

Case Study

'Long overdue' netball league for girls in Milton Keynes



Bucks Sport: Under 12 and Under 14 Netball League

Adult netball in Milton Keynes has been thriving for a number of years but few opportunities existed for young people to take part in club or competitive netball outside of school. The Bucks Sport Netball Development Officer identified the need to provide competitive opportunities for young people and engaged volunteers from schools, junior and senior netball clubs in Milton Keynes. Funding through the Extending Activities programme was secured to cover start up and running costs for the first 10 weeks, including an incentive for all new teams. Upon receipt of funding, a multi-agency committee for the league was set up to ensure all interested parties were involved in the planning, running and sustainability of the league.

This project provides the only regular competitive opportunities for junior netball players in Milton Keynes. The introduction of the league has led to junior clubs running additional teams and has created the opportunity for many more young people to play netball outside of school. The league runs on a Sunday morning and has received great support from parents, volunteers and local secondary schools; some of which are also entering teams. The league started in June with 5 teams and a total of 50 young people in the U12 age band and 7 teams and 80 young people in the U14 age band. In total 7 of these teams are associated with local senior teams and as such it is hoped they will provide exit routes for the players into adult teams to maintain their engagement in the sport.

The league is benefiting from the support of the Milton Keynes Senior Netball League who provide umpires for the league. Some senior clubs have developed new junior sections at their club and more are looking to do so in September. All young people, parents, coaches and officials involved in the league are amazed at the fun and enjoyment young people are getting from the sessions and the high standard of netball that is developing. The officials and volunteers are very supportive to the young people and have helped several beginners understand the rules.

"A junior netball league in Milton Keynes has been long overdue and it is fantastic to see it finally up and running. We have been overwhelmed by the response from junior clubs and it is great to see the girls enjoying themselves on the courts. Support from the volunteers, officials, parents and clubs has also been invaluable and this will hopefully enable us to sustain the activity beyond the initial 10 weeks."

Gilly Bettis, Netball Development Officer, Bucks Sport.

The Extending Activities Programme and funding is co-ordinated within Buckinghamshire by the Bucks & Milton Keynes Sports Partnership. For further information relating to Extending Activities or netball in Bucks please contact 01296 585069.

