



Annual Report 2016/17

Welsh Netball
Pêl Rwyd Cymru



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Chair Foreword

I am so proud to be the Chair of Welsh Netball, this resilient organisation capable of real change. This year has seen the organisation progress from a position of stability to one of active growth.

Our connectivity across the world of sport has visibly increased, demonstrated most notably by the Swansea University International Test Series v Silver Ferns in February. A huge undertaking indeed, but one that has placed netball firmly on the map and ensured that the voice of Welsh Netball is now heard globally as well as across Europe.

Welsh Netball's workforce remains active across the country with participation increasing across members, officials and coaches. Our dedicated family of volunteers continue to support netball on every level, allowing women and girls to participate from their very first steps onto court. We are very thankful for their time and endless efforts. Our family of sponsors also continues to grow as more and more partners recognise the impact and importance of women's sport. Their support and resources power our squads, improving performance and allowing our players more ways to engage with the wider sporting audience.

Many thanks to the Welsh Netball Board for their unwavering support. All volunteers, they give their time and effort willingly. Also to our staff, your commitment and resourcefulness has been clearly demonstrated this year and we thank you for always going the extra mile.

I will always be devoted to netball and I'm so pleased that so many people across Wales and the world are now involved. Netball is truly on the rise!



Catherine Lewis
Chair of Welsh Netball

Board Members:

- Vice Chair – Merle Hamilton
- Vice President – Sheila Cooksley
- Vice President – Wendy Pressdee
- Director – Jean Foster
- Director – Mike Halfpenny
- Director – Mel Hellerman
- Director – Lesley Riddell



CEO Report

During 2016, Welsh Netball experienced a year of stabilisation and development, with the focus on ensuring that the sport is being well positioned for the future.

The organisation has made significant progress over the last 12 months, it is difficult to believe that we weren't fully staffed until January 2017.

Whilst continuing to build the infrastructure within the organisation, work also started on reviewing and challenging existing working practices, programmes and processes. Whilst this has been started and significant improvement made, there is still much more to do to ensure the NGB is not just simply fit for purpose, but is delivering over and above expectation. This is a long journey but huge steps are being made to get the NGB to that point.

Positive change was reflected by the creation of a new vision: 'Grow the Game and Inspire Success' with 3 clear strategic goals that sit underneath.

1. Grow the Game.
2. Raise performance, Inspire Success.
3. Sustainability.

This strategic direction and clarity is another step towards stability and delivering successful outcomes. The operational plan for 2017 is now in place.

There are many successes to report over the last 12 months, here are a few of the highlights:

- Historic International 2-day test series Wales v New Zealand Silver Ferns at the Ice Arena Wales.
- 4-year contract secured for Celtic Dragons as 1 of 10 teams in the Vitality Netball Super League. New Celtic Dragons website launched, followed in January 2017 by the appointment of the first ever full time member of staff to manage and lead the Celtic Dragons Franchise.
- South Africa international test series (Wales U21s and Seniors) to ensure Commonwealth Games qualification, World Youth Cup experience and competing at the level we aspire to be as a nation.
- Sustained levels of governance.
- Increased membership by 16%.
- Following a national workforce audit, we increased opportunities in Q3 and Q4 in 2016 with 34 courses offered last year.



My personal highlight of the year is of course welcoming the New Zealand Silver Ferns to Wales for our Swansea International Test Series.

Another great moment for me was meeting the fantastic people involved with Sêr y Byd netball club in West Wales. The netball team represented Wales at the Special Olympics in 2016 and I was fortunate to meet them before they headed to the event. Following this, the team became the mascots for the Welsh squad at one of the international tests against New Zealand.

With all of this positive change in 2016 we were sad to receive the news of the passing of our President Wendy White. Wendy played such an important part in the fabric of netball in Wales and she touched so many lives across the netball community. We honoured Wendy by naming the trophy for the international test series with New Zealand after her. She is sorely missed by us all.

Special mentions need to go to Vicki Randall who won the BBC Wales Get Inspired Unsung Hero award 2016 for her incredible community efforts for growing netball in Torfaen, and to Alison Davies who umpired at the World University Netball Championships 2016 in Miami, Florida, and at the exciting Celtic Clash between the Scottish Thistles and Northern Ireland, held in Edinburgh last August. Alison is also set to Umpire at the Netball World Youth Cup In Botswana in 2017.

The sport is on a global upswing and so is netball in Wales we have proven this year that we can deliver world class events. Our partnerships are developing and I thank Playerlayer, Gilbert, Swansea University, Cardiff Metropolitan, University of South Wales, Torfaen Leisure Trust, Rondo, S4C, BBC, Netball New Zealand, Netball Europe and the International Netball Federation for being part of our evolution and supporting the changes and ambitions that we have, your support is very valued. These positive changes only happen with passionate and committed people, both paid and voluntary; thank you to each one of you that is making this journey interesting, exciting and possible. This really is just the start.



Ben Williams
Head of Community
Development

Community Development

Our newly formed Development Team has been in place since June 2016 following the full organisational re-structure at the beginning of the year.

Despite it being a transitional year we can report some significant outputs in terms of membership growth and workforce development.

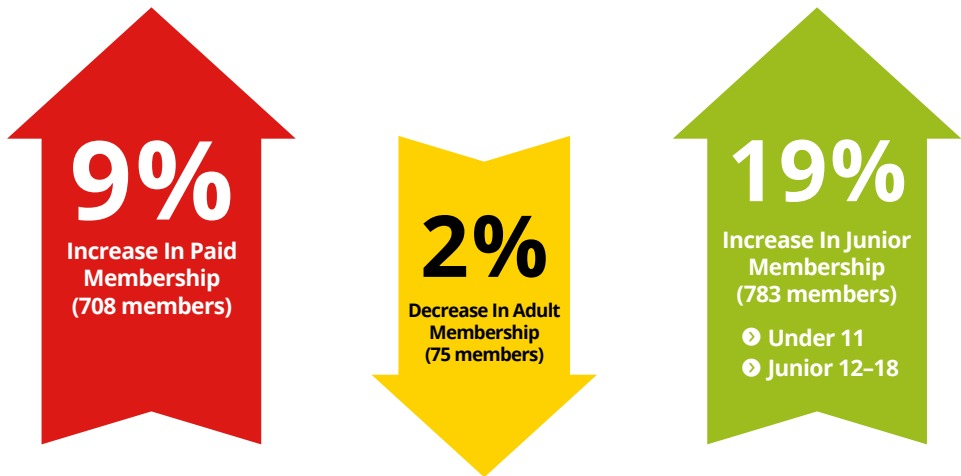
There has been a lot of work behind the scenes that will help us achieve our vision of 'Growing the Game' in the years to come. We have developed brand new courses for beginner coaches and umpires to enrich the 'Workforce' entering our sport.

