

OCTOPUSHY

By Abigail Johnson

You know Ice hockey and Field hockey but have you heard of this? This sport transports Everyday Joes into Nemo- in a game that's got people hooked!

While most sports demand you to run, jump, or sprint, there's one that dares you to dive—literally. Picture this: a fast-paced game where the field isn't a court, rink, or pitch, but a vast underwater arena.

In this world, every pass, every tackle, every goal takes place where air is scarce, gravity is no friend, and survival requires more than just physical strength.

Welcome to underwater hockey, a sport where you must sink, not swim—literally!

Imagine a game where each pass, tackle, and goal happens beneath the surface. The goal isn't just to score, it's to outsmart and outlast your opponents while controlling a 1.2 kg puck with spatula-sized sticks across a 25-meter pool.

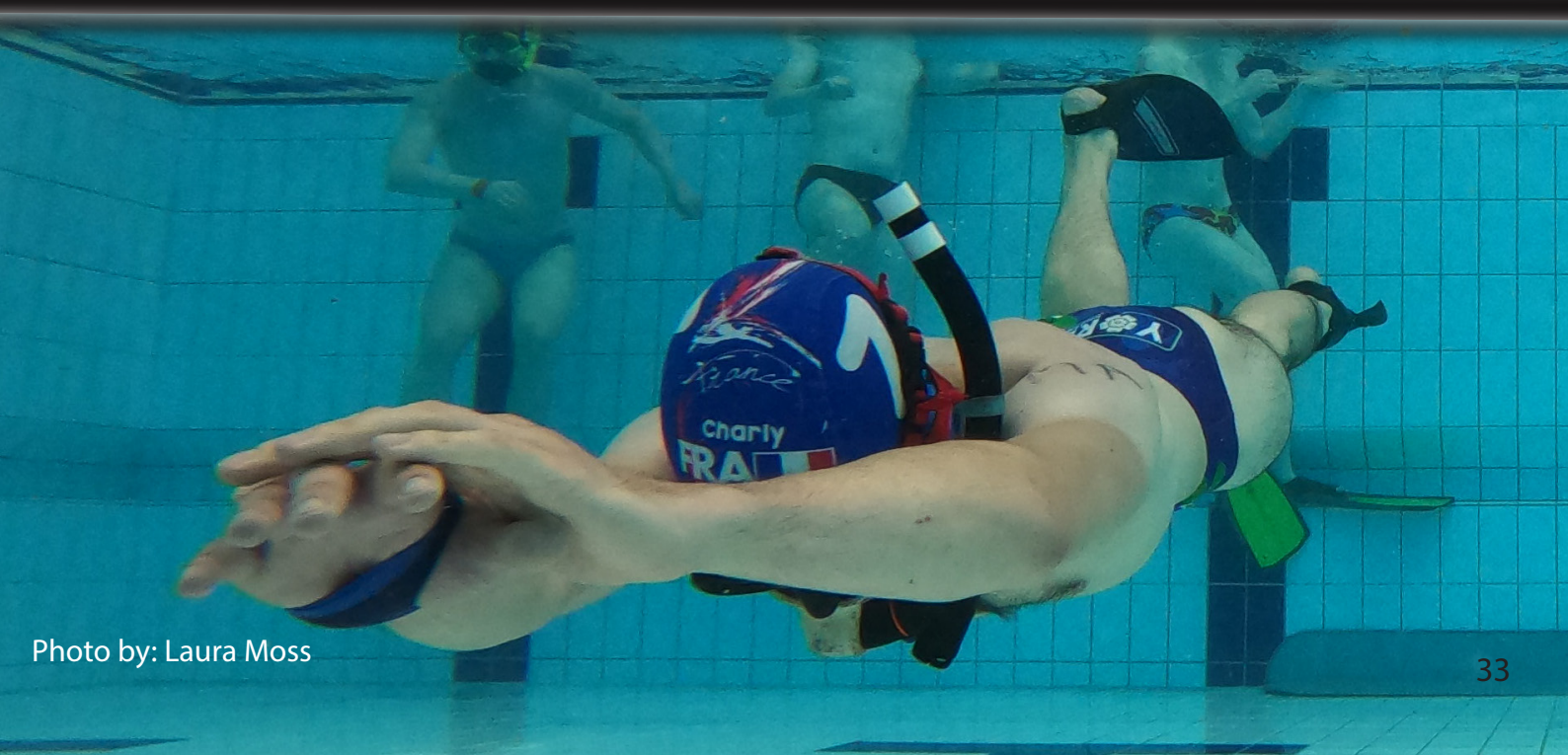
The twist? You can't breathe while chasing the puck. Players must stay submerged until the play breaks, then

scramble for air—only to dive back in and continue the action. It's a mental and physical test of endurance, timing, and strategy. What the puck right?

Olivia Draycott, whose played for several teams including the U24 GB team, shares the challenges. "Underwater hockey keeps your mind sharp and your body fit. The physical demands are immense—no breathing means you have to control your heart rate and stay calm. Mental resilience is key—especially when you feel like you're out of air, but there's always more to give."

With just six players per team, it's fast, furious, and physically demanding. But it's not just about endurance. Quick thinking and teamwork are crucial. As Draycott puts it, "Positioning, timing, and strategy can shift the momentum in an instant."

While the sport isn't a contact game, its underwater nature makes it a unique challenge. Players spend most of their time diving, passing, and defending, always calculating when to hold their breath and when to resurface for air. The ability to balance breath control with the demands of the game is what makes it so exciting—and exhausting.





Thinking, moving, breathing... Players need to do a million things at once but, without their voices how do they communicate?

Tom Pitchforth, captain of the Yorkshire Underwater Hockey Club, explains: "Being an underwater sport it's difficult to communicate with your teammates mid game therefore the team has know the strategy & formation inside out before you get in the pool. Over time players build up a really good understanding of each other's game & playing styles."

This sport is truly for everyone. It's not unusual to see fathers and sons teaming up, or players of all ages and skill levels coming together to compete.

For those with joint problems, underwater hockey has additional benefits. Emily McKeown, a medical specialist for the GB Underwater Hockey team, highlights, "It's great for cardiovascular fitness and low-impact on the joints, making it ideal for people who can't do high-impact sports. Plus, it's fun—so it's easier to stick with as a fitness routine."

And though it's not yet an Olympic sport, underwater hockey is making waves in other ways. With its growing global popularity and attention from betting companies like Betway, some wonder if it could one day join the ranks of mainstream sports.

There's no official talk of Olympic inclusion yet, but with enough support and visibility, who knows what the future holds?

With other hockey variants already mainstream; field and ice, maybe now it's time to put its wet neighbour sport in the fast lane?

Underwater hockey may not be as famous as football or as visible as swimming, but it challenges the body and mind in ways few sports can. Perhaps that's why it's the most demanding sport you've never heard of—until now.