

Bristol Ladies Union FC Newsletter

OCTOBER 2020



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Chairman's Piece:

To all players, parents and volunteers,

After such a disappointing end to last season, at last we're back. And how! Overflowing squads of enthusiastic girls and young women, donning the shiny new kit for Bristol Ladies from U10s all the way through the Bristol Girls League and into the lofty heights of the South West Women's League. I've really enjoyed watching the most junior part of the club on the 7 a side pitch at Canford Park, whilst also being part of the coaching of the Development Squad, with many of them playing their first games in adult women's football. I remember coaching those players at U10s, and to see how they have developed as players, in terms of skill, speed and strength, and as young women in their positive maturity, has been a great joy for me personally. I hope that many of those currently playing down at Canford on a Sunday morning will end up on the full size 3G pitch playing in the FA Cup, as our First Team did last week!

We have a couple of important initiatives as a club this season, which I wanted to highlight here; there is more detail inside this newsletter. The first is that we would very much like more female participation in the club's coaching set up. We realise that there may not be many women who are at the right age to coach who have grown up playing football, which may put you off, but there are plenty who are enthusiastic athletes who know how to conduct a warm up or fitness session. If you want to be part of this wonderful club and take an active role in your daughter's development as a sportswoman, please do speak to her coach or any member of the committee. You will be welcomed with open arms, and the same goes for young women who perhaps need to demonstrate some volunteering on their CVs. If you want to go on to take a football qualification then the club will support that.

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The second initiative is our pledge to recycle all our old kit, and to that end we have decided to use Kit Aid <https://kitaid.net/>, a charity set up to send used kit to Africa. It has been in operation for over 20 years and has donated more than 600,000 pieces of kit in more than 55 countries. Inside this newsletter you will find more information, but please do take the chance to dig out any old kit (not just BLUFC) to donate to this worthy cause. Thank you.

And finally, a big thank you to all my committee and all the coaches who have worked so hard to bring back football this season. It has not been easy, and I expect there may be more hurdles to overcome, but we're back!

Justin

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



U12s away to Portishead on a sunny day!

Under 12s news

So a new season has begun and the U12s are buzzing being back after the long break. Due to Covid, we actually managed to have a good pre-season, so are definitely in good shape. It is also very exciting as we embark on our first season at 9v9 and the girls are absolutely ready for the challenges ahead.

The squad still numbers 15 with 3 new girls joining this year so welcome to Flo, Sophie and Estelle. All great additions to the team and we're excited to see how they get on in their first season with BLU. We also have another 8 girls training with us and a further 5 girls on a waiting list, so girls' football continues to be very popular.

(Thanks to Les Abraham)

Under 13s news

Fantastic to be back and playing regularly, after what seems like an eternity away from the game. The U13s have come back with bags of energy and about a foot taller than when we finished last season. Forget Covid, the most important question when we started training again was "Am I taller than you yet coach?". This year we are facing bigger opponents, the games are faster and the competition is more physical, but we are up for the challenge.

Our 2020/21 season has had a mixed start with 2 wins and 2 losses, but the team are showing great team spirit, looking strong and settling back into competitive football.

(Thanks to Steve Cripps)

Under 15s news

It is good to be back playing again. The girls started training again as soon as we were able in July and we had great attendance through the summer on The Downs and at Stoke Lodge (where it was nice to meet up with some of the other BLU age groups training as well). We have started the season with some decent

performances, winning a couple and losing a couple of games. We have a group of 20 girls all competing for places and all hoping that both the weather and the virus stay away, so that we can get on with having an enjoyable season.

(Thanks to Ian McNally)

Under 16s news

It is great to back training and playing matches in what is our last year in junior football. When I attended an introductory session with Lloyd when Tilly was 9, I didn't imagine I would still be here seven years later. The anticipation and optimism before every season is still there, so we must be doing something right.

I am pleased that we kept all players from last season and have added two experienced players in Lucy and Kez. The girls who started playing for us last year have come on leaps and bounds and this has shown in their improved confidence. Last season was a struggle at times, but we are far more competitive this season which has been commented on by other teams. This has seen some great games and we are improving each week.

Although the training sessions are shorter, we are making good use of them and attendance is high, as always. The commitment to learn and put the effort in

during the 50 minutes, as well as enjoy it, is pleasing to see and makes it more worthwhile for everyone. The training facilities at St Bede's are great following the upgraded 4G pitch and goals being installed during the summer.