The opportunities provided through our LA Hub programme also continues to increase. We would like to thank all of the fantastic volunteers across Wales who give up their time and contribute so much to the sport of netball.



Membership

Welsh Netball has seen an increase in overall membership during the 2015/16 season.



The increase in junior membership reflects the ongoing work of the Welsh Netball workforce, both paid and voluntary, in terms of enhancing existing and developing new opportunities for young people in the sport.

Figure 1: Welsh Netball KPIs for the period September 2015 – August 2016.

KPI	2014 / 15	2015 / 16	Difference as a %
	Actual	Actual	
Number of active coaches	2950	3168	+7%
Number of active officials	2379	2514	+6%
Number of affiliated clubs	190	208	+9%

Club Development

Supporting the development of our existing community club network is an integral part of our work.

The regional Netball Development Officers (NDO) will use data to assess the need and demand for community exit routes within each area. By working in partnership with key stakeholders, such as Local Authorities, we have also been able to develop new club based opportunities to cater for the high demand for netball in our communities.

As a result, 8 new clubs providing 11 new regular sessions have been developed in the period between September 2016 – March 2017. This has generated over 230 new members and over 60 additional participants in the sport.

Workforce Development

It is vitally important to ensure that netball in Wales has a skilled and passionate workforce to 'Grow the Game'.

Growing the workforce in terms of the quantity is also critical for success at all levels within the sport. Significant developments have taken place to ensure the netball workforce is diverse, 'fit for purpose' and available across all geographical areas.

Courses

34 workforce development courses were provided between April 2016 – March 2017. The courses offered were spread across the disciplines of coaching and officiating, and catered for both inexperienced and experienced coaches and officials. Both qualifications and CPD opportunities were provided to meet the needs of our growing and developing workforce.

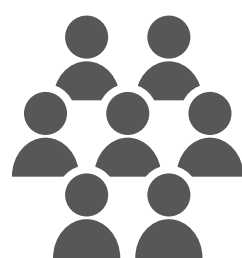
Coaching

Welsh Netball introduced the SLUK Leadership in Netball Award as the 'gateway' into netball coaching in September 2016. Alongside this delivery, Welsh Netball has been developing a new 'Netball Leaders' course that is due to launch in Summer 2017. The new course has been designed to enhance the learner experience, ensure our Leaders are 'fit for purpose' and feel confident to deliver netball activities in their schools and communities.

A number of coaching workshops were offered ahead of the 2016/17 season, with at least one workshop delivered in each Region. The 2-hour shooting workshops provided were successful in attracting new and existing coaches with 81 people attending. Further CPD opportunities are currently being developed and will be offered in addition to the more formalised qualifications.



21 coaching courses were offered between April 2016 – March 2017 with 354 learners achieving their award or qualification.



7 Leaders courses were delivered across Wales with a total of 131 candidates entering the coaching pathway at the entry point.



5 UKCC Level 1 courses and 4 UKCC Level 2 courses were offered with a total of 90 and 52 candidates qualifying respectively.

Workforce Development

Umpiring

Following the introduction of the new INF rules at the beginning of the 2016/17 season, Welsh Netball has been undertaking a review of the Umpiring Pathway in Wales and the associated umpiring courses that underpin it. This has led to a number of changes and developments including the new 'Intro to Umpiring' course that replaces the Q Award from April 2017, and an updated C Award Umpiring Course.

'New rules' resources were produced ahead of the new season to assist officials, league organisers and players in the transition. The new rules guide that was produced was used across the country in a number of workshops that were delivered by the league associations and were well received by the membership on the whole.

The number of officiating courses offered between April 2016 – March 2017 has been affected by the work undertaken across the umpiring pathway and related courses.

Tutor development opportunities have taken place for the C Award and Intro to Umpiring courses with 15 umpire tutors being upskilled. Our growing tutor workforce will increase our capacity to offer additional umpire development opportunities across all Regions.



13 umpiring courses were offered with 237 candidates accessing the awards.



11 Q Courses were run across Wales with a total of 202 candidates entering the umpiring pathway.



21 'C Award' umpires and 3 'B Award' umpires were fully qualified during the current period.

Course Development

Welsh Netball have been planning their workforce development calendar in 6-monthly cycles since September 2016. This provides the flexibility to shape our workforce development 'offer' to ensure it meets the needs of our membership and wider communities. Access to local opportunities across our suite of courses is key to ensuring that we can meet the specific workforce needs across all geographical areas of Wales. All entry level and Level 1 courses will be offered across each Region during every 6-month cycle as a minimum. Level 2 opportunities will also be provided in each Region at least once every 2 consecutive workforce cycles.

Case Studies

Central-South

The number of junior netball clubs in the Cardiff & Vale Junior League is disproportionate to the large number of adult clubs and teams that currently play within the Cardiff & District league. In order to increase the number of junior opportunities in the area, 2 new junior clubs were set up in the Cardiff this season. Dinas Juniors were successful in gaining a Community Chest grant to assist them with start-up costs and coach development. The club now has 21 members, 2 qualified UKCC Level 2 coaches and teams playing in the Junior League. Heath Angels have also set up a junior section this season and were successful in applying for Community Chest funding. As a result, the club has developed 2 coaches through their UKCC Level 1 qualifications and 1 coach through their UKCC Level 2. The club currently has 15 members and are continuing to grow their capacity to take on more members ahead of next season.

North

We have been working in partnership with BGC Wales (Boys' & Girls' Clubs of Wales) to offer netball opportunities in North Wales. Due to a lack of junior opportunities in the Denbighshire area, a satellite session has been developed to provide some community netball provision within the Local Authority. The sessions are delivered in partnership with the BGC Wales Project Officer and have attracted a group of regular participants. BGC Wales were successful in gaining Community Chest funding to support the set up and delivery of the sessions that are currently meeting the needs of the local Denbighshire community.

