



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

St Mary's University

FA Women's High-Performance Football Centre Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Monday 4th December | 5.45-7.30pm

GK Centre @ Alec Reed Academy

Tuesday 5th December | 8-9am

Female Coaches' Call

Wednesday 6th December | 8-9am

ETC Lead Regional Call

Thursday 7th December | 9am-5pm

UEFA C Block 1 Day 1

Friday 8th December | 9am-5pm

UEFA C Block 1 Day 2

Monday 11th December | 5.45-7.30pm

GK Centre @ Alec Reed Academy

Monday 18th December | 5.45-7.30pm

GK Centre @ Alec Reed Academy



Welcome to the December 2023 edition of the FA Women's High- Performance Centre newsletter

Last month we welcomed QPR's women's College Academy to St Mary's University. Hosted in collaboration between the Chelsea FC Foundation Academic Lead for Women's Football and the FA Women's High-Performance Centre, the attendees had an opportunity to look around the campus and view the facilities at St Mary's University, before hearing from speakers from the Wider Participation team and the academic programmes. Following this, the students had the opportunity to interact with current students and test some of the performance analysis equipment during their practical session. Thanks to Mandip Birk, Tom Simms, Rhi Galvin and the students who supported for their contributions on the day, with a special thanks to Becky Shubber-Barton for leading on and delivering a fantastic event.



@StMarysWHPFC



@SportStMarys



A particular lens of focus in this month's edition is on the women's football and futsal teams, who, with some new and returning coaches this season, continue to make progress in all areas both on and off the pitch and the court. We caught up with some of the players to give their insights into what playing across the teams has been like.

St Mary's Women's Football and Futsal club this season have a depth of players with talent, hardworking attitudes and a bunch of smiles. Led by our three coaches, Luis, Albert and Kevin,

the three teams have dedicated coaches with a passion for raising awareness of the women's game and creating a positive and safe environment where all players are welcome. The success of all three teams so far, both on and off the pitch, doesn't go unnoticed and has been a huge result of the coaches, the players and the club ethos set out at the start of the season: believe in each other and trust the process.

October comes around and the new season begins for the Women's first team. A new



season; a new league; a new coach; new players and new opportunities. Building on the strong foundations of last year, the girls have new competitors to face but a bunch of new players with passion, drive and ability to join the team and take on the challenge. With our trials accommodating for over 40 players, the depth of squad and talent was high, making decisions for our newly appointed football coaches, Albert and Kevin, very difficult. But, nevertheless, the girls started the season with one win, one loss and one draw. Having three away days, the girls cannot wait to, hopefully, bless the home turf in the same way the second team did with their 6-1 win over King's College. The love, passion and laughter shared within the team is strong, never failing to leave anyone behind or a piece of St Mary's everywhere we go.

The possibilities for this team and the club are endless with the spirit, determination and support that exist between all the girls



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and our coaches. We can't wait to see what the season ahead holds, both on and off the pitch.

For the second team, so far it's been exciting coming into the new season with new players and a new coach. There is a combination of players who are both new to football and who have played for years, but one thing that remains the same is the bond of the team during training and match days to support one another. Each session is an opportunity to teach each other something new and learn from each other. With an 'every mistake is a learning opportunity' environment created by our great coach, Albert, who has fit right into the team and gets on amazingly with everyone.

Our first match of the new season resulted in a 3-1 loss but getting a 6-1 win the week after

with one of our players scoring 4 goals has shown how resilient the team are and how quickly we have bonded together to get to know each other as players. We are all looking forward to the season ahead and aiming high with all the talent and winning spirit that we have in the team.

The futsal season so far has been a roller coaster! We have had plenty of highs as a team, both on and off the court, and we are as strong as ever. Having finished last season off on such a high, with Varsity and beating the England deaf women's team, we were keen to continue to push on. The hard work and dedication from all the girls has been incredible so far, and it has contributed to us winning our opening three league games. These came against Hertfordshire, Bath and Hartpury – who won the league last year!

Three long away days in a row was not the ideal start but we took it on the chin and made the most out of it.

Our successful start is something that has never been done by a St Mary's women's futsal team before, so it has definitely created a good atmosphere around the group and given us the belief that we are onto something special. We have set our standards and targets high this season, but with the group we have, and with the help of our coach, Luis, we hope this will be a very successful season for us.

**Contributions from Lauren Rudelhoff,
Kiah Owen and Charlotte Close**

**St Mary's University
Women's Football and Futsal**

In line with the University's value of inclusivity, it's important to recognise others' commitments to football beyond coaching and playing, in which Sport St Mary's Kevin Daly and friends have taken on the Wembley to Wembley spectator challenge. Here's what Kevin had to say about how the challenge came about:

"I was at The Forrester Arms in Hampton Wick one Friday night when a friend told me he was beginning his FA Cup journey from Wembley to Wembley the next day. Being a football fan, I was intrigued and asked for more details. He explained that he would be attending the Extra Preliminary round of the FA Cup, where Wembley FC would face Bearsted FC. He planned to follow the winning team to the next round, continuing this winner stays on pattern until he reached Wembley Stadium for the closing stages. Without much thought, I decided to join him.

The following day, we headed to Wembley. The first match, Wembley FC vs. Bearsted FC, ended in a draw, leaving us with a question: Did replays count? The answer was yes, they did. So, after work on a Tuesday evening, we made our way to Bearsted's home ground in Maidstone East for an 8pm kick-off. Bearsted won in an exciting match, and our adventure continued. Along the way, we gathered a few more friends to join us, and we attended the following matches:

- Bearsted FC vs. Southall FC
- Southall FC vs. Beaconsfield Town (including a replay)
- Southall FC vs. Hampton and Richmond
- Lewes FC vs. Hampton and Richmond
- Aldershot Town vs. Lewes FC
- Swindon Town vs. Aldershot Town (4-7!)

We've witnessed two stoppage time winners, some great calls, some questionable calls, absolute passion from fans and in the most recent

instalment an 11-goal treat. It's worth noting that it stung a bit to see our local club, Hampton and Richmond, drawn and then having to watch them play away twice before being knocked out; though I'd like to give a special shout-out to Lewes FC and their Dripping Pan Ground – it's a lovely venue that I wouldn't have visited if not for this. In every ground we've been to so far we've encountered nothing but positivity and a great atmosphere. This experience has transformed my perspective on lower league football, and I plan to continue attending these games even after this adventure concludes. Next up, Aldershot Town vs Stockport County – wish me luck!"

Contribution from Kevin Daly, Assistant Head of Sport Operations at Sport St Mary's

If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved in a similar challenge in future years, please contact Kevin.Daly@stmarys.ac.uk.