

**County Player Development Lead**  
**AGM Report – Season 22/23**

It has been wonderful to be able to run a proper program this season, without a Covid hangover, which we did experience last season.

Due to new regulations enforced by England Netball, we were forced to hold our trials in September, which meant a quick turnaround in order to start as soon as possible to ensure that we could fit our required 30 sessions into the calendar, without overspilling too far into the summer months, when players have summer league commitments, cricket conflicts, as well as school exams. Several of our talent identifiers (selectors) had attended a recent EN course on Performance Identification and trials were run in accordance with their recommendations.

The process ran smoothly, and I feel that with every year we run the program, we refine our processes to increase their efficiency.

The short gap between trials and training proved to be an administrative nightmare. This was eased slightly this year by moving to a new kit provider, who set up an online ordering and payment system, which allowed me to step away from being involved with kit.

Our two U11 Academies ran at Norwich School Sports Centre and were overseen solely this season by Katie Chillingworth and then assisted by former NCNA athlete and Saracens Mavericks U17 captain, Jemima Watson. Athletes trained weekly and then came together for 3 matchdays throughout the season. We ran two smaller groups, due to EN recommending Bee Netball 5-a-side format. This format didn't work, and we moved to one training group from January onwards. The main issue with two smaller groups, was that they proved difficult to manage as soon as we had a few athletes missing, meaning numbers were too small for any match play. A big thank you to Katie for leading the U11 program this year and I wish Jemima all the best as she moves into pastures new.

The U13 Academies have been run by myself, and assistant coach, Caitlyn Edwards this season. On one hand it has been brilliant to be more 'hands-on' with the U13s, but at times it has been a lot to manage, alongside my other coaching commitments. I am delighted that Sophie Hansell, will be joining us as U13 Head Coach for 23/24.

I have led the U15 academy this season as head coach, supported greatly by Claire Wells as my assistant and Josh Marlow as our S&C coach. It has been a highly successful season, with some of our best performances to date, most noticeably finishing second at the Saracens Mavericks tournament (only losing to Mavs U15) and finishing as the highest ranked East Region team in the recent Bedfordshire tournament. I am very proud that three of our U15 athletes successfully gained places on the Mavericks U15 squad, as well as a fourth athlete gaining a reserve place. As the year draws to its conclusion, it will be emotional to say goodbye to some of the athletes who have been with us for up to 5 years.

Competition for the U13s and U15s has been inconsistent and is an area that we need to develop for the future to ensure that we continue moving forwards. I worked hard at the start of the season to book some match days in, but it has been tricky getting other counties to travel to us and commit to matches. The only other county to organise any competition was Bedfordshire.

Thank you to the NCNA committee, and particularly Anna Bright, for their continued support.

Gemma Ashton