

Cambridgeshire Academies, 2020-2021 End of Season Report

I am writing at the end of an unprecedented season to reflect on what we have been able to achieve in the Academy despite three Government lockdowns. It goes without saying that it has been frustrating at times, saddening and also an anxious time for everyone, as we try to keep ourselves safe and well from the virus.

We had made exciting plans to re-commence netball activity after the October half term last year and to hold trials in November so that we could start anew. Unfortunately this all suddenly changed and we were forced to cancel current plans and we, as a team, had to re-think our plans in order to offer our current athletes some form of Academy interaction.

Our programme therefore offered virtual strength and conditioning sessions every week and a one-off Pilates session. We have had a constant core group of very committed athletes who have logged on every week to maintain their physical strength and condition. I hear very good feedback from these sessions and we are all proud of our athletes who have shown great commitment and motivation throughout these sessions. I am certain that these athletes will feel the benefit of maintain their fitness and skills when they return to the court soon. Emma Jones also developed a Fantasy Superleague this year which really excited our athletes and we also had a Lucy's Challenge. Lucy is one of our former athletes who very kindly developed a ball skills challenge for our athletes to try out.

The Team have met regularly over virtual means throughout this year and we were always mindful of safeguarding our athletes mental and physical wellbeing. I hope we have managed to achieve this. As our 'alternative season' draws to a close I would like to say that I have enormous admiration for the Academy coaches who maintained enthusiasm and motivation during this time and had a sense of responsibility to our athletes. It has been individually difficult for us all at times but I am proud as a team we have powered through and we look forward to more positive times in the coming weeks if the Government's road map to recovery is successful.

At the end this season we unfortunately have to say goodbyes to the following coaches who are for their own reasons are no longer able to commit.

Becca and Gill feel that can no longer commit to their coaching roles and it will not unnoticed how committed they have been to developing the U13 athletes for several years in the north of the county. They were a very effective team and worked hard together to provide the best coaching opportunities to theirs athletes. We wish you well Becca and Gill for the future and I know that they will remain connected to netball within their roles as school teachers.

Congratulations to to Jenni, our super organised Administrator (without whom I outlet never cope with all the Admin!) who had a baby boy in February. Emma is also expecting her second baby in June and will be on maternity leave for the first part of next season.

We wish Emma all the best for the safe arrival of her baby soon.

I will also be giving up my role as Performance Lead. This is not a decision I made lightly as I have enjoyed the role so much for the last four years. I have experienced many challenges during this time and learnt an awful amount. I have had the privilege of working with so many knowledgeable, forward-thinking, innovative and highly motivated coaches who I have grown to be very fond of throughout.

We now look forward to a new season In September and to providing exciting opportunities to a new intake of keen athletes.

Juliet Francis
Cambs Performance Lead