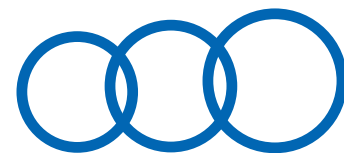


Bristol Ladies Union FC Newsletter

MAY 2022

ISSUE | 10



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To all players, parents and volunteers,

As we reach the end of another wonderful season of football, it's time to celebrate all our successes, without forgetting that it's not all about winning! Particular mention this season goes to the U13s, who won their Cup Final in some style, with the U15s coming runners up in theirs. But all the teams, from U10s to the First Team, have played with great skill, strength and stamina in the c150 games that they have played, and I have been lucky enough to watch most of the teams at some point, either in training or during matches. I'm pleased to say that Bristol Ladies Union Football Club is in a great position for its future development, and we look forward to next season and beyond with excitement at seeing the talent coming through.

The end of this season also brings a couple of eras to an end. Lloyd Burnell has hung up his boots, handing over the reins of Sunday morning minis training after many years of dedication. A huge number of girls have started their football journey under his watchful eye, with so many of them progressing through to the older age groups and beyond this Club. Lloyd was a founder of BLUFC, a coach to older groups, and a past chairman, but his lasting legacy and what people fondly remember is his patience and enjoyment of coaching girls aged as young as 5 years old, rain or shine, every Sunday morning. He is looking forward to his Sunday lie-ins, and we owe him a huge debt of gratitude. Minis training will, from the start of next season, move to Soccershooters, with whom we have struck up a partnership.

At the other end of the Club, Steve Price is stepping down as First Team Coach. He has been a stalwart of BLUFC for many, many years, coaching at junior levels before taking charge of the First Team, along with his talented daughters. A highlight of his term has to be the league and cup double in the 2018/19 season, where his team swept all aside at the top of the Gloucester Women's League and won promotion to the Southwest Women's League. Steve's enthusiasm on the touchline and at training has always been plain for everyone to see, and will be truly missed. On behalf of all his players, I would like to express our great thanks for everything he has done over the years for the Club. Next season's First Team will be an amalgamation of players from the current U16s, the Development Team and the First Team.

All the coaches, committee members and other volunteers continue to deliver football training sessions and matches, or work behind the scenes, to make this Club what it is. If you would like to be involved then please do contact any one of them. We rely on your involvement.

So well done again to all the players this season. You have been great ambassadors for BLUFC and I hope that you continue your football journey next season and beyond.

Justin

Check out our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/237169567430828/>

Club Day: This will be on Sunday 26th June.



Under 9s and U10s joint training session



Under 10s news

Well done to the U10s who played at the Portishead Tournament putting in some excellent displays. And some great team bonding along the way.

The U10s have progressed so much as we've gone through the season it's a real joy to watch. Thanks to all the parents - #BLUarmy - who constantly turn out week in week out to support the players....and the coaches.

Thoroughly looking forward to the Club Day and all the summer tournaments we have planned.

Thanks to Jerry from Bristol City for taking the girls and parents on a stadium tour during the Easter break and giving all the girls a replica shirt at the end, which topped off a lovely morning.

(Thanks to Tom Harris)

Under 11s news

After the stop-start nature of our first season in 2019-2020, it's been great for BLU U11s to have a first proper season of competitive football and the girls, coaches and supporters have really enjoyed themselves. We've been involved in plenty of thrillers including a 5-5 draw and 6-0 and 7-0 victories, with a free scoring team which has now racked up 47 goals in 18 games with 9 different goal scorers, led by Jess, Kate, Evie, Betsy and Lamorna as star strikers who have all scored 5 or more. We'll finish in a healthy mid-table position having lost slightly more than we've won, and have done exceptionally well considering we've often been up against much physically larger teams with inspired goalkeepers! Our goalkeeper Maeve has been busy and made some outstanding saves, with a great back line of Pippa (unfortunately now out with a broken collarbone) and Emilie, ably supported by Alice, Katherine and Lily

regularly switching between midfield and defence. Iris has put in many lung-busting performances in the middle with Ellie and Mairead always being reliable all-rounders prepared to play anywhere.

With the step-up to 9v9 next season, we're looking to bolster the squad with some additional strength in depth and are really positive about our prospects. From the coaches' perspectives, it's been so rewarding to see the sense of camaraderie grow through the season and there's a real feeling that the girls enjoy themselves whatever the score, with regular social sessions in parks after the matches! A highlight has been the match reports written by the team which are published on the BLU website - we appear to have plenty of future budding journalists!

