deal with the EU. The deal the UK are hoping for is a narrower free trade deal which the EU has done with other non-EU countries such as Canada. Brussels are arguing that due to the UK's proximity to the EU, and the degree of economic integration, such a deal cannot apply. (Sanford, 2020) Existing players who are making use of the Kolpak rule were only guaranteed their contracts till the end of the 2020 season which was around June 2020 (which will probably be extended with no final date due to the Coronavirus pandemic).

## 2.10 How will Malta be affected by Brexit?

Economists have two conflicting arguments on the future of Brexit. Some are saying that the UK with a no-deal will lead to lower economic growth and productivity. Their argument is because the UK will not be associated anymore to a trading block and therefore will have a

slower economic rate. Other economists believe that the UK may not be hit hard if they set their trading tariffs at competitive rates. If the UK's economic decisions are set right, they may shorten the period of economic slowdown and ultimately, they may recover the instability caused by Brexit uncertainty. (MaltaProfile, N.D.)

It seems to be a fact that in some way or another the UK economy will take a dip. The time the decrease will take place is not yet known but it is about to happen at some point. It is of utmost importance that Malta sees this situation as an opportunity and tries to diversify its sports tourism market with attractive packages to continue attracting the same number of British tourists to Malta. A scenario which is likely to happen post Brexit is a dip in the value of the pound, thus making countries like Greece and Cyprus stronger competitors to Malta. Such countries are considered to be cheaper than Malta. If the value of the pound does experience a decrease, Malta would become an expensive destination whilst Greece and Cyprus would remain affordable.

Brexit should not be bad news for Malta. Businesses working in the UK have been threatened with the loss of EU passporting rights. Malta has since repositioned itself to try and attract those businesses who are fleeing. *"Malta could be the UK's gateway to Europe,"* Malta's ex-Prime Minister Joseph Muscat stated.

Another positive note for Malta with regards to Brexit is the fact that due to the slowdown of the economy, and the limitation of EU nationals entering the UK, Maltese nationals might want to relocate themselves home and this would result in an influx of talent into Malta's economy which has been lost in recent years. High-net-worth individuals might want to relocate to the island due to a more professional working base and a stronger and more stable economic background.

## 2.11 Travel agents offering field hockey tours

There are a few agencies in Malta who offer all-inclusive hockey camps to foreign universities/teams. One such outfit is MSGtours.

Looking into the information that some companies provide to their customers shows that there is a lack of knowledge of the sport. It is unfortunate that such companies do not have all the information or knowledge about hockey facilities in Malta and occasionally end up providing misleading information to their customers:

*"Malta is equipped with an all new hockey complex in Corradino. The Hockey Association has undertaken a great step by upgrading their facilities and installing flood lighting and astro-turf and is now in line with IHF standards. The Hockey Complex facilities include 2 Astro Turf pitches, changing rooms and lockers, bar, and training ground which is open all year round."*  
(sunspotmalta.com, n.d.)

This abstract which was taken from the Sunspot Malta's website includes incorrect statements as no major upgrades have been done to the facilities over the past decade. The field hockey pitch has not been upgraded for several years and its condition remains poor at best. The illumination system which was once according to the FIH (International Field Hockey) guidelines, needs upgrading to meet the guidelines. Such guidelines have been changed many times over the years and are not up to the most recent regulations. Unfortunately, the standards are not being met mostly due to financing issues, which in turn emanate from the low following of the sport in Malta.

One company which is quite popular and brings a good number of tours per year is Sundreams Travel. This company has worked with the Maltese Field Hockey Association to organise training sessions, and a few friendly matches. Sundreams Travel agency give a good description of what Malta has to offer to interested hockey teams for both male and female participants. The company states:

*"Field hockey in Malta is played on 1 sand based astro-turf facility. The optimal year-round weather makes Malta a perfect destination for a short haul field hockey tour in Europe. The local teams offer great opposition and good hospitality. Hockey is predominately a male sport in Malta, so female hockey is not popular and available. In the meantime, we still manage to host female and girl sides effectively by arranging fixtures against local younger male sides." (sundreamstravel.com, n.d.)*

This travel agency is still promoting the 'Malta Rally', which unfortunately is no longer being organised. Instead of the Malta Rally, during Easter, a training camp is being held in conjunction with a small language school that specialises in attracting German students. In October, the Anthony Tabone Memorial is being organised with the few female players being able to take part.

Malta Sports Tours is another leading sport travel agent in Malta, and it brings many different clubs and universities from various sports. In 2017, this company brought the Old Cranleigh who are primarily a cricket team, but with a few other players included in the group they managed to put together a very strong field hockey team as well. In fact, the team was so good that the Maltese Field Hockey Association decided to play two friendly matches with the National side who were preparing for an international tournament which was to be held in Croatia. (maltasportstours.com, n.d.)

Teamlink, a British sports travel agent offers tours for every age group. Amongst the clients for this travel agency one finds sports clubs, schools, and universities and all have the option to have their tours in many different destinations worldwide.

*"Teamlink Sports Tours is one of the leading companies of its type in the UK, providing sports tours to Europe for clubs, schools and universities. We cover all major team sports – catering for teams of every age group - from minis and youth teams to veterans. We are experts when it comes to Sports Tours*

*to Europe and welcome teams from all corners of the globe.” (teamlink.co.uk, n.d.)*

Stirling University Ladies Hockey Club’s review on Teamlink’s website is very positive, both for the company and Malta. They wrote:

*"Malta was the perfect destination for us - lots of sun, the nightlife was brilliant, and the games were social and fun! The hotel was phenomenal, and all staff were friendly and helpful. We loved every minute and are making plans to return soon!" -Stirling University's Ladies Hockey Club*

## 2.12 Sports tourism scheme

The Maltese Islands offer the best kind of climate for any outdoor sports. Sporting activities and events such as Football, Rugby, Field Hockey, Swimming and Water Polo attract foreign teams to have their training camps in Malta due to great weather possibilities all year round. The touring scheme currently in place is one which was agreed upon by the Malta Tourism Authority and the Malta Sports Council in 2009. The scheme is for authorities to help attract sports tourism in the shoulder months and not during the peak tourism season. The tourism scheme would help National Associations, Federations and Non-Profit Clubs attract foreign clubs to organise tournaments and sporting events on the Maltese islands. Such entities would benefit from a monetary grant which is calculated according to the number of bed nights accumulated, the time of year (shoulder period or peak season) and the number of athletes and officials that are partaking in the event. Also, sports entities who bid to host international tournaments in the Maltese island will be given a monetary grant to assist with the organisation of such events. (Independent.com.mt, 2009)

## 2.13 Facility investment scheme – SportMalta

The facility investment scheme is another opportunity for local sporting organisations to upgrade their facilities. The scheme, which is offered by Sport Malta helps registered organisations that are willing to improve their current premises. The grant pays up to 75% of the total costs of the project, capped at €15,000 and a maximum of a project on an annual basis.