Our first five games are all away so it will be good to get back to playing at Hallen in late October. It wouldn't seem right playing there on a sunny day, so I'm glad we will experience the heavy rain and mud, as per usual. Please try and come along to support the girls and you will see some great football and determination.

(Thanks to Paul Maggs)

Development team news

Only a few months back we were not only unsure whether anyone would be playing again this season, but also whether we could get enough players to enter a team into the Gloucestershire Women's Senior league Div. 3. The future of the Development team was on a knife edge!

After many phone calls between myself and the chairman trying to get things sorted, the best move turned out to be actually getting training going again... and getting the buzz going with the players. Word soon spread quickly and, with friends

1st Team news

It's been a very good start to the season. We drew our first game in the FA cup, but went out on penalties, which wasn't too bad as we were playing against a side a league above us. That is also considering the fact it's been hard just getting a team out to play, even a friendly game or even getting players to a training sessions, because most of our players work evenings.

In the league we played Almondsbury - favourites to win the league and we beat them 3-1. Then we played a very good, but young, Cheltenham Town team and won 6-1. After that we played Downend Flyers which we also won 5-1, so all good and there have been some outstanding goals. However, our next game was cancelled on Sunday 4th due to our opponents having a player with COVID symptoms.

So, to sum up the start of the season, very good start and we need to keep up the good work.

(Thanks to Steve Price)

bringing friends along, we now have an amazing squad of 17 and a further 8 from last season who are currently away at Uni, but will hopefully join the party along the way.

The team spirit is excellent and with everyone coming to training, we are already reaping the rewards with a great start to the season. Played 3, Won 2 lost 1.

Long may it continue and everyone stays fit and well.

(Thanks to Andrew White)

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Squad Mums Initiative

We're not just creating the next generation of footballers, we're building a generation that will inspire their daughters to play football.

Currently, BLU has 200+ female footballers. 31 male coaches. 1 female coach.

Our players need role models, not just in football but in life. The players need to see the women in their lives volunteering, playing it forward, passing on a passion, proving the power of stepping beyond comfort zones. For life.

So BLUs has a new club initiative to get more women to be a part of the football experience.

Introducing Squad Mums

Definition: women with no idea about football but who enjoy sport and incorporate it in everyday life



What will Squad Mums do?

Lead a five-minute warm up or cool down session (so when you drop off or pick up) at the beginning or end of football training.

How many Squad Mums do we need?

Ideally, each team would have around four Squad Mums. Each team can arrange it to suit you: in pairs every other week or individually once a month, a warm-up squad and a cool-down squad. You decide. The more Squad Mums we have, the fewer sessions you need to take.

Do I need experience?

No. If you have ever run or done any organised sport, you can lead a warm up or cool down. The five-minute sessions are not unique to football. The coach will be available to support if you need them, but working in pairs can help with confidence in your first few sessions.

We'll have a WhatsApp group for Squad Mums both for support and to share the weekly warm up and cooldown plan, with pictures, to help you run the session – or completely ignore.

Do I have to stay for the whole training session?

Not at all. Take warm up and/or cooldown. If you want to stay to assist the coach for the whole session, that's great. You don't need to know anything about football to help with drills and technique training. There's no pressure.

And if you DO want to learn more about football, the level one coaching course – The FA Playmaker – is now completely online and free <https://www.thefa.com/bootroom/learning/qualifications/the-fa-playmaker>

As a Squad Mum, you get a NICE CUPPA AND A SLICE OF CAKE when you pop to harbourside to show the welfare officer your ID for your DBS check (a very easy process), which you need before you start.

Get in touch with your coach who will put you in touch with Lucy Cripps, the welfare officer, and we'll get the ball rolling.

Everyone can help KitAid



Kit Aid is a charity that recycles and distributes donated football kit and equipment to some of the poorest children and adults in different countries across the world so they have clothing, footwear and equipment to enable them to pursue their passion of playing the sport.

What can you do? Firstly, please have a look at <https://kitaid.net/> so you can read more about Kit Aid and see the great work that they do.

(Thanks to Anna Sice)

boots or shin pads that you no longer need (adult or kids sizes) and would like to donate to help Kit Aid. They also take training bibs, rain jackets, tracksuit bottoms as well as balls and goalposts, so if you find any items lurking at the back of cupboards, drawers or garages, then please let me know.