(Thanks to Andy Lawrence)

Under 12s news



Following on from some fantastic football played at tournaments over the summer, the new U12s team faced a challenging season ahead. Placed in Division A and new to playing 9 a side and the offside rule, it took the U12s a few matches to find their rhythm. The girls found themselves facing some tough competition but kept their heads held high and built up some strong reserves of resilience and determination to carry forward.

Having previously struggled to find volunteers for the position of goalkeeper, the team now benefits hugely from a choice of four girls willing and extremely able to take on the role. Coupled with a solid defence and midfield, in early November their perseverance was rewarded with a win against Emerson's Green. A closely fought game that went down to the final whistle and ended with a 5-4 win for BLU.

The new year presented the girls with another new challenge - their first Cup match. After a hugely competitive game with lots of battles in midfield, the final whistle blew at 0-0. Enter another first for the team: Penalties! Cool as cucumbers our super strikers found the back of the net while our goalie saved two of St. Aldhelm's penalties like a pro. A very exciting and well-deserved win for the team.

The quarter finals against Cheltenham Vipers beckoned. Again, the girls had a great game, tackling with confidence and playing some brilliant football. Unbelievably, the full-time score was 1-1 meaning - you've guessed it - another round of penalties! This time it didn't go our way but what an experience for the team and a fantastic confidence boost for the girls.

The second half of the season has seen the girls flourish in their roles and it's such a privilege to watch them develop as players. They secured two more league wins and are now scoring against and pinning back tough teams higher up the table. It looks like we'll finish the season in a respectable fifth place.

It's important to mention that this team started their BLU journey in the 2019/20 season, which saw multiple match cancellations due to flooded pitches and was, as we all know, cut short by the arrival of the pandemic. With further disruptions as U11s, this is their first full season playing for the club. That said, focusing on football and keeping fit and active during the pandemic has been hugely beneficial for the girls during the last few years. A massive thank you to the team's five coaches - Dan, Steve, Phil, Alex and Steve - for keeping the training sessions going while making safety a top priority.

Led by this quality quintet of coaches, the girls are in great shape to face the new challenges of playing 11 a side on a full-size pitch as U13s. Some pre-season tournaments and a bit of fitness training are now very much on the menu!

(Thanks to Becca Ramsden)



Under 13s news



“On 5th December we did the parents v children match, this was the first time that I did it and I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed it because we got to have fun with my teammates. We played 11v11 which was a good learning experience for all of us and I am sure that next year the kids will definitely win!”

Mirre

“I like playing the kids V parents match every year at Christmas and end of season. It’s good playing with my team mates and getting to be really physical! It’s good exercise for the adults and the kids... but especially the adults!!”

Imogen

The Season

Another cracking season saw the U13s finish 4th place for the second year on the trot. Some great wins against teams we’ve historically struggled against show the girls continue to improve and develop, most notably the 6-2 win away to Portishead, the 2-0 home win against Weston Mendip and most recently the 2-0 home win against Hutton – three of my favourite performances of the season. We finished with 9 wins, 2 Draws and 5 loses.

The team spirit gets stronger and stronger every season which is reflected in some great football from the girls but the biggest highlight has to be our cup run. The county cup was back after a 2 year absence and the girls first opportunity to experience knock out football! They absolutely loved it and after comfortably winning the earlier rounds encountered a tough semi final away to Gotterington, a team who were riding high in the Gloucestershire Girls County league. The weather was awful but this didn’t dampen the girls excitement before the game and after leading at half time found themselves 2-1 down early in the second half! The girls response was fantastic and a blistering 15 minutes saw the U13s go 4-2 up and see the game out to book a place in the final. Well done to the girls who were worthy winners in a nail biting final, winning 3-1 against FC Lakeside.

We move to 11-a-side next season which is very exciting and looking forward to the challenge. Not only in terms of the larger format but seeing if we can close the gap further with the 3 teams who finished above us in the league – challenge accepted!

Finally a huge thanks to all the parents for their support during this season, their help in setting up goals, volunteering to run the line etc. It’s been a great team effort. Roll on the Parents v Girls end of Season match...

