



SEPTEMBER 2019

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.stratfordthunderbirds.com

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NEW SEASON TAKES FLIGHT FOR THUNDERBIRDS

Welcome back to a new term of netball action and a warm welcome to all our new players and families who have recently joined the Thunderbirds flock.

Can you believe it? Thunderbirds Netball Club celebrates its 4th birthday this month with an incredible amount to show for it. Last season closed with another astonishing list of achievement, success and endeavour. Here it is in a nutshell:

Coventry & Warwickshire Junior League

Under 12s U12A Champions & U12B 3rd place

Under 13s U13A Champions & U13B 3rd place

Under 14s U14A Champions & U14B 4th place

Birmingham Intermediate League

Division 2 U15A Champions

Division 3 U14A Champions

Division 5 U14B 2nd place

Division 6 U15B 2nd place

Division 7 U13A Champions

Division 9 U13B Champions

Division 10 U13C Champions

Division 11 U13D 4th place

Division 12 U12A 2nd place

Division 13 U12B 5th place

Division 14 U11A 6th place

Division 17 U11B 5th place

BINL Tournament:

U14A (upper age) Champions

U12A (lower age) Champions

Warwickshire County Cup

U14A Champions

ENG Sports UK

U12A Winners Central Region Finals
& 3rd Place in National Finals

Redditch Senior League

Division 2 Summer League
ST Eagles take 2nd place



STRETCHING THEIR WINGS



As if she wasn't busy enough coaching Thunderbirds Monday to Thursday and overseeing matches at weekends; Molly Salmons, now has a new entry in her diary for Friday nights. She has been appointed as one of Loughborough Lightning's Head Academy Coaches for U15/U17. Molly, a graduate of Loughborough Uni, attended her first coaching seminar last week fronted by Sara Bayman, ex England player and now Head 'Lightning' Coach.

"This is great news for our club", said our Head Coach Kelly, who turned down a coaching opportunity herself at Wasps Academy in the past due to her Thunderbirds commitments. "Molly can bring the Lightning Academy program to Thunderbirds, it also means that we will be able to prepare our athletes better for trials knowing exactly what Loughborough, in particular, expect from trialists".

ISOBEL SCORES EXCITING NEW SPONSORSHIP DEAL

Following an impressive display at the ENG U12 National Finals and later with the U14s in the Central heats, Isobel Lock has been invited to become an ENG Sports UK athlete. ENG are sports events organisers "Earned Not Given". According to their website, she made quite an impression last season:

"Equally at home as Goal Defence or Goal Shooter, Isobel helped the U12A team to medal positions in local leagues and every tournament in which they featured in 2018/2019. She also appeared regularly for the U14A team in regional competitions and occasionally for the U15's. Her height, strength and awareness make her a valuable utility player who enjoys every moment on court".



Proud Dad, Colin Lock explained what Isobel can look forward to. *"ENG promotes what sport can do mentally and physically for young people, helping them to become stronger, confident and more focused individuals. The ENG athletes' program was established to encourage members to achieve their true potential through the provision of advice, support and opportunities to develop their skills. This includes performance enhancing workshops and competitions held throughout the year, together with sponsorship and/or fundraising to contribute toward the cost of kit, training or travel.*



ENG also provide a great platform to showcase individuals success through promotion on social media. Achievements and team activities are shared raising the profiles of the individuals concerned. Kelly always tells us that it's great to get as much court time as possible and to 'be seen' and this seemed a great way to do it!"

Isobel gave her reaction to this amazing opportunity. *"I am really grateful for the support I get from ENG and Thunderbirds. It has inspired me to always aim high and be the best I can be".*

Kelly added, *"We're very proud of Isobel. She stands out because of her age - she is so young but very talented! Isobel has also recently progressed to the second stage of the Severn Stars U17 Academy trials, and all at the tender age of 13 year old!"*

LIGHTNING STRIKES AGAIN While we await news of Severn Stars trials, we can safely congratulate four Thunderbirds who have been selected for Loughborough Lightning's Academy programme. U15 Elise Saffet Cole returns again for a second year, to be joined this season by U14A Lolita Galvin, U13 Mollie Hegarty & U13 Jessica Monthe. Good luck to all those club players who are still under consideration for Superleague academy teams.

You've got to admire the commitment of these girls, and parents, in making netball dreams come true.

