

## Netball South Summer Camp 2015 (17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> August)



Over forty young netballers and five coaches from the region's Performance Pathway Academies came together for a week of high-intensity training and match-play in August. The Camp theme was 'United' ... working together on and off-court, bonding, co-operating, teamwork and so on. The girls completed a tough daily programme of strength & conditioning, technical and tactical on-court sessions, match-play, pool sessions and evening workshops in the delightful surroundings of Bradfield College near Reading.

There were a few anxious expressions along the way as players faced both mental and physical challenges that often took them outside their comfort zone: the majority had never before experienced this level of training on consecutive days, let alone building a sofa out of balloons and sticky tape, or performing in a Talent Show!

We all enjoyed an entertaining, interactive workshop delivered by Sion Thomas, a sports psychologist, exploring how working together could be the key to success, how listening to what others have to say can provide a bigger, often better, picture to inform decisions. Sion took the girls on a hypothetical journey into the desert ... perish or survive!!!

Thursday was a day of celebration. In the morning, a number of the girls shared their amazing GCSE result, so many A-stars and A's! It was most uplifting and the joy / relief re-energised the whole group who were, by now, beginning to feel the exertions of the previous three days. The Talent Show in the evening proved highly entertaining, especially the nine groups battling for supremacy with lip sync routines to 'Shake it Off' by Taylor Swift ... in a similar vein to various national squads at the Netball World Cup.

The group wanted to turn the 'lip sync battle' into a 'lip sync – united' and, in the space of 45 minutes starting at 7am on Friday morning, choreographed and performed a routine involving all 42 athletes ... watch the video <https://vimeo.com/137003824?ref=tw-share> ... stay with it until the end to catch the cameo roles!

Going with tradition, the Camp culminated with a tournament, organised entirely by the athletes. This was the final opportunity for the girls to practise their new skills, and put their understanding into play. The outcome was a series of competitive matches with some truly excellent play.

We had a de-brief and award ceremony back in the boarding house before the girls departed with new friends, new netball knowledge and skills, and with a life-experience each will be able to draw on in the future.

As a coach it's really pleasing to see the progress each athlete made during the week and how, when the going got tough, everyone pulled together to get through the task. The girls should be proud of their accomplishments during the week; each demonstrated resilience, relentlessness, fearlessness, diversity, and – importantly – unity.



Thanks to Bradfield College for making us feel very welcome; to Netball South for supporting the event; to the coaches who worked from 7am until at least 10pm each day; to the athletes who just worked; and to their parents who had to listen to the 'stories from Camp' in the nightly phone calls and on the journey home.

It's hard work but I love it! It's so rewarding and comments like those below make it all worthwhile.

**Elly Moore – Netball South Performance Pathway Coach**

*5 of my girls have spent this week on the camp with you in Berkshire. 3 have already contacted me to say how much they loved it.*

**Coach from Sussex**

*Thank you so much for another fantastic Summer Camp. Your attention to detail is something we should all try to copy. It must take you ages to plan and source and buy the medals, smellies, and sweets and the sack bags etc. I come away with so many ideas and how I can improve my coaching and it's just great to see the girls grow as the week progresses.*

**Summer Camp Coach**

*I just wanted to say a massive thanks to you and the other coaches for giving the girls such a brilliant week of netball and fun. We have loved hearing all about the evening challenges and particularly watching the videos. Suzie really enjoyed the week.*

**Suzie's mum**

*Just like to say thank you again for the camp last week, I had so much fun and learnt lots!*

**Erin**

*I wanted to say thank you so much for such an amazing week, I absolutely loved it and really appreciate the opportunity that I was given to attend.*

**Polly C**

*Thank you so much for the camp, I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot.*

**Izzy C**

*I really enjoyed the South Summer Camp and I have learnt so much from it and have already felt my improvement at my club training ... I hope that you had just as good a time that I did – bring on this season!*

**Many thanks**

**Holly P**