(Thanks to Les Abraham)

Development girls

A fantastic season for the Development team with successive wins in friendlies against Brunel Banthams and a confident performance at Portishead’s Dev Tournament in March. We’ve seen real progress across the team. Well done Anna, Lilly, Lilia, Grace, Ellie, Isabelle, Rosie, Phoebe, Liv and Mabel who all played this season.

(Thanks to Chris Howell)

Holland tour

The U13s are embarking on a trip to the Netherlands from 17-19 June this year. They will participate in an U13 girls only tournament playing 11-a-side which will be great practice for next year.

They will also have a full match encounter with VOC Rotterdam U13, which is Mirre’s former team. She joined the U13s earlier this year.

(Thanks to Ytzen Van Der Werf)



In the spotlight

The U13s give their views on 3 of their team mates!

(Thanks to Sharon Davies)



Molly
“BLU has made me grow in confidence, make new friends and allows me to play the sport I love the most”

Molly is a superb player and is very fast.
I enjoy playing football with Molly because she is an insane defender with a lot of skill and she is always there for me if I need a friend to talk to.
Molly has great touches on the ball, is great at passing and scores amazing goals.
Molly is always ready to help when needed.
Molly is a great player in midfield and defence, Molly has brilliant ball skills but also passes when necessary and is an exceptional team player.
Molly is great at tackling even whether the player is 10 times her size!
Molly is a good team player putting effort into the game throughout using her good skills and rapid running.
Molly is really fast, she is good at winning the ball and she is excellent at running up the wings and working the ball up the field.
Molly is a really good at tackling and getting the ball back.



Izzy
“Playing for BLU’s allows me to have fun playing football as well as socialise with my friends”

Izzy has really good skills and is great in defence.
Izzy is fun to play football with because she has great skills and can get past any defender with her tricks.
Izzy is a good team player - she is good at passing and is effective at keeping the ball from opposition players.
Izzy is very confident on the ball and has great skills.
Izzy is a very powerful player with a wonderful shot! She combines her ball skills and defence skills into scoring great goals.
Izzy has incredible ball skills, always has the energy to run rings around players or tap it past, and is a team player on and off the pitch.
Izzy is a really skillful player who never shies away from a tackle, she can win the ball effectively and is a really good passer.
Izzy is very skilful, works really hard and never gives up.
Izzy is a great partner in defence and has great skills and pace.



Sophie
“I love BLU because not only do I get to play football every week but I can make new friendships along the way. The match day spirit between us is great! Since starting I have been able to improve my ball skills and gain confidence”

Sophie is really good in midfield and has amazing skills.
Sophie is great to play football with because she is an amazing mid field attacker with good skills. It is great when she gets the ball up the field for others to score.
Sophie is a skillful and versatile player- she can play anywhere.
Sophie has great footwork and knows when to pass at the right time.
Sophie is a really speedy and adept player she is good at engaging other people in football and is very good on the ball using some good skills.
Sophie has grown in confidence, strong on the ball and shows some nice skills.
Sophie is really quick on the ball and has good skills, she is a really good finisher and a good team player.
Sophie is really good at Midfielder and being able to get around players with her skills.
Sophie is pacey and good at getting back.

Under 15s news

As the season is coming to an end, all being well, the U15's this year look like finishing in 3rd slot, pending the final game of the season v Wootton. On balance it's been a good year, some good performances, some not so good. Some fantastic goals have been scored from Evie, Jess, and Macy and a steady central defensive partnership developed with Maren and Mia.

We desperately need a designated goalkeeper!!!, Anyone out there??.

But a lot of fun and some great development has been made by all players with regards technical skills, fitness, and positional play.

We made the GFA cup final - unfortunately lost - and came runners up in the Ashton 6-a-side tournament.

A good year! But we will be trying for better next year!

Well done, Girls!

(Thanks to Keith James)



Under 16s news

The photo shows the U16's after winning their last game of the season, 3-1 at home to Downend.

This capped off a really good season for the girls who finished 4th in a strong league. In some ways this feels like the end of an era for a group of girls that have been together over the last few years, but with exciting times ahead as we enter the world of open age adult football.

(Thanks to Ian McNally)

Development team news

One game to go in early May will bring the end of what has been a hugely successful season. We didn't win the league, neither did we win any of the cup competitions, but we will probably end up a very respectable 3rd in a very competitive and balanced womens senior league. From a coaching perspective it was hugely rewarding to see new friendships being built, trust and confidence on the pitch improved week on week and everyone enjoyed playing no matter what the final score was. Thankfully we won more than we lost, which was reward for the effort at training and on the pitch Sunday. Also worth a mention is the amount of coaches and opposition players who made a point of thanking the team for great games and playing in the right spirit (Focusing on the football and never dropping our standards).

