

Another successful season for the County pathway players has come to an end. The 2023-2024 season saw a record number of athletes accepted onto the programme.

The athletes were involved in several initiatives this year. The athletes participated in the 'Pulse' tournament at Leyton Score, playing against teams from Pulse Hubs, Middlesex and Essex Thurrock. A successful day all round with good results and good development and progress made by individual athletes.

We were fortunate once again to have the players watch a live Superleague match at the Copper Box – London Pulse V Saracens Mavericks. A superbly entertaining match saw the players taking away, ball skills and movements that they could use in their play and the inspiration to move forward and develop further their netball skills and support for London Pulse.

Thank you to London Pulse for hosting us and giving the athletes certificates, as well as having photographs taken with the players. Memories I am sure they will treasure.

This year we managed to attend a 'rain free' London & Southeast Regional Tournament in Kent with a record number of teams; three U15's and 5 U13's. This gave the players the opportunity to experience netball against other counties with excellent showcasing of skills.

To finalise our season we held a Mini Rally and invited teams from Woodford Warriors and the Redbridge London Youth Games Squad. Despite the heat, the players enjoyed the experience with an U13's team finishing in second place behind one of the Redbridge Youth Games Squad. Thank you to Val for bringing your LYG players.

I would like to thank the following coaches for their dedication and hard work this season, and coaching both age groups – U13's and U15's. A 'BIG THANK YOU' to Joan, Nana (who joined us in January), Jacqui, Sophie and Cyanne (supporting when required). To Claire Criag for stepping in to help coach and manage a team at the Regional Tournament. Both Nana and Claire both played for Essex Met County and have shared memories with the athletes regarding making new friends and enjoying the sport. I would like to thank Lisa Christie who has supported us by delivering sports psychology sessions to the under 13s and under 15s. The parents joined the sessions, and everyone found these

sessions enjoyable and looking at how best parents and athletes and be supported on and off the Netball court.

Of course, we, the County Squad could not have managed without the support and help of those at Redbridge Leisure Centre for the courts inside and out. A grateful shout out to all the parents, careers for bringing the girls to training and supporting us at every opportunity.

To Pat Meadows for her continuous support in making things happy for the Academy players and a massive THANK YOU to Tracy Howe our team manager who will be moving on from this role. Tracy has been a great member of the team to work with and it has not been easy balancing full time work and volunteering for the county. Thanks to all the committee members for your support and supporting young people in Netball.

The new season will be bringing exciting news regarding Netball becoming more professional. I look forward to working in partnership with London Pulse within the England Netball Pathway.

Until next season

Yours in Sport

Michelle Cox

Head Coach Essex Met County Netball