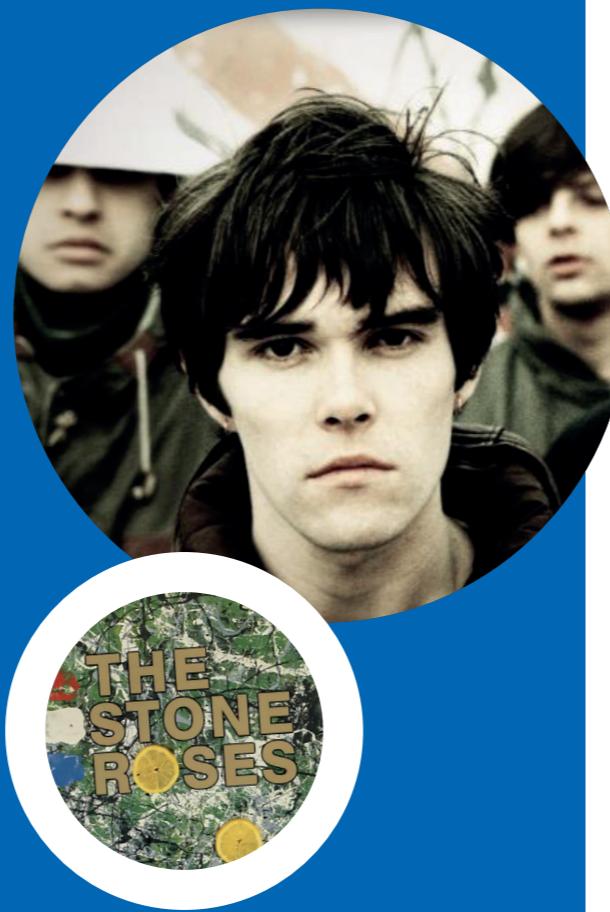
I can be contacted by email annasice@hotmail.com, if you have kit you would like to donate.

Secondly, I would be really grateful if you have any football kit (in good condition) whether it be clothes,

Top 5 Songs Selection

This time, Andy Lawrence, our Club Secretary/Covid-19 Officer and Assistant U10s coach, has selected his top songs to share with us. We welcome any player/coach/parent/committee member to send in their choice for future newsletters.

1. **Stone Roses – Fools Gold.** When I was in the 6th Form, the Stone Roses were never off the common room stereo and this still sounds timeless today, it brings back memories of not working hard enough at school! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBsazlACpYM>
2. **The Clash – The Magnificent Seven.** This has always been a favourite and although it's about working life in the 1970s, it's taken on more relevance recently as a song which could be referring to the BLU U10s! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoHLQTcbZCs>
3. **Depeche Mode – Policy of Truth.** I've spent far too much money on Depeche Mode concerts and memorabilia over the years and still can't get enough of them. Everyone loves Enjoy the Silence but I prefer some of the lesser known tracks like this one. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2VBmHOYpV8>
4. **Gene – Olympian.** One of the first gigs I went to with my wife was Gene in Norwich and they still hold a special place in my heart, the Olympian album is a much underrated classic. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbh6jTl8tfE>
5. **Blue Oyster Cult – Don't Fear the Reaper.** I spent 3 happy years at Bristol University, one of those living on St Michael's Hill, almost next door to the Colston Arms in which I spent an unhealthy amount of time. This was the only decent song on the juke box and although I was sick of it at the end of the year, I've since fallen in love with it again. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtoK2CSTehQ>



Bristol City Women

Bristol City Women are in the Super League and you can see the results and fixtures here.

<https://www.bcfc.co.uk/fixtures-results/city-women/202021-barclays-faws/>



England Women (Lionesses)



The Lionesses next play on Tuesday 27th Oct away to Germany (3pm KO) and will be shown live on BBC

<https://www.thefa.com/England/womens-seniors>

Committee members: (and contacts)

Please note new vice chairman

Chairman
Justin Ogilvie
07872 190132
blufc.chair@gmail.com

Club Welfare Officer
Lucy Cripps
07497 767595
cwo@blufc.com

Vice-chairman
Nathalie Haines
07779 165849

Volunteers
Becca Ramsden
07967 273595
volunteers@blufc.com

Treasurer
Simon Pargeter
07957 207067
blufc.treasurer@gmail.com

Kit Manager
Anna Sice
07968 411471
kit@blufc.com

Secretary
Andy Lawrence
07974 707839
blufc.youth@gmail.com

Referee Coordinator
Leigh Porter
07982 907705
leighporter@hotmail.co.uk

Membership Secretary
Sandra Freke
07766 938977

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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