For the players, the step up to senior womens football was taken in their stride and I am confident the whole

team will take away great memories and positive experiences. A huge well done to the whole squad from the coaching team.

We now move into a new era of BLUFC Senior womens football with planning already underway for next season to merge the upcoming U16 squad with those who are staying from the current Dev squad, but also hopefully bringing some of the current first team back in to make what will should be an amazing new senior team. Still lots to sort out, but please drop me a note if you need more info.

Finally, one last shout out to all the players who are off to University and other adventures. We wish you all the very best and hopefully we will see you back on the pitch in the near future.

Mixing it up With the U15 U16 and Dev



1st team news

It's a very sad day today as I drive home from our last game of the season – tears are in my eyes because I will miss everyone, but today's game was our last with me in charge of the team. After 12 years Janet and I will be calling it a day and letting someone else take the team forward.

It's been a challenging year with players finding it hard to go training and even turn up on match days - I can count on one hand how many players are committed to the team, so it's been a very stressful and frustrating season. We had some great times, winning leagues and cups from U11 to ladies' football and we had some really great players playing for us during our years.

On a good note....
The U16 team will have players old enough to step up to play in the ladies' league and some of the Dev team players will be leaving going to Uni, but hopefully the rest will be staying and with any players from the first team who want to play, they will all join together and make a very strong team. This team will play in the Gloucester Women's League and will soon be back playing in the top level again.

The club is in a healthy place and got a fantastic committee and chairman so things can only go upwards I wish all my players the best where ever they play next season.

Steve.

Head coach - new role

Just a quick note to say hello and provide a summary of the plans for next season. This new role is relatively light touch, but will hopefully provide a focal point and opportunity to pull together all the coaching talent, knowledge, top tips and ideas to ensure we are all supporting each other and pointing BLUFC coaching in the right direction.

Some thoughts already discussed include:

- 1. Welcome pack for new starters/helpers – Including top tips and links to key resources.
- 2. Knowledge share – What works, what doesn't
- 3. Development opportunities – Level 1, 2 and beyond
- 4. Support for training sessions – Senior players to help out at sessions, guest appearances etc.
- 5. How to get more ladies coaching and joining the sessions.
- 6. Goalkeeping coaching – specialist sessions and ongoing support.

It's a team effort so please feel free to get in touch with any thoughts, suggestions and feedback.

(Thanks to Andy "Chalky" White)

Top 5 Songs Selection

This time, Becca Ramsden, BLU Volunteer Coordinator and parent of Susie in the U10s and Georgie in the U12s, has selected her top songs to share with us.

(We welcome any player/coach/parent/committee member to send in their choice for future newsletters.)

- 1. **Mr. Jones by Counting Crows.**
One of my favourite bands, I've seen them live many times and just love this song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oqAU5VxPWs>
- 2. **Respect by Aretha Franklin.**
Aretha is such a soul legend and the song reminds me of watching Bridget Jones's Diary with my uni friends – happy memories. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FOUqQt3Kg0>
- 3. **A Design for Life by Manic Street Preachers.**
Another favourite band in the 90s - and love the opening line 'Libraries gave us power'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfEoVxy7VDQ>
- 4. **If I Had \$1,000,000 by Barenaked Ladies.**
The lyrics crack me up and the band are hilarious. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8zdNe_I3M8
- 5. **Fast Car by Tracy Chapman.**
Hard-hitting but such powerful lyrics and one I always turn up loud in the car. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIOAlaACuv4>



Bristol City Women

Bristol City Women are in the FA Championship and you can see the results and fixtures here.

<https://www.bcfco.uk/fixtures-results/city-women/202122-fa-championship/>



England Women (Lionesses)

The Lionesses next play against Belgium on Thurs 16th June at Wolves ground.

<https://www.Englandfootball.com/womens-senior-team/home>



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Thanks for reading – feel free to contact Rob Groves to offer future content or general comments on rob.Groves13@hotmail.co.uk or 07582 437972. All contributions welcome from parents, players and coaches.

Many thanks again to Les Abraham for the final newsletter presentation.

BLU Website
<http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/BLUFC>



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