The Maltese Hockey Association has recently been registered with Sport Malta and is now eligible to apply for such funding. The first project must be the upgrade of the playing field. The cost of such an upgrade, is way out of the budget and appetite that Sport Malta can afford. When planning to upgrade a field hockey pitch, the association must take into consideration the paved areas, irrigation, floodlighting systems, and fences. Therefore, the total cost of such a pitch would be at around €450,000. Funding a new pitch is currently not possible due to the

value of installing and maintaining such a high-quality pitch. In the meantime, dressing rooms, dugouts, parking area, stands and their seating, security and other infrastructure are also in dire need for refurbishment. (Sportmalta.org.mt, 2018)

One of the most persistent issues at the National Hockey pitch, is the artificial lighting. Due to this issue, the association finds it difficult to schedule local and international games in the evening as the lighting is not up to the required standard. The use of such artificial lighting maximises the costs of running the property due to the long durations of training sessions that happen regularly in the evenings and rescheduled matches during the week. Some international fixtures are also sometimes played during the evening to ensure that maximum spectators could come watch the matches.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH), through its sixth edition of Guide to the Artificial Lighting of Hockey Pitches has put forward four reasons why lighting must be up to the required standard. These are:

- *“To ensure the safety of players and others involved in the game*
- *To provide better viewing for spectators and television where applicable*
- *To ensure the effective use of money spent on capital and operating costs over time*
- *To be environmentally sensitive.”*

*(Guide to Artificial Lighting of Hockey Pitches, 2011)*

Unless being played in good natural daylight, hockey, like other sporting events needs to have good artificial lighting for it to be enjoyed and played safely. This applies both to when the game is being played at recreational level or at an international televised event.

If adequate lighting is installed at the Corradino Hockey Centre, hockey could be played in the evening during the summer period. Temperatures during the day can reach well up to 40 degrees Celsius and therefore makes it unbearable to breathe and to play the game, whilst impossible for spectators to watch the game during the peak sunny period.

If the correct lighting system is installed the association could organise some international tournaments during the summer rather than stopping everything between May and September.

A document released by FIH which included the four standards mentioned, indicates that the lifespan of the lighting system is of about ten years. The total to upgrade to a new system would be at about €40,300. (Guide to Artificial Lighting of Hockey Pitches, 2011)



## 2.14 How can Malta still attract British sports tourism towards the island?

Malta's tourism Authority must work on a good pricing strategy with excellent value for money to ensure that the inflow of British tourists to Malta does not decrease. A common goal must be decided upon by the MTA to devise a clear strategy for the future of Malta's relations with the United Kingdom.

Sports packages must be investigated. University students may not afford the extra £225 (€284.02) indicated by Ms Fabri, to visit Europe and practice their sport overseas. An attractive package would include an all-inclusive trip which tries to minimise costs as much as possible. Budget-friendly excursions may be offered to such visitors with the option of buying at a later stage. Package deals and prices must be quoted before-hand. Concurrently the Malta sports authority should devise an investment strategy to improve sports infrastructure throughout the island.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Study overview

This chapter is an overview of the research techniques used within this study to obtain the information required. The methods of research together with the formulation and the limitations of the study are included within this chapter.

Three methods of conducting research were used which included:

1. Sending out questionnaires to students to gain understanding of what they look out for when choosing a tour,
2. Interviewing participants from the local field hockey scene, which included:
  - a. Hockey Association Malta personnel and,
  - b. Members of hockey clubs.

This dissertation was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Qualitative research methods were preferred and thus the main source of information was gathered through scripted online interviews.

Comparing field hockey between Malta and the United Kingdom is not a straightforward matter. Field hockey is one of the largest team sports practiced at British Universities whilst in Malta it is practically an unknown sport. This meant that the focus of the quantitative research questionnaire had to determine whether Malta would still be an option for field hockey tours after Brexit.

On the other hand, the focus of the qualitative online interviews was around the fact whether Malta is a suitable destination to hold field hockey tours. It is evident that the facilities are not up to the required standard and therefore one must gain an understanding as to what could be done to improve. Brexit was also mentioned in such interviews to see whether personnel in Malta were aware of what was happening and whether they have planned to continue to attract British markets post Brexit. Such questions helped strengthen the research carried out.

The online interviews also helped tackle delicate topics such as facility maintenance, government investment schemes and promotion of the sport overseas.

Several limitations were encountered whilst conducting the research. Academic journals which had direct reference to field hockey tours were sparse. More replies from corporations and field hockey players would have helped strengthen some points made in the research further. Nonetheless, the data collected through the interview questions held proved to be credible enough to help reach the objectives of the research.

## 3.2 Research Techniques

The use of qualitative research methods was of great help to the study as it helped focus directly on a specified number of individuals. The people asked to take part in the interviews were chosen due to their personal backgrounds and their specific roles within the field hockey sector. All questions which were asked tackled different areas of the study which ultimately helped understand how the Maltese Hockey Association could manage the issues relating to facility investment and Brexit.

Face-to-Face interviews were planned, however due to Covid-19, these had to be cancelled. These would have been an ideal method to conduct the research as it would have allowed for more detailed questions to be asked. Misunderstandings could have been clarified immediately thus would have been considered as being more efficient. The latter method of interviewing also has a very high response rate when the participant feels comfortable.

The procedure to collect all the data proved to be very time consuming as there was no allocated time for the participants to answer the questions. Regular follow up reminders were needed to be sent to get some feedback. Although time was considered as a disadvantage, the final contribution by the participants who replied to the questionnaire helped strengthen the research.

Questionnaires were sent to several universities and clubs including: Bromley and Beckenham Hockey Club, Bristol University, Loughborough Hockey Club, Exeter Hockey Club, Gloucester Hockey Club, Plymouth Hockey Club, Birmingham Hockey Club, Cardiff Hockey Club, Swansea Hockey Club, Edinburgh Hockey Club and to other universities around England, Wales and Scotland.

## 3.3 Interview Profile: How to Conduct Research

The interview structure has been formulated using the book called “How to Conduct In-Person Interviews for Surveys” published on Google Books. The book provides insight to the reader on the key points on how to prepare for the interview, what to do during the interview and how to analyse the data which has been collected.

Before the interview, the interviewer must discuss the subject and explain the questions to be asked to the interviewee. Guidance should be given throughout the interview to help with the responses however ensure not to guide for a particular response. The questions prepared were for two different sets of people, one was for club personnel and the other was for the Maltese Hockey Association. The duration of the interview was specified (30 - 45 minutes) to the participants before starting. Advising how much time is needed allowed the interviewee to find a suitable time slot which was convenient to their schedule.

The book, which was considered, stated that the location of the face-to-face interview is an important factor in obtaining the right results. The correct location would make the interviewee feel safe and comfortable. (Oishi,2003)

Email interviewing is not considered to be the ideal method of how to obtain data, but it still could be helpful in some cases. If the timing of the email is done correctly, and timing is not an issue within the study, then follow up questions could be sent to clarify any issues which may arise. Online and email interviewing were the only option in this case due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and according to the recommendations given by the relevant authorities.

It is important for the person conducting the study to have researched the topic beforehand. Being that the literature review was written before the methodology, there were no issues regarding information. Having read about Brexit and how it is expected to affect sports tourism in Malta, the correct questions were formulated depending on the interviewees role within the hockey industry.

Consent to send emails to those being interview was requested. After analysing the questions, those interviewed were asked whether they would be willing to be part of the study. This was taken as consent to be used during the following chapter.

Questions varied for this study. The study required information regarding the number of participants and clubs which participated on tour. It was important to understand how the association and clubs will work in the future to attract UK hockey teams to Malta. The Malta Hockey Association was also asked how it would start promoting itself in the future since the UK is not within the European Union any longer.

After analysing the results and ensuring that no further questions were to be asked, a short 'Thank You' note was sent to those who participated. Once the research paper was finalised, a copy was sent to all those that helped within the research as it would help them in the future planning through the recommendations presented.

### 3.4 Research Limitations

The main research limitation encountered throughout this study was the timing of the interviews. Interviews were planned to happen during the month of March 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring partial lockdown and observing social distancing measures as much as possible, interviewing methods were shifted to email and online interviewing.

Online interviews were instead considered as being the ideal option. Questions which had been drafted for the Face-to-Face interviews were slightly reviewed to offer more background and sent to all participants. Wherever clarification was requested, this was provided via email. In this manner, the study was delayed slightly because respondents did not reply immediately.