Mid & West

We have been working closely with Sport Pembrokeshire to identify areas of the borough that have a high demand for netball but few opportunities to participate in a community setting. Tenby was identified as an area of Pembrokeshire that would benefit from additional junior provision due to there not being a junior club in the town. Subsequently, Tenby Ladies Netball Club has adopted the session and have now developed a junior section of the club to sustain the long term future of the session. The club now has 25 regular participants in the junior session and are going to enter a team into the Pembrokeshire Junior League ahead of the 2017 / 18 season.

South-East

Caerphilly Juniors are a new U11 netball club in the South-East Region. The club were successful in gaining a Community Chest application and has currently attracted 15 new members. The club has also developed a new Level 1 and Level 2 coach and will be entering the South-East Junior League next season. Welsh Netball has organised a mini tournament in partnership with Sport Caerphilly to prepare them for competitive fixtures next season.

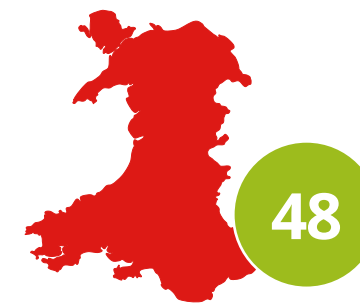
Pathway

LA Hubs

The aim of the Local Authority (LA) Hub programme is to provide a progressive and accessible pathway to maximise our young athletes' potential to be the best they can be.

Through training once a month we can ensure that we are developing and nurturing our talented netballers throughout Wales.

The LA Hub programme saw further expansion ahead of the 2016/17 season with additional opportunities being provided across regions and age groups.



48 'Hubs' are running across Wales, which is an increase of 6 (10%) compared to 2015/16.



21 coaching courses were offered between April 2016 – March 2017 with 354 learners achieving their award or qualification.

We have also seen a significant increase in the numbers of our LA Hub workforce with 15 additional coaches, umpires and team managers becoming involved. This represents an increase of 45% on the previous season. LA Hubs provide a valuable platform for coach development with a number of volunteers accessing development courses through the programme.

Safeguarding

We view safeguarding of young people in our sport with the utmost importance.

The organisation works in conjunction with the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and Sport Wales to ensure our safeguarding requirements as a Governing Body of Sport are met. Over 50 DBS checks were processed between April 2016 – March 2017, with Welsh Netball successfully transitioning to a new DBS checking service in October 2016. The WSA Background Screening Service is now utilised to carry out DBS checks on request by eligible persons involved in the sport. The current service is being provided free of charge by Welsh Netball, whilst volunteers are also benefitting from automatic enrolment onto the DBS Update Service outlining our commitment to high safeguarding standards within the sector.

Competitions

2015 – 16 Season

U15 National Clubs

23 April 2016 | Bangor

Congratulations to the Winners
– Mumbles Treforus Netball Club and
the runners-up Cwmbran Netball Club.

Senior Inter Arena

16 April 2016 | Swansea

Congratulations to Glamorgan Valleys
Inter Area Squad – winners of the
2016 Division 1 Senior Inter Area
Championships, and runners-up
South East. Congratulations to
North West Wales – winners
of division 2 with Afan Nedd
Tawe B team coming runners-up.

U11 Junior National Clubs

7 May 2016 | Cardiff

Congratulations to champions
Deeside Dots and runners-up
CTK from Cardiff.

U13 Open Clubs

8 May 2016 | Cardiff

This year's champions were Eastside Junior
NC, with Llantrisant NC as runners-up.

National Primary Schools Final

19 May 2016 | Cardiff

Tŷ Newydd Primary School, Caerphilly,
were crowned 2016 champions.

Performance Training Centre Tournament

11 June 2016 | Bangor

Congratulations to Afan Nedd Tawe
who stole the title with a total of 30 points.
Glamorgan Valleys came in a close second
and North-East Wales finished third.

Development Training Centre Tournament

2 July 2016 | Cardiff

Congratulations to North East
Wales A team – winners of Pool A.
Congratulations also goes to Pool B
champions Cardiff and Vale team B.

2016 – 17 Season

U17 Open Clubs

26 November 2016 | Cardiff

A big thank you to all fourteen teams who
took part in the Under 17 Open Clubs. CTK
and Treforus 1 were neck-and-neck during
the nail-biting final match, with a score of
15-15 at full time. Treforus 1 stole the victory
with 3 goals difference during extra time.

U16 A&B Inter Area

21 January 2017 | Merthyr

The winners of the A section were
Afan Nedd Tawe, runners-up were
Glamorgan Valleys.

U14 A&B Inter Area

29 January 2017 | Bangor

The winners of section A were Cardiff
& The Vale, runners-up were Glamorgan
Valleys. The winners of section B
were Cardiff & The Vale, runners-up
were Glamorgan Valleys.

U18 Inter Area

12 February 2017 | Swansea

Afan Nedd Tawe became this year's
champions, whilst the team from the
Glamorgan Valleys came runners-up.

Ann Smart Competition

25 March 2017 | Ebbw Vale

Llongyfarchiadau to Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr
who earned first place at the Ann Smart
Trophy tournament.

President's Cup

25 March 2017 | Ebbw Vale

Huge congratulations to Haberdashers
Monmouth School for Girls – winners
of the Presidents Cup competition.





Wendy B White BEM Welsh Netball President 1940–2016

Wendy had been at the heart of netball in Wales for over five decades.

A former international player herself, Wendy had seven caps to her name in position as Wing Defence and she had the honour of playing in the first ever Netball World Championships, which were held in Eastbourne, England in 1963.

In later years, she was key in the development of Welsh Netball's Bench Officials. This was a tight group of dedicated people who worked in unison under her guidance. Their education and progress is a testimony to her leadership.

