



Bishop Wordsworth's School

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Dear Parents/Guardians

I watched a short video over the weekend of a former coach called Steve Black or Blackie. I was lucky enough to be coached by him while at Durham and he was innovative, but also kept things simple. He also always seemed to focus on the positive and the human behind the sports person was at the front of all he did. It prompted me to think and reflect on my coaching.

In short, it made me think about how much our sports people put in, on top of their academic studies. They are not at BWS to play sport, they are here to make the next step on their journey. Sport contributes to that, but to do it they have to sacrifice additional time and make lifestyle choices that enable them to compete on the level that they do. After what has been an exceptionally long term, they should all be immensely proud of all that they have achieved and how they have grown as individuals both on and off the sports field.

I would also like to thank all our parents who support the students. I realised on the frozen touchline at Eton this weekend whilst trying to process the matches and shimmy the boys along, I rarely stop to speak with our wonderful support. It is a real pleasure to see our touchlines regularly full of parents and more so on frozen away days. So, thank you, your ongoing support is hugely appreciated.

This term one fortnight in particular stands out in terms of sporting performance and participation. From 6 November to 20 November, we had 42 fixtures played across 8 different sports with all years involved. The breadth of sport on offer and standard being played, be it at a participatory level or pushing more toward performance, is exceptional.

This fortnight was special to me and had a certain symmetry to it as our U12D rugby boys (some of whom may go on to be 1st XV players) travelled to Millfield for their first matches, many of whom having never played before, while the 1st XV after a torrid season falling on the wrong side of the score line, earned their first victory against Pangbourne.

The fortnight was made more pleasing however with our senior football winning a memorable ESFA R3 match against Thomas Hardy School on penalties. The senior boys and girls' tennis sides recorded notable results topping their groups. The KS3 squash team upset National Championship favourites Wycliffe to earn their place in the next round and cross country ensured three teams would progress to the National Final in Leeds. Finally, the girl's rugby travelled to Milton Abbey where they played their first ever full sided rugby match, building an 8-person scrum in the changing room before kicking off!

On average 42% of the school student body has participated in a sporting fixture this term, with Year 9 paving the way with over 50% of the year being involved. With the main football and basketball seasons to come next term and then our summer provision, including cricket, I would hope these numbers will increase again as more young people find their sport.

Badminton

Simon Woodhouse continues to coach on a Monday morning with our club and county standard players. After Christmas we hope to open this up to Y7 for anyone interested. Off the back of 6F Games we played a participatory friendly with Godolphin which sounded great fun and we hope to repeat in the new year. The KS3 and KS4 sides won their local round of the school games, and we hope there will be a county round, although that is to be confirmed. If not, we may look to host the best schools from each local competition.

Basketball

The senior and U14 sides have encountered tough EBBA groups against basketball heavy weights Millfield, Richard Huish College, and Bristol MET, while the U16s have had a more favourable draw overcoming Orchard school. Thanks to Mr Duckett's insight, the U13 for the first time have been entered into the Junior NBA competition with a clean sweep in their first triangular with another coming before the end of term.

Cross Country

Our senior boys secured 8th place in the National Finals of the ESAA Cross Country Cup, with our senior girls 22nd and inter boys 21st. Another outstanding set of results from the runners who also came out on top across the board at the local school's races as teams with some notable individual performances and await results to see if they have been selected for the Wiltshire trials in the new year. Thanks as always to Mr Griffey who gives up his free time to run the cross country and support our sports teams.

Football

As already mentioned, the senior football side has had quite the season so far with 8 matches played and only two losses to Reading Blue Coats and Millfield in the last 32 of the ESFA National Competition. They continue their run in the County Cup after Christmas as well as the Poole Schools 6th Form Cup which we entered this year. We also have a 2nd XI at senior level who play their ESFA R2 match on the last Friday of this term. It has been great to see our footballers really push on this year with an excellent team culture and verve about them. With many of them in Y12 and a strong Y11 group coming through, the future of BWS football is bright. Thanks to Mr Edney, Mr Green and Mr Owen for working with them this term as well as our sports assistant Isaac.