Another limitation which was encountered throughout the study was the shortage of literature with regards to Sports Tourism in Malta. Books regarding the topic were very difficult to find

and thus material was very restricted. Nonetheless, Hockey Association Malta and England Hockey were very helpful through their online website as the information that was available was used in the study.

Several companies which offer field hockey tours on their online website were contacted throughout the study to obtain information regarding the packages they offer.

Sport Malta were also contacted telephonically. They proved to be very helpful with the information provided with regards to government schemes.

The General Secretary of the Maltese Hockey Association also provided plenty of information which was very credible to the literature review and to how the association works with government schemes.

The response rate to the questionnaire was 54% of the desired result. Contacting such members was deemed very difficult due to having no close connections to members within the UK field hockey community.

## 4.0 Analysis and Results

### 4.1 Overview

The primary data which was collected through the online questionnaires were all respondents from the UK. All 54 of the respondents were either teachers, parents, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, board members, club members, players, or volunteers. All the respondents had in common a passion for field hockey. Various Facebook Groups were requested access into throughout the study which related to field hockey. These were used as to be able to contact as many people from the field hockey community within the UK.

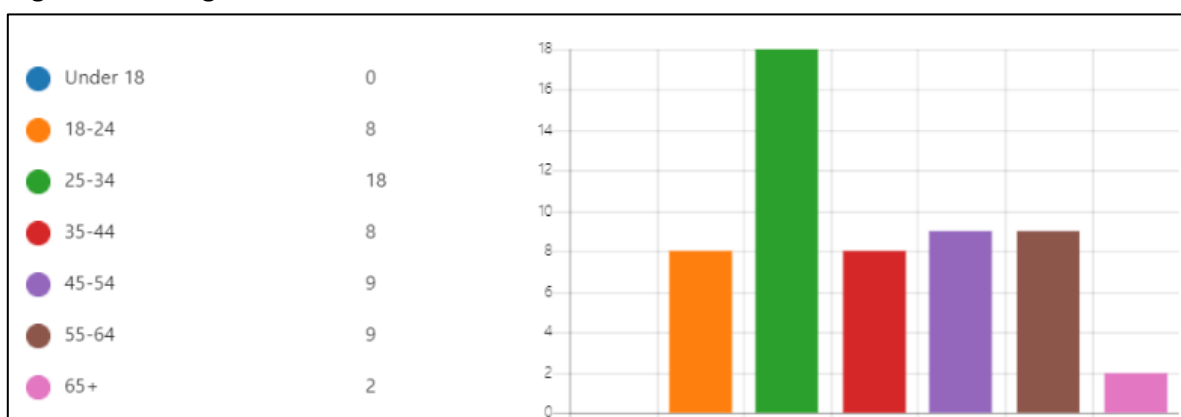
A total of 4 online interviews were conducted to collect data with regards to field hockey in Malta. Two interviews had the same questions which were presented to two Qormi Hockey Club representatives. The outcome from the two interviews were very interesting. The other two interviews were held with two Malta Hockey Association representatives

### 4.2 Field Hockey Questionnaire

Most of the those who acknowledged the authors messages were from the Facebook group H4H Hockey Hub which is a base for those people who had served the country and play hockey. Therefore, within the group one could find soldiers, firefighters, nurses, and police officers.

Out of the 54 questionnaires completed, 35% were women and 65% were registered as men. Ages varied a lot within the research. The largest threshold of 33% of the respondents were between the age off 25-34 as could be seen in figure four.

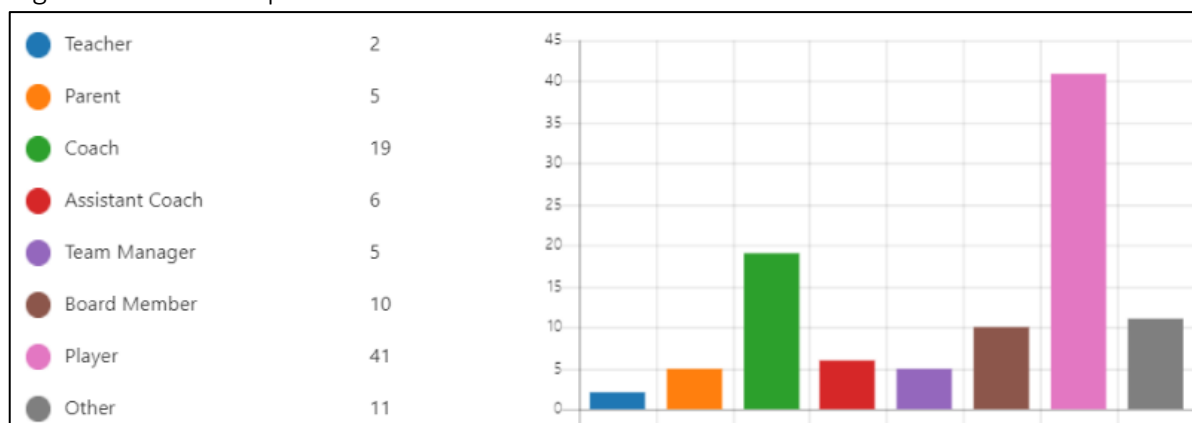
Figure 4: The Age Distribution



Source: Research findings, 2020

The roles the respondents had within their respective clubs is shown in figure five. Some of the respondents had two roles within the club. There were 11 respondents who ticked the “other” box. This indicated that the response had to be considered as coming from a club and not an individual.

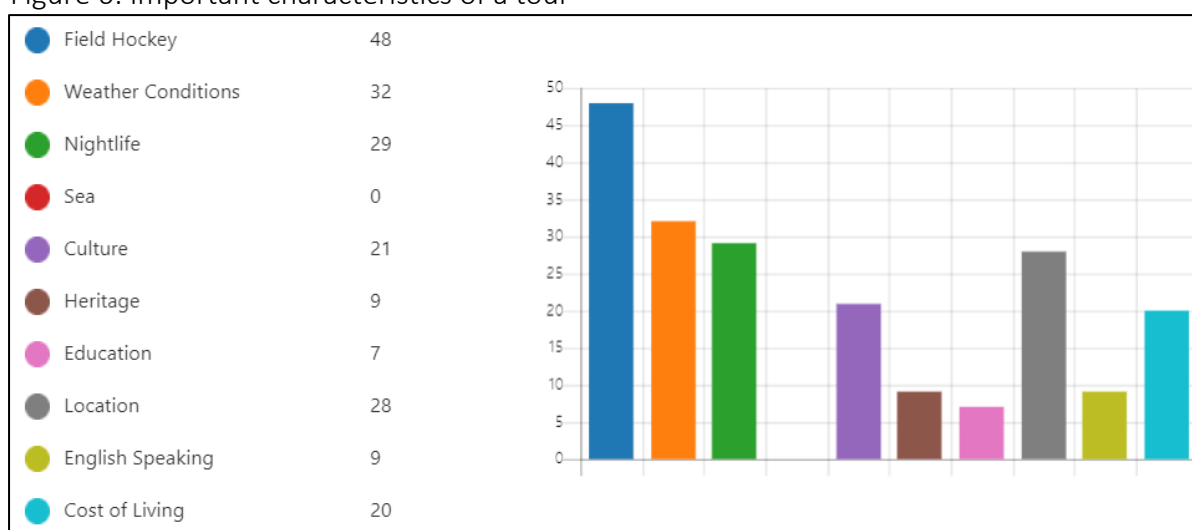
Figure 5: Roles occupied within clubs



Source: Research findings, 2020

Since most of the respondents were players throughout this study, this gave an indication beforehand of what the responses to figure six would be. The important characteristics for players going on tour are usually challenging field hockey opponents, better weather conditions than the UK, and the location of the nightclubs.