As an international Coach, her credits include the Welsh Open (1968-1980), Wales U21 (1969-1971 and 1980-1987) and the Welsh Schools (1969-1971) teams. Over many years, she was a Welsh Selector at various age groups. Wendy was awarded the BANC/Dextrosol Welsh Coach of the Year in 1985, as well as the BANC/Dextrosol UK Coach of the Year for Women's Team Sports in 1986. Part of the prize for the 1986 Coach of the Year award was a trip to Australia. This visit was so enjoyable that in 1987 she decided to move there to work. Wendy worked for the All Australia Netball Association at first, then for the Queensland Netball Association. These experiences influenced her in how she thought the game should be played and umpired.



On her return home in 1991, she became the first Technical Director for Welsh Netball. Wendy's contribution to Welsh Netball was invaluable. As a volunteer, she held various roles including, Vice-President, Hon Chairman, General Secretary, Umpiring Secretary, Coaching Secretary.

Her passion and vast knowledge and understanding of netball in Wales was remarkable; she was often called upon by both past and current staff for counsel on various matters. The netball community in Wales was lucky to have Wendy White amongst them, playing a crucial role in promoting the sport. No doubt one of Wendy's biggest honours was receiving her BEM in the New Years Honours List in 2012. The honour was awarded in recognition of her services to netball.

Wendy White was certainly an inspiration not only to those of us within the netball community, but to women and girls across all sports in Wales. Wendy gave all her energy and time into ensuring the sport thrived wherever she was.



Performance

It's been a time of change and growth within the performance team with my new appointment in January 2017 as Head of Performance and the role change of Trish Wilcox to Head Coach of Wales and the Celtic Dragons.

It's been an extremely exciting and fast paced first few months with some amazing opportunities for all of our performance teams. There are so many highlights already, with the Silver Ferns coming to Cardiff at the Ice Arena Wales, the U17 squad achieving silver at Netball Europe and preparations for the U21 Netball World Youth Cup in Botswana.



Rosie Pretorius
Head of Performance



Wales Seniors

Netball Europe Championships

13–15th May 2016 | England

Wales travelled to Northumbria University for the annual Netball Europe Competition. Wales finished in second place with a silver medal.

Seniors Netball Europe Scores:

Wales 49	36 Scotland
Wales 54	38 NI
Wales 42	82 England

Wales senior team for NE:

Sara Bell, Fern Davies, Suzy Drane – Captain, Bethan Dyke, Kyra Jones, Chelsea Lewis, Sarah Llewellyn, Kelly Morgan, Rebecca Oatley, Stephanie Perry, Georgia Rowe and Amanda Varey.

Head Coach – Trish Wilcox, Assistant Coach – Mel Tuckwell,
Team Manager – Donna Crossman, Physio – David Lee,
Performance Analyst – Alessandro Foglino, Psychologist – Tom Williams.

South Africa Tour

17–19th June 2016 | Durban International Convention Centre

Wales travelled to Durban, South Africa for a 3 match test series. It was great exposure for the seniors to play against a highly-ranked country in an overseas tour.

In the final test, Wales took the lead for most of the first half of the game with a competitive and confident start. However, the hosts fought back and finished the series with a third win. Head Coach Trish Wilcox said: “This was a fantastic experience for the players, I am extremely proud of the progress we have made throughout this three-test series.”

Scores:

Wales 43	63 SA
Wales 45	64 SA
Wales 50	64 SA

Wales senior team to SA:

Suzy Drane – Captain, Sara Bell, Fern Davies, Bethan Dyke, Kyra Jones, Chelsea Lewis, Sarah Llewellyn, Kelly Morgan, Steph Williams, Georgia Rowe, Amanda Varey, Clare Jones and Lateisha Kidner.

Head Coach – Trish Wilcox, Assistant Coach – Mel Tuckwell,
Team Manager – Donna Crossman, Physio – David Lee,
Performance Analyst – Gemma Davies.

The Swansea University International Test Series

7th and 8th February 2017 | Ice Arena Cardiff

Welsh Netball were proudly sponsored by Swansea University for the test series which marked twenty years since the Silver Ferns last visited Wales to play the home team. Wales were met with a formidable Silver Ferns squad who were on top form having come straight from the last leg of the Quad Series in England.

Wales halved the score difference in just 24 hours with a much-improved performance in the second test. Wales equalled the best ever recorded score against the Silver Ferns in Welsh Netball history with a 33 goal difference. Wales’ squad set the record in 1979.

Scores:

Wales 27	92 NZ
Wales 39	72 NZ

Wales senior team to face NZ:

Suzy Drane – Captain, Kelly Morgan – Vice Captain, Sara Bell, Fern Davies, Bethan Dyke, Kyra Jones, Chelsea Lewis, Chloe James, Nia Jones, Georgia Rowe, Amanda Varey and Lateisha Kidner.

Head Coach – Trish Wilcox, Assistant Coach – Mel Tuckwell,
Team Manager – Donna Crossman, Physio – Clare Briers,
Performance Analyst – Gemma Davies, Psychologist – Tom Williams.



Wales U21

South Africa Tour

17–19th June 2016 | Durban International Convention Centre

The U21 tour to South Africa was the first time Wales had ever taken an U21 squad along with the senior team overseas which was great preparation for the NWYC in Botswana.

Congratulations to Anna Brindley, Carys Allen, Lowri Jenkins, Lowri Norkett, Celyn Emanuel and Emma Roberts who received their first Wales under 21 caps at the South Africa test series.

Wales U21 team to SA:

Megan Powell – Captain , Carys Allen, Lowri Jenkins, Anna Brindley, Emily Edwards, Celyn Emanuel, Lydia Hitchings, Chloe James, Emma Roberts, Lowri Norkett and Leanne Thomas.

Head Coach – Louisa Daniell, Assistant Coach – Sarah Lewis, Team Manager – Lavinia Baker, Physio – Lucy Warren.



U21 Netball Europe

7th–9th October 2016 | Cardiff

With a target of finishing 1st at Netball Europe, Wales finished in third place at the Championships, but were still able to secure qualification for the next World Youth Cup in Botswana, July 2017.

Scores:

Wales 41	61 Scotland
Wales 56	33 N.Ireland
Wales 18	88 England



Wales U21 team for NE:

Fern Davies – Captain, Sarah Llewelyn – Vice Captain, Chloe Dyke, Lydia Hitchings, Chloe James, Lowri Jenkins, Bethan Johnson, Bethan Moore, Megan Powell, Leila Thomas, Miquie Walker-Jones and Eve Wright.