Netball

The netballers have kicked on this year with great team cohesion and style under the guidance of Mr Hole. With two teams now running we have more girls than ever playing, with strong results against SWGS and plenty more to come in the new year. It is sure to be an exciting season for the girls despite the heartbreak of an admin error leading to their exit from the county competition having previously thought we had made regionals. Credit to the girls for their resilience and attitude after such terrible news.

Rugby/Rugby 7s

The U14s have been the standout side of the term with eight victories from ten against notable opposition including Whitgift and Canford. However, as we always say, sport is far more than about the results and we focus on the performances and standards we hold ourselves to on and off the pitch. It has been a tough term for some teams, but the players attitude and commitment has been unwavering and with over 350 of our students playing, it has been another great season against some fantastic opposition with many lessons learnt and memories made.

Squash

The KS3 squash team is an exciting prospect this year with two boys in the top 20 nationally and they stand an excellent chance of going deep in their competition. Having already knocked out one of the favourites, we look forward to seeing how they progress in the National Championship after Christmas against Sevenoaks and Truro. The KS5 team has a wealth of experience and after losing in their initial group stage will also compete after Christmas but in the plate against Peter Symonds and Cheltenham College.

Tennis

The term started with our A and B teams playing knockout tennis rolling over from last summer. The A teams had tough away draws across the Southwest and were unable to progress to Regional Finals this year. However, our B teams made their Regional Finals with the KS3 boys finishing 3rd and KS4 finishing 2nd overall. The senior boys and girls currently sit atop of their respective groups going into the new year and following their performances last year, we earned the rank of 17th best tennis school in the country.

Locally it is exciting to see two clubs headed up by former BWS students with Jamie Barry and his family running a great program out of Riverside Tennis Club and Rory Smith having recently taken over the helm at Salisbury Tennis Club with some great innovative ideas and projects in the pipeline.

Beyond BWS & Beyond Christmas

Congratulations to all our sports people in and out of school. Via our social media channels, you have hopefully seen the exciting season M Stahl has had in fencing and C Qi in badminton, as well as L Makin with Bath U19 netball and both S Cowey at Bristol Bears and O Branagan at Bath with their rugby. S Cowey has also been invited to tour with Ultimate Rugby 7s to Prague in the new year.

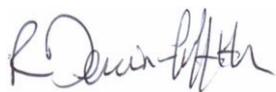
As I write we are putting together the final additions for our Richard Hill event in aid of the Pitch In campaign. It has become apparent this term just how important this new facility will be and is no longer a nice addition but a necessity to deliver both curricular and extracurricular sport with the increased use of the sports hall. By Christmas we hope to be beyond halfway in our fund-raising efforts, but still with some way to go, and your support is more important than ever. If you can help at all please do get in touch and you can find out more via <https://bwsnetwork.org.uk/supportus>

Excitingly the school has once again confirmed its place at the Fishwick 7s in the summer and the OW sides for the Rory Walworth Memorial match on Boxing Day have been released. Always a magnificent event and well worth taking the family along to Salisbury RFC for a bit of a social event and excellent viewing.

As we look ahead beyond Christmas, we have multiple rugby 7s tournaments for all years, boys and girls as well as some exciting opportunities for our U17 boys to team up against both Bath and Harlequins ACE schools. Our football season moves into full swing with the local leagues starting up and our cricket nets and track sessions for athletics will begin as we start to have one eye on the summer. Fixtures/socials: [Fixtures - Bishop Wordsworth's School \(bishopwordsworths.org.uk\)](http://bishopwordsworths.org.uk)

Thank you to all our supporters and volunteers. It does not happen without you and I wish you all a restful festive season.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Demain-Griffiths'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'R Demain' and the last name 'Griffiths' clearly distinguishable.

Mr R Demain-Griffiths
Director of Sport