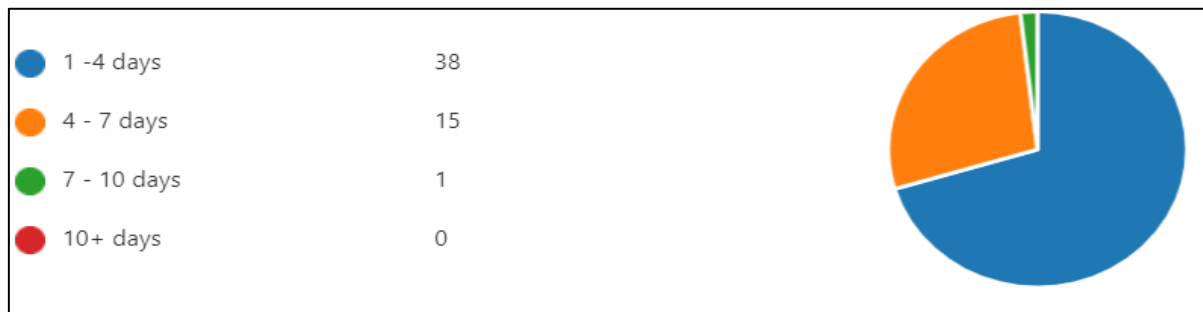
Figure 6: Important characteristics of a tour



Source: Research findings, 2020

Most of the respondents, 67%, have answered that their club or university are interested to go on tour. Regardless of their answer to the tour participation question, figure seven included an opinionated question which asked for the ideal length of a tour. 70% opted for a short tour of a maximum of 4 days, 28% prefer a length of 4-7 days whilst the minority 2% prefer going for between a week and up to a maximum of 10 days. No participants opted for a tour longer period than 10 days as could be seen within figure seven..

Figure 7: Ideal length of a tour



Source: Research findings, 2020

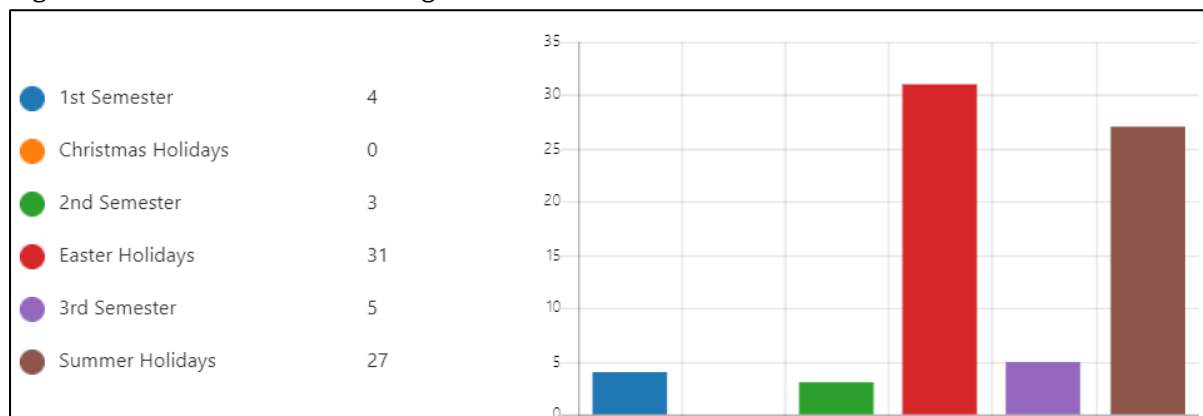
A further two questions were asked with regards to how many times a year their respective club goes on tour and during which semester these usually happen. These are shown within figures eight and nine.

Figure 8: Number of tours per year



Source: Research findings, 2020

Figure 9: Preferred semester to go on tour

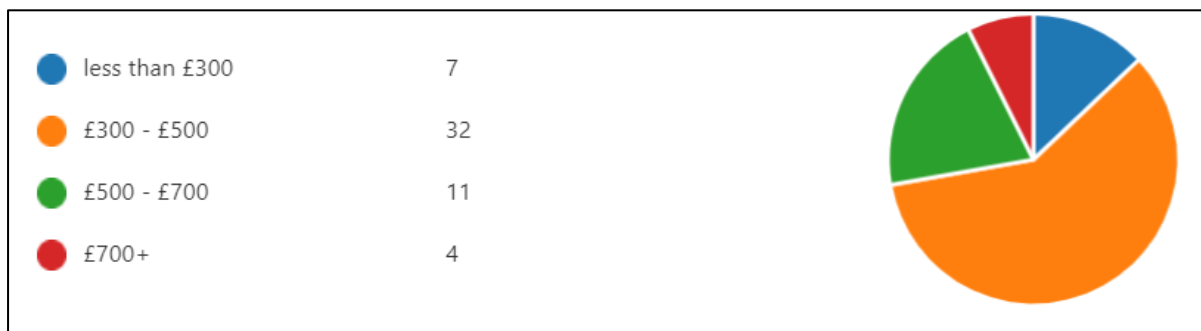


Source: Research findings, 2020

The final question on touring was made with regards to costs. Participants were asked to indicate the estimate price a tour would cost them individually. 13% noted that they spend less than £300. 59% of the participants said that they would spend between £300 and £500. 20% spend between £500 and £700 whilst the remaining 7% spend an astonishing £700 or more. This was considered to be very expensive for a tour to a European country as could be seen in figure 10.



Figure 10: Cost of Tour



Source: Research findings, 2020

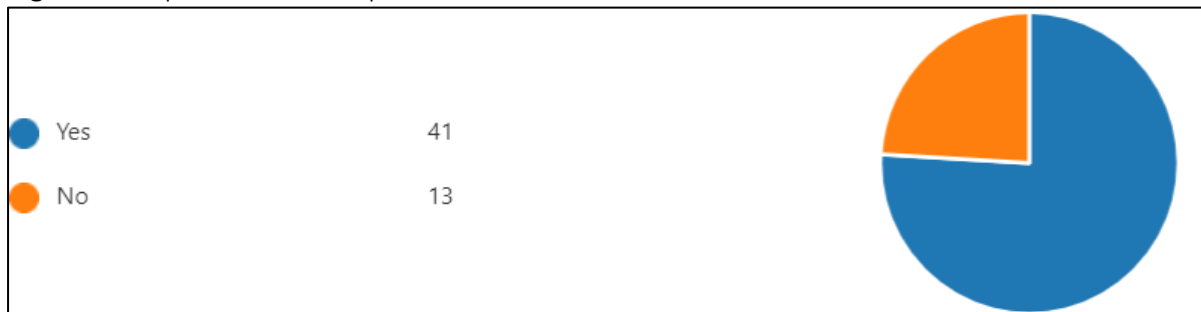
### 4.3 Will Brexit affect Touring in Europe (Questionnaire Perspective)?

One of the most important questions, was whether the respondents were aware of Brexit and how it is thought to impact travel arrangements in the EU. This played a major role within the study, if most of the people were not informed about the changes that may happen, then the study was targeted to the wrong population or age group. 91% of those who answered the questionnaire noted that they were informed and aware of the issues relating to Brexit whilst the remaining 9% replied that they were not informed enough.

The question regarding whether touring would be affected after Brexit raised quite a debate. 50% believe that touring across Europe will be affected after Brexit whilst 31% said that touring will not be affected by whether the UK leaves the EU or not. The remaining 19% were undecided and would have to review the situation at a later stage.

76% of all the respondents in figure 11 believe that prices to travel to European countries will increase. The remaining 24% are still hopeful that Brexit will not affect in such a way which would mean that prices would remain the same.