Interim Head Coach – Mel Tuckwell, Assistant Coach – Jamilla Abbott, Assistant Coach – Sarah Lewis, Team Manager – Lavinia Baker, Physio – Lucy Warren.

Congratulations to Chloe Dyke, Bethan Johnson, Miquie Walker-Jones, Bethan Moore, Leila Thomas and Eve Wright who received their first Wales U21 caps at Netball Europe.

With the introduction of a new Wales U21 Head Coach, an improved programme was put in place to give the U21 squad the best possible preparations for Netball Europe in May and the NWYC in July.

Wales have been drawn into Pool D, and will therefore face England, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada.

Natalie Peperell was appointed the new U21 Head Coach in December 2016. As a former Head Coach of Bath University's NPL team and Performance Pathway Coach with England Netball, Natalie brings a wealth of experience and an impressive skillset to the U21 Head Coach role. Natalie was also Head Coach of Swiss Netball's U17 squad, and responsible for leading the side to their first ever Netball Europe Gold Medal in the development section. With a busy year ahead of Wales U21, Natalie will help prepare the players for the Netball Europe Youth Championships in May 2017. They will then participate in the Netball World Youth Cup in Botswana in July 2017.

Wales U17

U17 Netball Europe

3rd–5th March 2017 | Belfast, Northern Ireland



Wales' U17 squad had a successful campaign at the Netball Europe U17 Championships 2017, winning a silver medal position ahead of Scotland and hosts Northern Ireland. Wales achieved the original target of coming second with two competitive matches against Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Wales U17 centre court player Elysse Haywood from Cardiff, also received the great honour of winning Player of the Championship.

The Wales U17 squad played a pre-Championship warm-up match prior

to a recent Celtic Dragons Superleague game against Chester U16. The squad's Head Coach Bev Powell described this match as invaluable to the squad in their preparations:

"The 'big match' conditions were perfect preparation as the players experienced the pre-match nerves they undoubtedly will have prior to their first match against Scotland."

Scores:

Wales 59	59 Scotland
Wales 37	67 England
Wales 46	37 N.Ireland

Congratulations to Emily Davies, Beca Hughes, Ellie Begley, Gwenno Davies (Captain), Sapphira Fisher, Megan Gareh, Caris Morgan, and Nikita Harris for gaining their first Wales U17 caps.

The U17s are now working towards an exciting opportunity as an invitational team at England Netball's Performance competition tournament in Nottingham in August 2017.

Wales U17 team for NE:

Gwenno Davies – Captain, Milly Watts – Vice Captain, Ellie Begley, Emily Davies, Rhian Evans, Sapphira Fisher, Megan Gareh, Nikita Harris, Elysse Hayward, Beca Hughes, Macey Lane and Caris Morgan.

Head Coach – Bev Powell, Assistant Coach – Rhian Davies, Team Manager – Sharon Walters, Physio – Wendy Casterton.

U17 and U21 Talent Squads

U17 and U21 Talent Squads were introduced to add depth to the performance pathway and create a national training and development environment for talented players with the potential to represent National squads.

With a new training programme, the squads were able to mimic the National squads with high intensity and quality training sessions.

The success of the new programme was evident with the progressions of Celyn Emanuel, Emily Edwards, Rachael Evans, Eleri Michaels and Hari Truman moving up to the U21 Long Squad.

PTCs and DTCs

The 8 regional DTCs and PTCs have up to 25 of the top players in that region training once a month to develop key skills and tactical play to prepare them for the next stage in the performance pathway.

The training centres also provide development opportunities for our coaches and officials who are crucial in the running of the performance programmes.

This year, match play was introduced in the form of curtain raiser games for the Celtic Dragons home fixtures. This was a great opportunity to showcase regional talent and for players and management to have a taste of a crowd and big arena.



Umpire Report

Elite Umpires

Huge congratulations to Welsh umpire Alison Davies, who has been appointed by the International Netball Federation (INF) to Umpire at the upcoming Netball World Youth Cup 2017.

The Youth Cup will be held in Gaborone, Botswana on 8th to 17th of July this year. P.E. Teacher Alison Davies of Fforestfach says she feels “honoured to be appointed for this prestigious event”, and is “over the moon.” Alison will join seven other Umpires from across the world on the International Talent Identified Umpire (ITID) list. Alison has also umpired at two international events, and has been selected as a member of the Superleague Umpire Pool. In summer 2016, her first tournament was the World University Netball Championships in Miami, Florida. The second event was at the exciting Celtic Clash between the Scottish Thistles and Northern Ireland, held in Edinburgh in August.



Talent Identified Umpires

There were fantastic umpiring opportunities afforded by the 3 Celtic Dragons warm-up games – these are a great step up from league netball and provide excellent preparation for Netball Europe, the Superleague and Wales U21 games.

We continued our excellent representation at Netball Europe events with umpiring at the U17s Netball Europe Championship in Northern Ireland in March with very positive feedback assessments. Our umpires were invited to the 2016/17 National Schools Finals held at Stanborough School, Welwyn Garden City on the 18th of March. As a result of good performance, they were invited to National play offs on the weekend of the 6th and 7th May as a further umpire development opportunity.

There are many such umpiring events being entered into the Performance Calendar to maximise elite umpire development opportunities.

Several umpires progressed along the Umpire Pathway with the addition of two newly qualified B award umpires.

This year saw the introduction of the 2016 INF New Rules with many areas across Wales running update workshops to upskill their umpires.

Welsh Netball Umpire Assessor Jan Richards supported umpires at our events such as the U18 competition, the Ann Smart Trophy and the Presidents Cup, providing the opportunity to look at new, young umpires. The future looks bright.

The Performance Umpire pathway is being reviewed by the Head of Performance following discussions with the Welsh Netball Umpire Assessor and Chair of the Performance Panel.



The Swansea University International Test Series: Wales v Silver Ferns

February 2017 saw Welsh Netball take on one of their biggest challenges in hosting the Swansea International Test Series – Wales v New Zealand Silver Ferns.



The two teams last faced each other in Wales over 20 years ago so the opportunity to host such an historic event was one that could not be passed up.

