

# Former football club CEO appointed to Ice Hockey UK

The former head of Forest Green Rovers has been appointed chief executive officer of Ice Hockey UK (IHUK).

Henry Staelens, who became the youngest chief executive in the football league when he joined the Gloucestershire-based club in 2018 at aged 30, will start his new position at the UK's national governing body for the sport, which is headquartered in Cardiff, in mid-April.

Mr Staelens had been in the role at Forest Green Rovers, known for its environmentally-minded operations, for over four years but stood down in January. He oversaw record commercial growth at the Nailsworth-based club as well as two play-off-campaigns and a title-winning season in 2021-2022.

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Prior to that, Mr Staelens was the co-owner of Cheltenham-based content marketing agency PinPoint Media, which he exited in 2018. As part of leading IHUK, he will be responsible for overseeing all performance aspects of the organisation, as well as growth, governance and compliance.

A large part of the role will include the ongoing progression of the GB Programme and its representative teams. He will also work with key stakeholders including International Ice Hockey Federation, the Home Nation Associations consisting of the English Ice Hockey Association and Scottish Ice Hockey, the Elite Ice Hockey League and organisations such UK Sport, British Olympic Association, the Home Nation Sports Councils and UK Anti-Doping.

Mr Staelens said: "I'm really pleased to accept the position

as IHUK has the ingredients for a very successful future both on and off the ice. It's a brilliant sport with so many passionate fans in the UK and around the world – and we'll be looking to bring even more eyes to the ice.

“I'm looking forward to getting started and moving the organisation forward to be a world-leader in ice hockey and indeed winter sports as a whole. There is a lot of potential to be uncovered and harnessed.”

IHUK Chairman Clifton Wrottesley, said: “I'm really excited about the appointment of Henry Staelens as CEO. It's a new role for Ice Hockey UK and I strongly believe that Henry has the vision, ambition and creativity to lead IHUK through what will be a period of significant evolution, as the organisation looks to professionalise its operations and performance structures, building on governance and GB Programme reviews that were carried out recently.

“Henry will also lead on forming an overarching strategy for the sport and IHUK, as well as be the main conduit in our relationships with our key stakeholders.

“Delivery is going to be key, as is being able to reach out to our existing loyal fanbase who follow our teams passionately, but also hopefully to a new, expanding audience, as we build our ambitious commercial, marketing, comms and events strategy.

“I'd like to welcome Henry to IHUK and indeed the ice hockey family in the UK and am really looking forward to working with him to build on the work that's been done recently to improve our governance and operations.”

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