Figure 11: Opinion whether prices will increase due to Brexit



Source: Research findings, 2020

#### 4.4 How is Field Hockey promoted in Malta?

The Maltese Hockey Association is an entity of its own and is not managed by the government. When speaking with the Hockey Association Malta representatives, they both confirmed that the association does not look out for potential teams to visit Malta and invite them for hockey tours to the island. One representative spoke further about the issue and said:

*“Malta has traditionally been looked at by many clubs from different countries who want to travel and get experiences in warmer climates, particularly by countries who have situations where they close the facilities for one or two months because of the adverse weather. Sometimes they come on training tours or camps in that period to compensate for the lost training sessions. It has also been a friendly type of destination for teams ranging from university teams who regularly contact us to come and visit going all the way to veteran teams who come for social hockey. This is something that we (Malta Hockey Association) are working on to develop further as it gives our players more experience in socialising and mixing with international competition whilst seeing hockey at different levels and also broadening people’s personal experience.” (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)*

The Malta Hockey Association representatives gave further insight when questioned about the companies who offer packaged tour to the island and stated that the:

*“association is not yet properly structured to work with such companies to promote the sport in Malta but, there are ongoing works to have a proper structure as to potentially start having such partnerships.” (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)*

When speaking to one of the Maltese Hockey Association representatives regarding tours the association offers on its website, it was pointed out that the association:

*“offer’s coordination of touring teams including accommodation, local transport and of course fixtures against local teams” (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)*

Having a similar project to that offered by the MTA with Manchester United Football Club also mentioned in the literature review was proposed to the Maltese Hockey Association members. Such a project was deemed to be very important to Malta and the field hockey scene. It was stressed that the twinning project is very similar in nature but not pushed by a governmental entity.

## 4.5 Facilities at the Corradino Complex

The facilities at the Corradino Hockey Complex in Malta are not up to the latest required standards of the FIH. Malta has only one sand-based pitch, which means that all hockey, starting from junior all the way up to senior games are played during the weekends on just one pitch. The topic regarding the facilities of the association was discussed with all 4 interviewees. Both the HAM representatives agreed that the facilities need to be upgraded. One Hockey Association Malta Representative stated that:

*“the complex is very attractive as it dates to the 1880s when the English troops used to manage it. Unfortunately, little investment has been put into the last years and therefore there is much to do. It (the complex) needs an upgrade to reach the level of what people expect, but this needs extensive funding.” (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)*

Another Hockey Association Malta representative was also questioned about the upgrades of the facilities and he stated that:

*“at the moment there are only ideas. There are not enough funds to build a new pitch either.” (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)*

Qormi Hockey Club representatives were also questioned regarding the facilities of the Corradino Complex as they both had been part of the organising committee to the most recent Euro Club Challenge IV held in Malta during the summer of 2019. They were both in contact with the tournament Technical Director who had very positive feedback regarding the organisation, but quite negative comments regarding the facilities that the Maltese Hockey Association runs. One club representative also noted that even though the negative feedback regarding the premises,

*“during the three months before the tournament, the Association President worked tirelessly and invested as much as possible to try and bring the complex up to the required standards for a Euro Club Challenge IV tournament.” (Qormi Hockey Club Representative, 2020)*

The improvements which both Qormi Hockey Club representatives mentioned that should be done by the association are to refurbish the catering area, open a women’s changing room, fix the indoor pitch, refurbish the umpire’s room, and invest in a new pitch.

## 4.6 Government and Private Funding Schemes

Funding was one of the topics which was extensively raised when conducting the interviews. Reference to the facility investment scheme offered by Sport Malta was mentioned. All four members agreed that such a scheme is available, but funding schemes are capped and not sufficient to the value of investment required. One Hockey Association Malta representative

expanded further and went on to say: *“that the association was not structured well before.”* To apply for government funding, the association should have been structured in a certain manner to be able to submit claims to the government to help with funding.

Both HAM representatives agreed that there should be further investment to improve the facilities but stressed that there was not enough money to carry out such work. One Hockey Association Malta representative, and a businessman himself explained how the HAM will try and solve the issue of funding.

*“There are two things which must be done to acquire funding to improve the premises. The first being attracting private investment who would improve its name when being in partnership with a hockey association. Secondly by having the correct sponsorship structure as to attract better sponsors.”* (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)

It was pointed out that if the association cannot give something in return for the money it was asking for, then no private investor would invest in the sport.

One Qormi Hockey Club Representative mentioned agencies which provide support to associations with funding which included Agenzija Zaghzagħ, Sport Malta and the Ministry for Tourism. Another Qormi Hockey Club Representative stressed that the Maltese Hockey Association is still not set up properly to date to apply for funding from the government.

Qormi Hockey Club had undergone an upgrading process some seven years ago which saw both the facilities and the administration improve. The administration was properly set up to start being able to apply for government funding. Since then it was evident that Qormi Hockey Club remained in the top position in both organisation and funding. In fact, one of the Qormi Hockey Club Representatives was the first in Malta to acquire a €6000 grant from Sport Malta towards hockey.

#### 4.7 Will Brexit Affect Field Hockey Tours (Local Perspective)?

When questioned about the issue of Brexit, all four interviewed gave a basic description of the situation with the most basic being *“Brexit is simply put, the exit of the UK from the European Union”* (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020). A worrying situation for Maltese Hockey is if the sports tourism sector will be affected. The same Hockey Association Malta representative went on to say that:

*“sport does not have political boundaries. Tourism from the UK did not depend on the fact that the UK was in the EU. No funds were used to bring UK teams to Malta and therefore the island will remain attractive to the British tourist because of the language, the climate and the history of hospitality.”* (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)

It was established with the association representatives; the HAM has requests to host about one or two teams per few months on tour. One Hockey Association Malta representative stated that *“at least, 3 teams per year are from the UK”*. Therefore, this means that about 75% of all yearly incoming field hockey related tourism is directly from the UK.

When challenged by the statement Ms Fabri had published on the Malta Today regarding the £225 (€284.34) increase per person the British market will face when visiting any EU country, all four interviewees had quite a lot to say. Club members who look forward for such tours were quite shocked to say the least when the figure was presented. *“There needs to be a good marketing plan”* (Qormi Hockey Club Representative). The other three participants had a very similar say to each other, but one Hockey Association Malta representative described the situation best.

*“The HAM will not work if it prices itself out of reach for most people. It will be the same for foreign teams. They will always find a way to reduce costs. To be more attractive, the HAM needs to invest in better facilities, provide better support, organise tournaments and diversify its product to include training camps for juniors.”* (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)

Other than not working, the association should start planning out different ways in which it could reduce costs for its British market. Accommodation, airport transfers and food are amongst the most expensive items a tourist may face in Malta. The hostel industry which was proposed by Dr de Marco could be a viable option which may result in being worth the money for incoming participants.

## 4.8 Other Possible Niche Markets

Currently the Malta Hockey Association has no partnerships with any travel or tour companies. This means that all inbound hockey related tourism is through direct contact that the association has or through the few sports tour companies. There is a small German company which organises a short field hockey camp every year. The company brings over a few players (not always the same amount) to join forces with local clubs and organises a few days of training together.

Malta is very popular for its Language Schools. A possible niche market is to work with language schools to attract students that play hockey and want to improve the English language. When questioned, one Hockey Association Malta representative stated that the association has:

*“not ventured into this market yet. Joint marketing could be done to promote both sport and education”.* (Hockey Association Malta Representative, 2020)

Therefore, working with such companies could be a project to consider for the future for the association. According to national statistics, 2018 was a very successful year for language companies.

*“More than 87,000 foreign students attended English language courses in Malta in 2018, according to official statistics. These students represented 3.4% of all inbound tourists last year, spending a total of 215,252 weeks in Malta.” (Times of Malta, 2019)*

Language schools have a very strong presence on the Maltese Islands. Partnerships could be made for month long trips which include English lessons, training sessions and games with local teams throughout the summer months.