Initially the test series was set to be held in Sport Wales National Centre but after the tickets were released for a membership pre-sale, both games sold out in less than 48 hours with a mounting waiting list for tickets. Realising the demand for the test series was extremely high, the Welsh Netball team began to investigate the possibility of moving to a larger venue.

Close links with Cardiff Devils Ice Hockey

led to the selection of Ice Arena Wales, a nearby venue with a 3000 capacity and the infrastructure that was now clearly needed. Ably assisted by Neon Arena, the team behind Glasgow 2014, plans were made to cover the ice and lay a Junkers Portable floor. For the first time in the UK, an ice rink was to be turned into a netball court for International play.

Closely supported by Sport Wales and thanks to a close working relationship with Netball New Zealand, February 7th and 8th 2017 marked the largest games ever hosted by Welsh Netball.

Partnership

Welsh Netball recognised the need for strong partnerships to assist in their undertaking and as such the games became known as the Swansea University International Test Series. Aware of the incredible uplift in the progress of the game and the importance of women's sport in Wales, Swansea University were key in supporting the delivery of the event. Many businesses took the opportunity to become a part of the netball sponsor family by advertising their companies or providing their services and expertise. Keen to celebrate the momentous occasion, focus was placed on delivering supporting events and activity around the games to give guests different ways to be involved. Invited guests and partners enjoyed VIP Hospitality while visiting dignitaries from INF and local Assembly Members experienced netball on a truly ground-breaking scale.

Communication and Coverage

Communication was key in ensuring that as many people as possible were made aware of this historic event. Coverage appeared on BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru, BBC Wales Today, S4C's magazine, sport and news programmes and ITV Wales news as a result. There was a real buzz across social media and once the news was made public, Welsh Netball collaborated with the Silver Ferns to create engaging content for our social media platforms. A film of Silver Ferns players Katrina Grant and Shannon Francois attempting to learn Welsh for the occasion proved particularly popular on the social sphere. The twenty-year anniversary since the Ferns visited Wales was also marked by video interviews with former Wales squad members from 1997.



Behind the scenes, we worked with local company Hello Starling to secure strong eye-catching branding to use throughout the whole campaign. The simple yet effective black and red contrast was recognisable across our social media platforms and across various event branding. As the spotlight was on Welsh Netball, we wanted to showcase our netball community – we worked with Yoke Creative to film and produce three short films of three different areas of Wales: Wrexham, Pontypridd, Llanelli. Thank you to Misfits Netball Club, Top Tots and Sêr Y Byd for sharing your stories of how netball has impacted positively on your lives. A highlight of the event was a film produced by production company Rondo to be used on the large screens within the Ice Arena and played before the Wales team made their entrance. The film contributed to the electric atmosphere of the event, and was well received by both the crowd and the squad before a live performance of both anthems.

Broadcasting was the largest ever seen for netball in Wales, with viewing figures across the platform exceeding all expectation. Here are some figures from BBC Wales Sport's broadcasting:

- Facebook Reach: 2.88 million.
- Facebook video views: 390,956.
- Online views: 26,880.
- iPlayer views: 7,546.



Community



The Silver Ferns were welcomed to IAW to be greeted by Welsh Netball, Visit Wales and a choir from Ysgol Cwmbran, singing traditional Welsh hymns. The Silver Ferns squad returned the gesture and performed a traditional song before taking a whistle-stop tour of Cardiff.

Unprecedented access to the Silver Ferns gave the Development Team the opportunity to offer “money can’t buy” workshops. Coaches from across Wales came together to watch the Silver Ferns’ coaches in action on the day of the first test match. Over 45 volunteer coaches observed the session where the Silver Ferns players ran through their pre-game routines. There was also a Q & A session where our Welsh coaches could gain insight into the approaches and techniques Silver Ferns coaches adopt to make their players amongst the best in the world.

On the day of the second test, pupils from 4 lucky schools (Pontypridd High School, Stanwell School, Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera & Pencoed Comprehensive) met some of their netball idols at the Ice Arena Wales. The pupils experienced an ‘all access’ tour of the arena followed by the opportunity to take part in some netball drills on the International court. The Silver Ferns players then did a Q&A with the secondary school pupils, inspiring the next generation and demonstrating the tangible effects such an event can have on grass roots netball.



The sporting community also offered their support with expertise lent from Sport Wales, WSA, Canoe Wales and many more to help deliver such a large scale venture. Attendees on the nights came from every realm of sport, truly bringing together the sporting community on a wider field.

Performance



After so many years, Wales relished the opportunity to play the 2nd ranked team in the world. The tests provided a valuable benchmarking opportunity for Wales’ Commonwealth Games preparations. The formidable Silver Ferns showcased their world class standards, but after just 24 hours, Wales were able to implement key learnings to halve the deficit in the second test. This led to the squad equalling the best ever score line achieved by Wales.

Head Coach Trish Wilcox said of the experience: “The test matches provided us with an amazing opportunity to play in front of the biggest crowd to ever see an international series in Wales. It was so pleasing to see such a significant improvement in performance, particularly when playing back to back games over 2 days, and to achieve the best ever goal differential against a New Zealand team was the icing on the cake.”

Game Day

Keen to make best use of such a ground-breaking venue, the team focused on delivering a world-class set of events to attract not just netball fans but also those new to the game.

Merchandise and refreshment stands were hugely popular and interactive half-time entertainment was added to the line-up, making each test a hugely entertaining evening. A VIP lounge and hospitality areas were created to host partners, politicians, and influential figures from the sporting world and beyond, all keen to witness these historic games.



Welsh Netball were keen that the trophy for the Swansea International Test Series be reflective of the growth of the sport over the years. With that in mind, the trophy was named in memory of the late Wendy White, a true stalwart of the game and a fantastic figurehead for netball’s progress.

As always, the success of the tests depended hugely on netball’s dedicated band of volunteers. They turned out in force from across Wales to be part of such an historic event. Our volunteers remained a key and integral part of the success of the two evenings.

