

Cheshire County Netball Association.

Dear Cheshire Member

The 2013/2014 season has been a year of change – lessons learnt and re-direction. In September we selected 150 girls from all over the county to be in the County Academies, which included two Under 19 development PODS. In addition we scouted girls into the U12 county development POD with 20 new Year 7s brought in for bi-monthly training. Our Chair of 9 years Kevin Rowley emigrated to Australia and I stepped in as Chair with Fiona Rose taking over as secretary.

County Squads Training

With the new directive from EN and a signed agreement with set targets and a renewed focus on intensity and quality, the new Cheshire academies were limited to 1x U14 Satellite training for 15 weeks and 1 x U16 Academy training for 30 weeks, both limited to 20 athletes, following a strict schedule with homework booklets and strength & conditioning – regional match play included one in county colours at Widnes and a second as individual athletes in Cumbria.

The lead coaches have then selected a number of athletes to go forward to regional selection in June. Our target is to get 2 athletes selected per academy, this will then secure our funding. We wish them well.

Training PODS

We renamed Cheshire Club player development groups to PODS and continued with East and West PODS at U14 and U16, with U19's also having a training POD.

With no movement allowed between the PODS and the Academy / Satellite, we also looked to develop our coaches with a schedule for coaches to move around the county. This didn't work as well as we thought and some athletes become disengaged. Feedback this season has been disappointing for these areas and we have revised our plans for next season.

Match Play

Outside of the EN regional training programme, in March we hosted an evening with the IOM, U16 & U19 match play – a great session and they would like to make this a yearly event with a possible visit to the IOM in October as well as their March visit, possibly including the U14 satellites.

The tour for this season for the U16 and U19's was to Wales, playing the national squads over two days including the match before the Celtic Dragons v Manchester Thunder NSL match. Coaches and athletes agreed to intensity of match play and observations was a great learning exercise for all.

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A play day evening took place at Priestly in Feb for all U12, U14 and U16 as well as the Wilmslow event in April, this event finishing with Australia and Barbados taking the chocolates.

County Trials

We held Pre trials for the Under 16's on Saturday 8th June and U14s on 9th June. We will be holding Summer Training sessions over 4 dates, mirroring the format of Regional training. The final session is the day after the Regional Selection so we will not only have seen all the athletes over several hours but we will know exactly how many places we have for athletes' within each group. The focus is on quality not quantity so if we don't have enough players of the correct caliber, we won't be making up the numbers for the sake of it.

Twenty players were nominated to attend the North West Festival run by the Regional Talent Coach Karen Greig on 14th June and congratulations go to:

Ailsa MacArthur - Cheshire
Jasmine Cook - Cheshire
Esther Horton - Cheshire
Imogen McCance - Cheshire
Ama Mainoo - Cheshire
Josie Heron - Cheshire
Chloe Turpin - Cheshire
Ruth Huges - Cheshire
Madison Sterling - Cheshire
Amelia Veveers - Cheshire
Mary Nelson - Cheshire
Sejal Karmarker - Cheshire
Grace Bodha - Cheshire
Eilidh Thomson – Cheshire * 4 weeks training only

Along with the coaching staff headed by Sue Day and Chris Brien for getting them there.

County Plan

The four year plan is now kicking in. Cheshire were praised as a forward thinking County as we have excellent communication links with the website, facebook and twitter all of which keeps players and parents updated. Cheshire were the only county who were running academies for under 12's and Under 19s and we have a Hardship Fund so that no talented player will be denied the opportunity to play for Cheshire due to finances.

This next season we have been granted 2 x U14 Satellites and 1 x U16 Academy and have signed and returned the agreement to EN. With the success seen in the development at U12 with intense basic training, this enables us to increase the basic intense training at the younger age ensuring the basics become a natural part of our athletes game and intensity becomes the norm.

For 2014/15 season, we will continue with U12 training, 1 x U14 and 1 x U16 POD as well as 1 x U19 POD. The U14 & U16 POD focus is Cheshire athlete development, providing skills training that they can take back to school and club. The U19's will take part in the Cheshire

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Elite League the focus moving strategy, match play, team work and other aspects of the sport including umpiring and coaching.

Cheshire Schools

We supported the Schools helping run all the Schools Tournaments for every age group throughout the season. A special mention goes to Fallibroome School who won u16 County Tournament and the Regional Competition and finished 2nd in the whole country a great effort. Christleton and Wirral U14's also were national qualifiers.

County Junior Regional League

This was the 2nd Year in this format for the NW with Cheshire having 9 clubs in the new Regional Junior Leagues which saw Chester, Didsbury, Macclesfield Pink Ladies, Wilmslow, Warrington and Boughton Belles representing the county in the u14 and 16s leagues against teams from Manchester Lancashire Cumbria and Merseyside. All competed well and we have seen the standard rise with NW representatives, Ribble Valley and Oldham winning their sections.

County Junior League

The County has again allowed the Junior league to run the qualification for the under 13 and 15 age groups. We worked with the committee to secure an indoor venue which has seen an improvement in the quality of games. There is additional cost but I think all agree it's worth it.

County Elite League

The County again supported the Elite League and it has expanded to 16 clubs playing and now into 2 divisions This League is the envy of other counties as we use this for player, club and umpire development and forms the pathway for senior clubs to qualify for the Regional league on the way to the EN Prem league. Well Done to Merseyside Police who won the premier and the NEWTS Division 1.

Manchester Thunder Superleague

The County did not support Thunder financially but bought into the player training package with head coach Tracey Neville.

We were requested to provide only 2 girls for the tri festival with Yorkshire and North East hubs during the school holidays both of whom were under 13 (Year 8).

Coach Development Fund

We have continued to help our clubs develop by providing £250 maximum to each club who applied for development of their staff ranging from level 2 to first aid to Safeguarding fees. We have sent Coaches to the national Conference and supported our A grade umpires enabling them to attend the National Conferences.

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Planning

Following this AGM, we will continue to plan for the next season, working with the NW Regional Board in order to access the Regional training and other opportunities, which could be available to our volunteers, officials and players.

This will mean a number of changes to the format for the season ahead with each coach being supported by team managers and not only looking at the skills of the players but their fitness and core strength which will be measured regularly. Ex County player and qualified S&C coach Hayley Preece has provided S&C for our athletes this year and this will be continued for the following season.

England have also asked for all counties to ensure they have succession planning and whilst we have one of the largest and hard working committees we always welcome new members who are willing to help.

I would like to finish by thanking our hard working committee, coaches, umpires team managers Officials and other volunteers, including the Whitworths for their catering support, who put a lot of time and effort into making the whole season run smoothly.

Estelle Graham
Chair