NEW SEASON — NEW LOOK

This year Thunderbirds had to take the drastic decision of changing kit suppliers. Our former provider simply could not keep up with demand from our club. Little wonder since we have expanded 400% in four years. Meeting demand became an impossible task for our volunteer Kit Secretary, Sarah Saffet Cole who, nevertheless, persisted all this time in the vain hope of the company switching to online orders. When the supplier kept failing to deliver on the latter, Thunderbirds had to look elsewhere.



For several months, Kelly and Molly painstakingly researched, costed and designed a new Thunderbirds range, opting for 'Surridge Sports', a reputable national supplier. Such a commitment called for time as well as capital up front, to secure advance orders on a scale to meet a club our size. Delivery in August proved too ambitious though **SURRIDGE ARE WORKING FLAT OUT TO DELIVER BY END OF SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER.** The window for purchasing online remains open until further notice. The Surridge Webshop link is on our Thunderbirds website Kit page.

We look forward to supply and demand settling down in due course, as much as Sarah looks forward to having her life and spare room back! Enormous thanks to Sarah.

A further consequence of a new manufacturer is the unavoidable change in design and colour scheme. The club appreciates that there will be a period of overlap between the two kits. It is also grateful for the investment each family has made in replacing items.

The Thunderbirds kit remains a symbol of pride, unity and commitment to our netball club. Thank you, everyone, for your patience and understanding.

AWARDS EVENING Despite another glittering year of league and tournament success, along with personal development on a grand scale, the Executive Committee regrets to announce that there will not be an awards ceremony this year.

There are a combination of reasons. Some key people have been genuinely wrapped up in family matters. Any time left was absorbed with the new kit designs and orders and getting to grips with England Netball's new enrolment procedures. The new kit required capital up front, diverting funds that might otherwise have paid for a party. With hindsight, it would have been helpful to have a social team of volunteers in place to get a ceremony organised. This will be on the agenda for the forthcoming AGM along with fundraising to cover cost. We cannot let our 5th birthday slip by without marking the occasion and achievements of our dedicated Thunderbirds.

COVENTRY LEAGUE — END OF A BRIEF ERA

The Executive Committee would also like to bring its members up to speed with the news that Stratford Thunderbirds will no longer be participating in the Coventry & Warwickshire Junior League (CWL). Most disappointingly, our U12s, U13s & U14s will not have a chance to defend the League titles won in spectacular style last Spring.

Due to a new ruling in the CWL constitution, teams are no longer permitted to play in Junior League competitions unless they have teams registered in the Senior League. Unlike Birmingham & Redditch leagues, which use a neutral venue for all fixtures, Coventry Senior League expects each club to have a home venue to host fixtures. Thunderbirds do not have a 'home' venue for matches and even if we did, a handful of clubs, (mainly in North Warwickshire) made it known that they would not want to travel to Stratford upon Avon.

The growing popularity of netball and rise of new clubs has tested CWL in recent years. Thunderbirds were already restricted to two teams per age group. To compound matters, the League has been forced to leave the Excel Centre and move their junior fixtures to a smaller venue. When clubs from Birmingham and Leicester applied to join this year, a blanket policy was made to restrict entry to all clubs outside its Coventry catchment area, including Thunderbirds, so our fate was sealed.

Thankfully, we have feathers in other nests and girls can be assured of a busy season ahead. With invitations for new regional competitions and a new summer League emerging in Shipston on Stour, Stratford can look forward to meeting new rivals on plenty of other netball stages.

All member parents and Team Managers are encouraged
and welcome to attend this year's

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Monday 7th October 2019

Gather at 7.00pm for prompt start at 7.15pm

Venue: Dinning Hall, Stratford Girls' Grammar School
Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9HA

**If your daughter's netball club is to continue and thrive,
it needs new parent volunteers to share the workload.**

Come and be part of the club's success story.

On the agenda:

Club Manager's Report & Treasurer's Report

Election of new and re-election of current executive committee members.

Recruitment for non committee roles with occasional duties, including:

Club Publicity: Website/Newsletters/Press/Social media

Data Protection Officer

CAPS Officer (England Netball compliance and accreditation)

Fundraising/ Sponsorship Coordinator

Team Managers' Support: (buying balls, bibs, first aid supplies, stock keeping)

Club Representatives for both Redditch & Birmingham leagues (i.e. point of contact for umpires, admin, trophies and AGMs)

Events Organisers (e.g. Annual Awards evening 2020)

2019-2020 SEASON GETS OFF TO A WONDERFUL START



U13 are Cup Winners & U14A are Plate Winners at this year's Nottingham Tournament.



U10s & U11s shake off those nerves at the Lynn Cain Charity Tournament



U15s back in the dizzy heights of winning again as Runners-Up at Ryland's Tournament