As to have field hockey tours as a niche tourism in Malta, the association must clarify its position on whether it would want to work on its own or with Sport Malta and the Malta Tourism Authority. If such tours could potentially be a niche market for Malta, then the association must not only focus on the United Kingdom but also other countries as its target audience.

## 4.9 Twinning Project

A twinning project is organised by the Euro Hockey Federation which lasts 18 months. The project will see HC Schiedam work with the Maltese Association to improve its administration, coaching structures, premises, and national teams (including juniors, seniors, ladies, and veterans). Dutch hockey club HC Schiedam has some 1,400 members playing in 50/60 teams.

The twinning project was something new for Maltese hockey and was first spoken about during the interview with one of Hockey Association Malta’s representatives. First-hand information on the partnership was discussed. This project was embarked on because it was:

*“one of the only methods for the association to improve its standards as it will shadow a major club and take on the method it utilises to make hockey one of the top sports on the island.” (Hockey Association Malta Representative)*

The Euro Hockey Federation has a much larger club coverage than any other association working independently in this field. Therefore, whenever the EHF proposes a project, it is of utmost importance for the Malta Hockey Association to take any opportunities given.

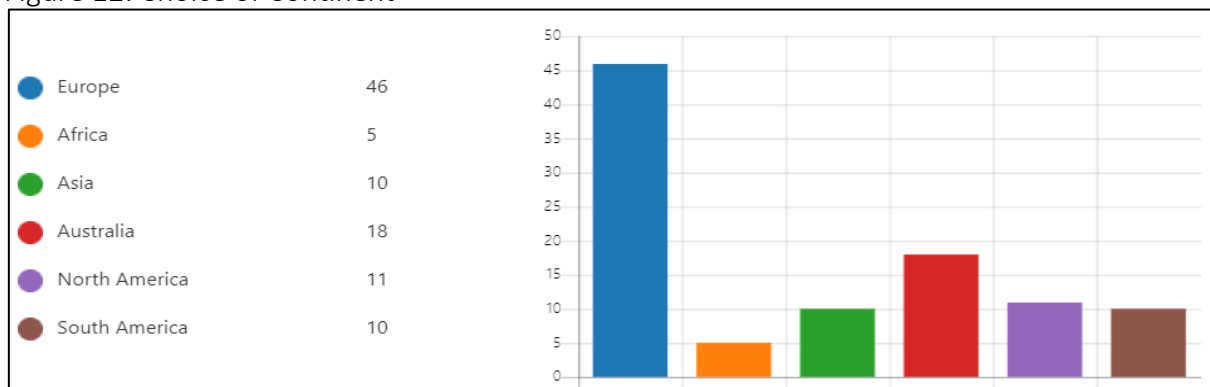
Being that Malta’s main hockey tour visitors are English teams, it was believed to be a good idea to work with England Hockey. In fact, one Hockey Association Malta representative said: *“Anything which will promote the sport is backed by the association”* but hinted that such a project with the UK should be for the clubs to organise and not the association. The Dutch Hockey Association is a much larger association than England Hockey.

If Brexit will eventually affect the prices of touring to the European Union, the Maltese Hockey Association must embark on other twinning projects with other countries. Such projects will help the association with establishing further and potentially better contacts within the international field hockey scene. A twinning project with several countries could ultimately help shift field hockey tours into a niche market and could be an adequate supplement to make up for the losses of the British teams.

#### 4.10 Will Malta Remain a Possible Tour Destination?

If prices for UK players to visit Europe will rise by £225 (€284.34) as stated by Ms Fabri, it would be just as worth it for UK teams to consider visiting another continent and playing with many other different teams. Most of the interest within the questionnaire was still in having tours around Europe as could be seen in figure 12.

Figure 12: Choice of Continent



Source: Research findings, 2020

The final question was whether Malta would still be a possible destination. Malta would still be considered as a destination for 78% of the participants that voted that they would still like to visit the island on a hockey tour. The remaining 22% opted that they would prefer not visiting Malta after Brexit as shown in figure 13.

Figure 13: Would Malta still be considered after Brexit?



Source: Research findings, 2020

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 The Future for the Malta Hockey Association**

The interviews with participants from the local hockey scene have proven to be very helpful to the study as they gave insight to the current situation. Field hockey could be exploited as a possible niche market, if twinning projects with other foreign associations were considered. For such a market to develop within the field hockey scene, the association must first have a clear working structure. All members must be independent and have no affiliation with local hockey clubs to reduce bias over projects.

One of the Hockey Association Malta representatives noted that the replacement of the artificial grass pitch was the biggest issue for the association, in view of the costs involved. After some 18 years, the artificial grass pitch has been paid in full. The association could now start monitoring future projects. Projects which will need actioning first are those highlighted by the Euro Hockey Federation Technical Delegate which include a new pitch and refurbishments of the stands to name a few.

A Euro Hockey Federation (EHF) tournament which was held in Malta in 2019 had a Technical Delegation reporting about the facilities the Malta Hockey Association hosts. Projects which were highlighted to be done first included resurfacing of the field hockey pitch given that it:

“is bumpy and in one corner there is a tree root growing under the pitch causing unevenness. Although not dangerous it would be beneficial to action this as soon as possible.” (EHF Technical Delegate, 2019)

Other projects which must be done are the refurbishment of the stands as these are exposed to the elements of nature and have some major cracks and having larger team benches closer to the umpire box. Other projects were mentioned by the Technical Delegation, but these were not highlighted as being as important and will not affect the sport much which include a score board a bigger clock.

Malta possesses a very good number of attractions which could be used by the Maltese Hockey Association. A possible consideration by the Maltese Field Hockey Association should be to embellish its green area and turn it into a camping area. When such a project is considered, the association could start hosting Field Hockey Festivals, where participants could camp for a few days. It would be cheaper for the clubs both from accommodation and travel between hotel and training grounds. Further research must be held on this topic and therefore it is only being proposed as an idea to improve the on local field hockey scene.

Given that most of the hockey teams which visit Malta are from the UK, the association must find ways to expand on its target markets and start focusing on other possible clubs/universities from other countries in order to mitigate the risk of UK clubs looking for other non-EU countries for touring. The association cannot rely on the UK teams only due to many uncertainties following Brexit. Once there is a concrete plan, the Maltese Hockey



Association must work with the Malta Tourism Authority to figure out in which countries to start promoting Maltese hockey.

A plan for the regeneration of the sport should also be considered. The association must start to work on promoting this sport at schools together with club officials to ensure that talent is discovered and retained within the junior sector. Much emphasis is currently being put on the senior national team, without realising that the junior sector needs to be stronger and more focused since presently it is very limited in numbers.

## 5.2 Financing the Sport

Both Hockey Association Malta representatives hinted that, finances from the state are not enough to improve the facilities at the Coradino Complex. Private investors are the only possible solution to invest so that the facilities improve. Unfortunately, there are currently none who are interested in the sport or see an opportunity to invest.

A proposed 2016 legal notice could pave the way for third party financing:

*“The aim of the proposed legislation will be to provide a legal tool that will enable Maltese sports organisations to develop their facilities, both from a purely sporting angle as well as from a commercial perspective, consequently assisting these organisations in becoming financially self-sustainable.” (Chris Bonett, 2016)*

SportMalta in 2019 have continued to work on the proposed legal notice and have made it a priority for the current administration to ensure that *“sports becomes sustainable and self-sufficient.”* SportMalta stressed that the:

*“government should invest its budgets in sports facilities which can be utilised for SportMalta programmes and sports organisations. The majority of the budgets allocated on a yearly basis by government are currently being forked out to sports organisations in the form of assistances. However, new facilities managed by SportMalta and sports organisations are in the pipeline.” (SportMalta, 2019)*

Malta may see better hockey teams being interested in tours if the facilities at the Corradino Complex are improved. Such teams could even stay on tour longer, if the facilities include camping sites with clean and comfortable conditions. This would be possible if SportMalta are brought into the administration of the Maltese Hockey Association to help with the commercialisation of the sport.