Looking back on the event, Welsh Netball CEO Sarah Jones said:

“This test series was historic in the first instance just by bringing the Silver Ferns to Cardiff for the first time in 20 years. By moving the venue, we brought netball to a whole new audience that may not otherwise have been able to experience this momentous occasion. This platform allowed Welsh Netball to inspire the next generation of elite players, but more importantly to inspire girls and women everywhere to play netball in their communities for fun, health and social benefits. Key for us was connecting elite to community – offering a unique experience to get “up close and personal” with the Wales and New Zealand players. Moving to such a large venue was a risk but I’m so glad we took the opportunity to grow the game and inspire success.”

With many thanks to our family of partners:

Swansea University, Sport Wales, NPTC Group, Visit Wales, Gilbert, PlayerLayer, Dragon Signs, Gallery Loft Conversions, Spiros Catering, WRU, California Prunes, Fyffes and Welsh Cycling.

Mascots

Sêr Y Byd, Rhondda Netball, Cil Y Coed and Penarth All Stars.

Ball Girls

Pontypridd Netball and Rhydal Penros.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in bringing these historic games to Wales.





Celtic Dragons

Performance

Celtic Dragons secured a four-year contract to participate in England Netball's Vitality Netball Superleague.

Starting from the 2016/17 season, this landmark deal allows the franchise more stability and consistency as they continue their progress within the Superleague.

For the first time, 10 teams were confirmed to make up the 2016 VNSL. Celtic Dragons named a squad of twelve and confirmed international imports as Kalifa McCollin from Trinidad and Tobago and New Zealander, Stacey Peeters from Southern Steel.

In the run up to the season opener, Celtic Dragons competed in the annual Mike Greenwood tournament in Manchester and also played three pre-season training matches against Manchester Thunder, Team Bath and Severn Stars. All franchises came together to play their second-round games at 'Super Ten', held in the Birmingham NEC Arena on Saturday February 25th, 2017 in front of 6500 spectators. A difficult defeat at the hands of new franchise Sirens led to weeks on the road and victory just out of reach for the subsequent games. As the Celtic Dragons returned home for a run of games they secured their first win of the season in an electrifying televised game against Sirens. Scorelines have been very close and performance has steadily become more competitive with a strong focus on player development. This is positive news for a very young Dragons squad who are showing real potential for the future.



Community Engagement

2016/17 saw the players spending more time out in the regions carrying out masterclasses, camps and appearances and increasing their engagement with fans and members.

Fan Zones were launched and the squad travelled to Neath Port Talbot College, Cwmbran, Deeside and Ebbw Vale meeting and engaging with hundreds of young players across Wales. Celtic Dragons continue to provide excellent role models for girls and women across the country working with schools, universities, and businesses where they deliver coaching, carry out speaking engagements and offer advice and expertise to players and clubs in the community. This is a fundamental part of being a Celtic Dragon. Community engagement is and will continue to be a key focus in alignment with Welsh Netball's vision to Grow the Game and Inspire Success.

The Green Army fans continued to turn out and show their support with many travelling to away games. Fans of the franchise squad are still regarded as the most vocal and loyal in the league with demand for weekend games as strong as ever. Social media engagement has been a highlight this season with followers increasing by around a thousand on both Twitter and Instagram.



Commercial Support

The off-court management team worked on procuring and retaining some key partners to allow the players to focus on their performance. Players have begun to benefit from support offered by our sponsors and partner activity has proved very popular with players delivering coaching sessions and appearing at partner events.

Many thanks to all our partners this season:

PlayerLayer, Gilbert, Torfaen Leisure Trust, USW Sport, Cardiff Metropolitan University, MSC and Ace Orthotix.

Programme Sponsors:

Mark Baker, Castell Howell, Carter Lauren, Pure Kitchen.

Player Mascots:

Llantrisant Netball, Morganite Dragons, Mini Merlins, Sara and Elen Govier, Gwenfo Primary School, Pembrokeshire Junior League, Penarth All Stars, Aberavon Celtics.

Ball Girls:

Pontypridd Netball, Queen Elizabeth High, Gilfach Netball, Eastside Netball, Cardiff University Development Centre, Cwmrhydyceirw Primary School, Gwenfo Primary School, Ogwr Netball, Penarth All Stars.

Huge thanks to our umpires, bench officials, stewards and volunteers for your time, support and dedication.

The biggest thanks as always to our Green Army fans this season who have been the eighth player for Celtic Dragons, creating an electrifying atmosphere at our home games.

Celtic Dragons Management Team

Catherine Marin – Commercial and Operations Manager, Jean Foster – Franchise Director, Trish Wilcox – Head Coach, Mel Tuckwell – Assistant Coach, Sarah Roberts – Team Manager, Donna Crossman – Team Manager, Lavinia Baker – Team Manager, Clare Briers – Physiotherapist, Tom Williams – Psychology Support

Celtic Dragons Final 15

Suzy Drane – Captain, Kelly Morgan – Vice Captain, Kyra Jones, Bethan Dyke, Sara Bell, Lois Rideout, Kalifa McCollin, Stacey Peeters, Fern Davies, Leila Thomas, Lydia Hitchings, Eleanor Roberts.

Celtic Dragons Training Partners

Clare Jones, Chloe James, Megan Powell and Lowri Jenkins.

Match Day packages were popular again this season along with new lines of merchandise which will be expanded moving forwards.



Communications

A new role was introduced to the Welsh Netball family this year – Communications and Member Engagement Officer.

This is a positive step change for the organisation, to ensure communication is integral to the way the organisation works and to help bring the vision ‘Grow the Game and Inspire Success’ to life.

Communications are key in supporting the Governing Body to grow the game and inspire success – by promoting our achievements, our records, and the passionate and colourful netball community at its heart.

Captivating content has been integral to our communications in 2016/17. It has been fantastic to hear about and to be able to demonstrate how netball can impact people’s lives – including social life, career, relationships, as well as one’s physical and mental health. It’s great to see local coverage of these stories, thus raising the profile of our sport and its multiple benefits. The aim for the next year is to work even more closely with the netball family, so that members can be engaged with and to continue to secure the media coverage that the sport deserves and so desperately needs.

As well as working closely with both the community development and performance branches of the organisation, the focus has been on developing our rapport with national and regional media; developing the Welsh Netball brand for a more recognisable image; and establishing a much clearer approach to our social media and digital platforms.

