



WOMEN & GIRLS SECTION

The 2007/08 season has seen a great move forward for Women and Girls rugby in Lancashire. The hard work of the committee, coaching staff and managers has enabled the formation of both Under 18 and Under 15 county squads who, alongside the established women's team, competed in the Northern Counties Competition against Cheshire, Northumberland and Yorkshire.

This competition is going from strength to strength. Next season will see Cumbria, Leicestershire, Notts, Lincs & Derby and Staffordshire enter, a very exciting prospect, and thanks must go to my Cheshire counterpart Victoria Muir for all her work in this area.

Another first for the season was the inception of the Lancashire Cup for Women, which we have named in honour of Mrs Sue Garnett. Sue sadly passed away on 23rd October 2007 after a long battle against cancer. It is therefore extremely poignant that Vale of Lune Ladies (the team in which she managed and played) were deserved winners of the competition on the finals day of Monday 5th May. The match between Ormskirk and Vale was a fine example of women's rugby and a fitting tribute to Sue. My thanks go to Sue's son Andrew who was on hand to present the cup and medals.

On behalf of the Women & Girls group I would like to thank all the clubs who have very generously loaned us their facilities for training and competitions. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support given to our section by the CB and in particular the RDP and competition committees.

STEPH WILSON

Chair, Womens & Girls Committee

WOMENS SQUAD

The County series of games this season has been an emotional rollercoaster for everyone involved. The death of Sue Garnett, the binding light of Lancashire Womens Rugby was heavily felt by all those involved and the process of moving on has been very difficult at times. However we were spurred on, as we all knew Sue would have wanted us to play and be successful for the 'Red Rose County'.

A new management and coaching team had to be put in place and the games ran from September to November. The first encounter was against Northumberland at Morpeth RUFC, which turned out to be a very high scoring match in Lancashire favour.

With this new-found confidence Lancashire entertained Cheshire at the Vale of Lune. As this was Lancashire's first home match of the season expectation ran high but this was soon squashed by a well organised Cheshire side who ran out winners, perhaps Lancs weren't as disciplined as their counterparts as the game was played the day after the World Cup Final!

Lancashire's final game of the competition was against Yorkshire at Wigan RUFC, in the middle of November. The game started with precision and a high level of energy and Lancs were soon in the lead. Yorkshire played hard but had few chances and Lancashire won the match. With Lancs, Cheshire and Yorks having won 2 games each the competition was decided on points difference with Lancs the eventual victors retaining the Crown of Northern Counties Champions for the fourth season.

Many thanks must be given to all the people involved this year: Steph Wilson -Chair of Women and Girls Section, Trevor Parrott - Lead Coach, Assistant Coach - Mike Carter, Physio - Clare Lucas, Assistant Physio - Jane Carter and of course all of the players who gave their all in Lancashire's cause.

GILLIAN ALLEN

Manager

GIRLS' RUGBY

Following trials at Tyldesley Rugby Club in September, development squads were selected in both the U18 and U15 age groups. Clubs represented were Tyldesley, Waterloo, Blackpool, Fleetwood, Bolton, North Ribblesdale, Ormskirk and Holy Cross College.

The U18 team, coached by Sam Cockcroft and his team demonstrated how much rugby has improved in the county in this age group since the first LJ17 squad was set up last season. They started their season by defeating Northumberland at Morpeth, before losing narrowly to Cheshire at Vale of Lune.

The final game was a heavy loss to a very experienced Yorkshire side at Wigan but, with several players injured and others out of position, they showed plenty of character throughout the game. They finished the Northern Counties Competition in third place overall.

Achievements during the season were:

- *The team's first win (against Northumberland)*
- *A closer losing margin against Cheshire than in the previous season*
- *Nine players going on to represent the North- West (compared to seven last season)*

The first U15 County Girls' squad had an excellent first season with plenty of new talent emerging. Coached by Joanne Riches and her team, the girls faced a tough first game away to Northumberland but came away with a narrow victory.

They went on to win the second game, against Cheshire, well and faced Yorkshire in the final game, unfortunately losing by two points. This loss cost them dear as it led to Northumberland, whom they had defeated, being named champions on points difference. Despite the disappointment, however, the squad had a very good season, finishing in second place in the Northern Counties Competition.

Achievements during the season were:

- *Two wins out of three*
- *A number of players going on to represent the North-West*
- *Two players attending the 'Schools of Rugby' Talent Development Programme*

Trials for next year's squads will be held during September.

RACHEL GOODING

Girls' Squads Team Manager