### 5.3 Will Brexit Affect British Touring to Europe?

There would have been great potential for Malta if Brexit were not happening. The association could have started on its renovation projects to help grow the field hockey tour market towards British nationals. It was evident that British universities/teams enjoyed their trips to Malta due to the level of hockey which is played, the hospitality, warm weather, and the nightlife. Many of those contacted through the questionnaire have responded that they were interested in visiting Malta on tour.

The uncertainties which are still present, in view that there is no deal between the UK and the EU, is proving to be a difficult time for universities to plan their future trips. Increase in prices for tours are also of great concern.

### 5.4 Should Other European Countries be Invested in?

As there are still many uncertainties and no concrete deals with regards to Brexit, the Maltese Hockey Association should start looking into diversifying their tour programs to other countries. The association must first have a strategic plan to ensure that the sport is growing in Malta and is no longer struggling to organise junior tournaments. Once the sport participation numbers are increasing, then the association must start promoting such tours to attract foreign talent to Malta so that local hockey improves to international standards.

The Malta Tourism Authority already promotes Malta in other countries due to its brilliant weather conditions, the history, the outdoor living, and the early morning nightlife. (VisitMalta, 2020) Such a project should be like the twinning project mentioned earlier in the study and will help with the regeneration of the sport. With the help of such an entity, Malta could ultimately be marketed as a destination with many different activities to do which would include field hockey.

If Malta keeps on marketing and focusing on just British teams, it might fail and potentially limit participating teams coming on tour on a regular basis. Therefore, it is recommended that more focus and resources should be put on other markets such as Belgian, Dutch, and German universities which have a lot to offer due to their much higher level of training and playing techniques.

If Malta starts to incorporate all it has to offer in one package, there may potentially be a much wider target audience than there currently is.

## 5.5 SWOT Analysis

Malta as a tour destination has many positive aspects on how it could be marketed to foreign teams. Results within the questionnaire received have shown that important characteristics for a tour to be considered must include good weather conditions, nightlife, and the location of the sporting facilities. The cost of living in Malta and the UK was found to be very similar (67.46 and 67.28 respectively) and hence is considered as another strength for the island. Such strengths are shown in Figure 14.

Malta possesses the right opportunities to become a unique field hockey tour destination, but this depends a lot on the funding opportunities which the association could acquire. If adequate funding is sourced, upgrades on the premises could be commissioned. Further opportunities Malta depends on are whether the association could develop field hockey tours as a niche market. The development could happen by hosting field hockey tours once the facilities are upgraded. Otherwise, field hockey tours could be promoted with language schools or twinning projects.

Figure 14: SWOT Analysis

<b>Malta as a Possible Tour Destination SWOT Analysis</b>	
<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warm weather all year round</li><li>• Cost of living is similar to the UK</li><li>• Field hockey facilities in close proximity to touristic locations</li><li>• Has good nightlife which is required by visiting students</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities are not up to the standards of the EHF and the FIH</li><li>• Funding is limited within the sport</li><li>• Maltese hockey must be improved as to invite teams from other countries to participate on tours</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ample space for facilities to be upgraded</li><li>• Working with language schools</li><li>• Hosting field hockey festivals</li><li>• Twinning projects with other countries</li><li>• Field hockey tours could be a niche market</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other Mediterranean destinations offer equal or better facilities</li><li>• Maltese hockey is not recognized and advertised by SportMalta</li><li>• Participation numbers in Malta are very low</li></ul>

Source: Research findings, 2020

Weaknesses were mostly highlighted by the Malta hockey representatives together with the Technical Delegate. Such weaknesses relate to:

- The deteriorating quality of the current facilities
- The ability of SportMalta to secure funds to improve the overall facility
- The lack of private investment
- Lack of attraction for younger players towards the game

Threats which are worrying to the Malta Hockey Association include:

- The increase in cost of touring to UK parties
- Further deterioration of pitch, which will not be adequate to play on
- No interest/recognition of the sport on a national level

Other destinations around Europe have similar weather conditions and facilities to offer at lower prices and these include Cyprus and Sicily. (Janar K, 2016) (Karlis L, 2018) As the Maltese hockey association has no affiliation with SportMalta, there is no marketing done on a national level.

SportsMalta must be included in the administration as to collectively work with the Maltese Hockey Association on an attractive field hockey tour program. With the correct planning strategy, the association could start applying for government grants to upgrade its facilities. The association must also start communications with language schools as to twin both administrations to offer a unique package which offers education and sports.

As noted within the SWOT analyses, the weaknesses and threats Malta faces are primarily because the Maltese Hockey Association is working on its own without the help of SportMalta. If both administrations are working collectively, all the required upgrades should be investigated and a plan on how these would be improved should be formulated. Once such issues are resolved they would be considered as strengths and opportunities and ultimately would improve hockey tours on the Maltese island.

## 5.6 Recommendations

This study recommends a public/private partnership to invest in a project to have a hostel or camp site for approximately 30 officials at a time at the Corradino Complex. There are ample grounds on the premises to have a such a building on site. This project is being recommended considering the possible increase of travel expenses for the British sportsman. Such facilities could also be used by any team wishing to visit the island on a tour. The association would be offering its premises as a lodging facility at reasonable prices.

If refurbishment is done to the changing rooms, and the catering area is upgraded, the proposed project would not even need to have a kitchen or showers incorporated given that these can be done up to the desired standard.

If such a project materialises, the association could also consider offering its premises to host foreign teams from other sports disciplines. These would include rugby teams and football teams who are all based in the adjacent Hiberians Stadium. Tennis players could also be offered the facilities if tournaments are held at the Kordin Tennis Club. The premises could run as a B&B (Bed and Breakfast) or hostel with the catering area being rented out for further meals at a charge.

The Maltese Hockey Association could have their pricing done in a way to ensure a positive return on investment which is reasonable, not to scare away any potential teams. The association should factor in the increase in prices when considering the British tours.

When mentioning such a project to the Malta Hockey Association, one representative mentioned that such a project was deemed to be interesting, and that he would pass the recommendation forward during a committee meeting. One Hockey Association Malta representative also added that such a project could *“not be ruled out”* but stressed that he would prefer that the association continues with just working on the administration and improving the sport instead of venturing into the hospitality market. *“Its (the association) expertise is within sports and not the management”* of the proposed Bed and Breakfast.

## 5.7 Further Research

As the UK has not yet agreed on a deal with the European Union, many uncertainties have still not been discussed. Issues which would affect Maltese Hockey are how accessible Malta would remain for such British nationals if prices would be significantly increased. Such data would be needed by the Maltese Hockey Association to consider working on a tour package for British teams.

Another option would be to consider changing the location of the facilities currently held by the Hockey Association Malta. The regeneration of the facilities could be just as expensive as building a completely new complex and club house in Ta' Qali. Many international stadiums are built in a way to be able to accommodate more than one sport. The Hockey Association Malta could consider this jointly with the Malta Football Association. Ta' Qali is a viable option as it could then be considered as Malta's national sports facility.

Further considerations which would be interesting to factor are having a new hybrid pitch which will soon be on the market by the International Hockey Federation. The hybrid pitch would be cheaper to maintain as water irrigation is not needed as much as having a water-based pitch.

If the hostel/camping site project materialises, the association could have its administration work in a similar manner to how the Malta University Sports and Leisure organisation offers its services. The said organisation is specialised in organising accommodation, transportation, and hiring of sports facilities to both local and foreign markets. (Malta University Sports and Leisure, N.D.)