The results have been a rapid growth in social media, higher quality and quantity of media coverage, more engagement with brands and potential sponsors, and most importantly – our members have been better informed than previously.



Social media

Our social media platforms have boomed over the last twelve months. We have seen a remarkable growth in followers and engagement figures and we are seeing these figures grow week-on-week.

Our Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram platforms give our members more channels on which to communicate their news and stories. We have engaged with regional and national media organisations, and most importantly our members using several different methods including video clips, interviews, press articles, and photos.

We have also increased our engagement with sponsors and stakeholders. Our partnerships are very important and help the organisation in reaching our goals. We are proud to publicise those who continue to support us throughout our journey.

Platform	May 2016	May 2017
WN Twitter	5844	7925
WN Facebook	1284	2614
WN Instagram	104	1677
CD Twitter	5325	6342
CD Instagram	905	1567

Press coverage

Welsh Netball has seen significant levels of media coverage this year. Members of our national teams have appeared on S4C, ITV Wales and BBC Wales programmes, as well as being interviewed live on BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. At a community level, members of Welsh Netball have featured on BBC Get Inspired, S4C and BBC Wales. Highlights from Celtic Dragons’ first match in February 2017 were also broadcast on S4C’s Clwb 2 programme.

The Swansea University International Test Series: Wales v Silver Ferns

(over 14 day period)



Twitter page
impressions:
363.8k.



Twitter
audience increase:
1.9k new followers
(139 on average per day).



Facebook
audience increase:
(Feb to March):
2087 to 2428.



Increase in
Instagram followers
(Feb to March):
964 to 1418.



18,429 impressions
received by most
successful tweet.



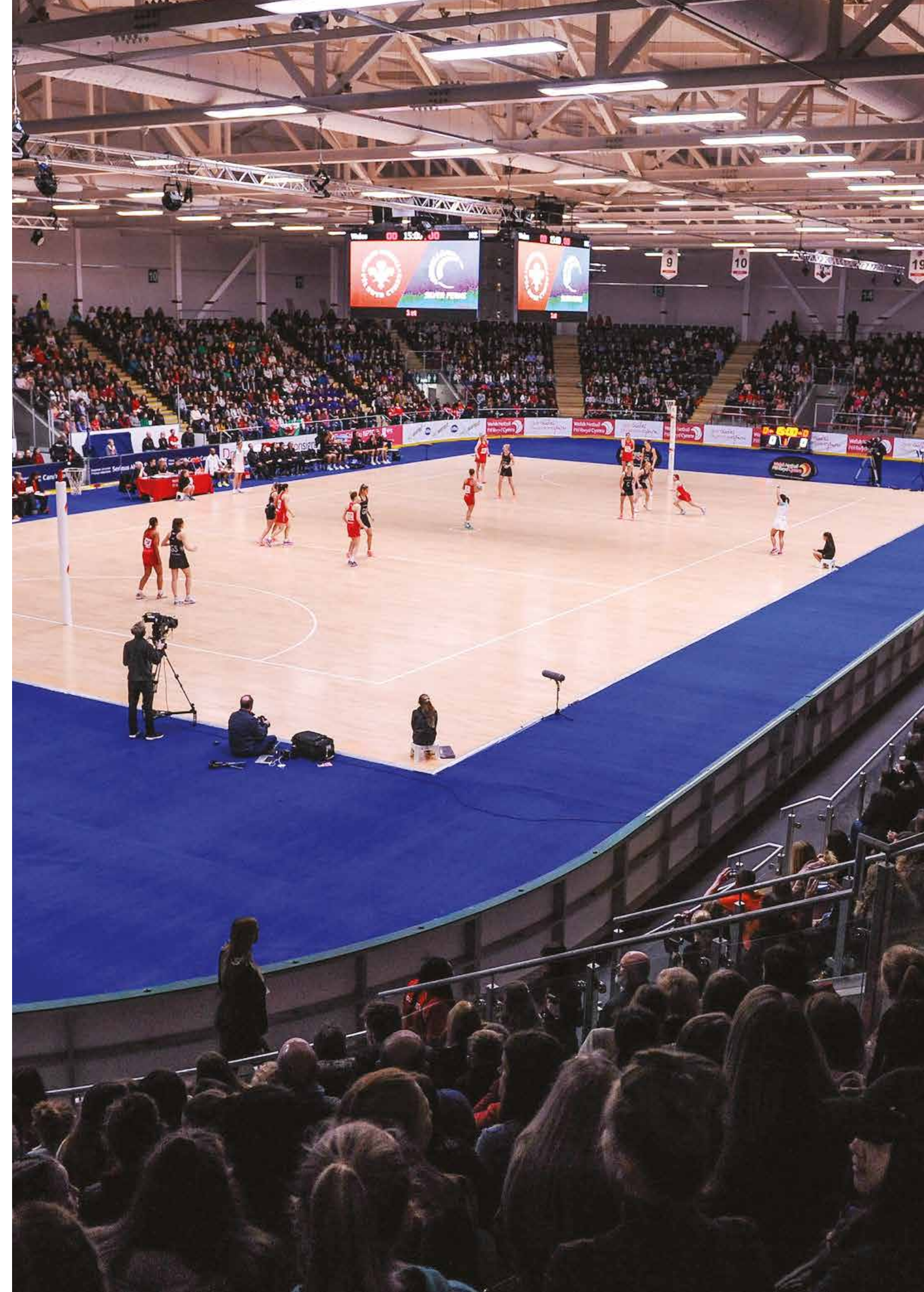
312 likes received
by most successful
Instagram post.

➤ Broadcasting was the largest ever seen for netball in Wales with viewing figures across the platform exceeding all expectations.

- Facebook Reach: 2.88 million.
- Facebook Video Views: 390,956.
- Online Views: 26,880.
- iPlayer Views: 7,546.

Media coverage:

S4C interviews on Newyddion 9, feature on S4C's Heno, BBC Radio Wales news bulletins and interviews, Swansea Bay TV, BBC Wales Sport blog by Bethan Dyke, BBC Wales Sport feature, BBC Wales Sport website live stream, BBC Wales Sport Facebook live stream, BBC iPlayer live stream and catch up, articles on Dai Sport website and the Cardiffian Times with support from I Loves the 'Diff.





www.welshnetball.com