The Malta Hockey Association could also try investigating whether it would be possible to invite field hockey university teams through the Malta University Sports and Leisure as it might work better when two universities are communicating together.

The last but not least option would be the twinning project with the Dutch Hockey Federation which is still in its early stages. It would be interesting to reconsider the scheme being offered by the European Hockey Federation at a later stage and draw up the improvements.

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## 7.0 Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix 1 – Dissertation Proposal

# Institute of Tourism Studies



## Dissertation Proposal

Date:	06/12/2018	Course Year:	2nd Year	Proposal No:	
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First Student:

Students' Name:	Keith Balada	Course:	R-IHM	ID Card:	427299M))
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Second Student:

Students' Name:	Course:	ID Card:	
		Tel:	
Address:		Mobile:	
		Email:	
		Signature	

Proposed Title of Dissertation:

**Should Malta still invest in and promote field hockey tours towards the British market after Brexit.**

Abstract of the Proposed research work (to not more than 300 words)

Studies conducted by the NSO between January and June 2018 have shown that 291,911 tourists' arrivals originated from the United Kingdom. Reasons for travel to Malta included leisure, business, education, religion, health, and sport. The United Kingdom placed first in other sectors of the study as well; being in total bed nights and total expenditure, which was €213,301 million. (NSO, 2018)

Several organizations, together with the Maltese Hockey Association have been organising Field Hockey Tours to promote Malta and its sports facilities, mainly towards the British market. Currently Malta has five clubs participating in the national league, that is: ~~Gormi~~, ~~Daikin~~, ~~Floriana YoungStars~~, ~~Sliema Hotsticks~~, ~~White Hart~~ and ~~Rabat Deniro~~. Britain has a long-standing field hockey legacy and with 841 registered clubs playing in 68 different leagues across the UK, is surely in the top league by volume. (England Hockey, no date). The English national team currently ranks in seventh place in world ranking with Malta in the 50th place. (Hero FIH Rankings, Outdoor, 2018)

Brexit could affect tourism in many ways. Malta, being in the Commonwealth may stand a better chance than other countries within the European Union in attracting sports tourism from the UK, and most definitely field hockey. Both hockey federations in the United Kingdom and Malta have been in contact after the Brexit vote to ensure that both countries keep their strong relations.

The topic of field hockey tours was chosen due to the authors extensive interest and participation in the sport. The subject was related to try and establish the affects Brexit will pose on field hockey tours. Notwithstanding that most of Malta's field hockey tourism originates from the United Kingdom, it is strongly believed that not enough is being done to attract the full market potential. After Brexit, prices for travel and accommodation for British tourists may increase, and British participation in local hockey tournaments may be negatively impacted. This may result in a disastrous landscape for the Malta field hockey game, given the importance in size of the British market when compared to other supply countries with Germany being next in line with

Description of Research Methods to be applied:			Brief Description:
	Bibliographic search		
	Historical documents		
	Focus Groups	Sample size	
X	Qualitative & Quantitative		
X	Interviews	Sample size	
	Case Studies	Sample size	
X	Questionnaire	Sample size	
	Culinary Project (WMD Catering only)	100	
	Guided Tour (WMD Tour Guiding only)		
	Other		

Keywords: (to be filled by the supervisor)		
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
4. _____	5. _____	6. _____

Supervisor's Endorsement (From the approved ITS list)	
Name: _____	Email: _____
<p>I have discussed the proposed research with the student and endorse</p> <p>_____ this dissertation proposal.</p>	
<p>Signature _____</p>	

## 7.2 Appendix 2 – Club Questionnaire

### Personal Questions

- What is your position within the Maltese Hockey Sector?
- How long have you had this role for and what does it entail?
- How do you best describe field hockey in general?
- What do you think about Maltese hockey?
- How many players are registered in Malta and within the club?

### Foreign Participation

- How frequent do foreign teams participate on tours in Malta?
- How would you rate such teams?
- Do you know of any companies which bring foreign teams on tour?
- Do you think Kordin Hockey Complex needs structural improvements to better host such teams?
- What changes would you suggest as to improve the premises?
- How do you think we could attract more universities to come visit and play in Malta?
- Do you think working with language schools is another possible niche market?

### Investment Schemes

- Do you think enough money is being invested in the sport?
- Does the government help financially to improve the standards?
- If there is investment towards a new pitch, do you believe that it would attract a wider range of teams?
- What is the plan for hockey in the next ten years?

### Brexit

- What do you know about Brexit?
- Do you think Brexit will affect Malta's sports tourism sector?
- What are the major changes that will happen in your opinion?
- How could Malta still attract such British teams to participate on their hockey tours if the average price per person will increase to about £225 (€284.34) per person?

## 7.3 Appendix 3 – HAM Questionnaire

### Basic Questions

- What is your position within the Maltese Hockey Sector?
- How long have you had this role and what does it entail?
- How do you best describe field hockey in general?
- What do you think about Maltese hockey?
- How many players are registered in Malta?

### Foreign Participation

- The Malta Hockey Association offers Field Hockey Tours on its website, could you elaborate on what it offers?
- Does the association contact foreign teams to come on tour or do the teams contact the association?
- How many teams visit the island per year?
- How many of them are English teams?
- Are there any companies that offer packaged tours for such teams, if so, do they liaise often with the association?

### Future Investments

- Are there plans on improving the premises to host foreign teams?
- Does the government help financially to improve the standards of our premises?
- If there is investment towards a new pitch, do you believe that it would attract a higher class of teams?
- Do you think enough money is being invested in the sport?

### Brexit

- What do you know about Brexit?
- Do you think Brexit will affect Malta's sports tourism sector?
- What are the major changes that will happen in your opinion?
- How could Malta still attract such British teams to participate on their hockey tours if the average price per person will increase by about £225 (€284.34) per person?

### Twinning Project

- How do you think the twinning project will affect Malta?
- Could you spare more details of what the project might include?
- Our main visitors are English teams, should something similar be organised independently with a club from England?
- What benefits does the EHF give which cannot be acquired independently?

### Follow up Question

- A paper by the nationalist government highlighted that a method in which sports tourism in Malta could be improved is by having hostel's set up. Such hostels would be used by visiting teams when participating on tours in Malta. Being that the association has such big grounds would you see this a possible future project to set up a hostel on premises to have teams living next to the pitches?

## 7.4 Appendix 4 – Tour Questionnaire

What is your gender?

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

How old are you?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

What is your role within the Club/University?

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Coach
- ☐ Assistant Coach
- ☐ Team Manager
- ☐ Board Member
- ☐ Player
- ☐ Other

What are the important characteristics of a tour?

- ☐ Field Hockey
- ☐ Weather Conditions
- ☐ Nightlife
- ☐ Sea
- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Heritage
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Location
- ☐ English Speaking
- ☐ Cost of Living

Does your Club/University go on tour?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the ideal length of a tour?

- ☐ 1-4 days
- ☐ 4-7 days
- ☐ 7-10 days
- ☐ 10+ days

How many times a year would you go on tour?

- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Twice a year
- ☐ Three times a year
- ☐ Do not wish to participate on tours

Which time of the year would you prefer going on tour?

- ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> Semester
- ☐ Christmas Holidays
- ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester
- ☐ Easter Holidays
- ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester
- ☐ Summer Holidays

What would you estimate to be your total cost of a tour?

- ☐ Less than £300
- ☐ £300 - £500
- ☐ £500 - £700
- ☐ £700+

Are you aware and informed about Brexit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Do you think Brexit may affect touring around Europe?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Do you think prices across Europe would increase due to Brexit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If the prices of visiting Europe do increase, would you still be interested in visiting or would you visit other continents? If so, which would it be?

- ☐ Europe



- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America

Would you be interested to go on tour in Malta?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No