



Sport at Wycombe Abbey

AUTUMN TERM 2020



INTRODUCTION

It has been a delight to watch the girls outside and once again enjoying sport over the past few days, with the majority of our sporting activities now back up and running. The girls are enjoying more than twenty different sports across the site in PE lessons, team practices, weekend activities and Extras.

This booklet provides further details on our sports programme and our plans to maximise the benefits the girls get from physical activity this term.

Last year's sporting successes combined outstanding achievement with increased participation across all levels of sport. An extraordinary sporting season culminated in our senior team becoming National Lacrosse Champions. Such successes were combined with increased participation in physical activity across girls of all abilities, with high take up of our core team sports.

We are eager to build on these successes over the coming year. This term, we are delighted to welcome Mrs Earnshaw-Punnett as our new Head of Sport Performance, and Miss Smith is now Assistant Director of Sport alongside Mrs Gee. I hope that these new roles will drive enhancement of provision across our full range of sports.

All sports staff are looking forward to supportively coaching girls of all abilities to achieve their physical and training goals this year, and we look forward to celebrating sporting successes of many kinds with the pupils.

Mrs S Bryett Windle
Director of Sport

SPORT AND WELLBEING



As a school, we fully recognise the significant role that physical activity plays in the wellbeing of our pupils, and this is particularly the case after the experience of the past few months. We know well the critical importance of sport and exercise in ensuring adolescent physical development, good sleep patterns and positive emotional wellbeing. Sport builds a range of important attributes including confidence, self-reliance, resilience, and perseverance. After a long period separated from their peers, sport

and other co-curricular activities are also key in developing the girls' friendships, school spirit and sense of shared achievement.

It is therefore particularly important as a school that we are encouraging a high level of participation in physical activity across all pupils and have as many sports operating as close to normal as possible.

DIFFERENT PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES

All our pupils have experienced changes to the type or frequency of their physical activity over the past few months. We are delighted that many girls have been able to maintain a relatively high level of physical activity during the summer. Judging by an increase in the number of girls jogging around site over the past few days, many have taken up running and I know that many are keen to return to the gym.

Movement, coordination and agility are skills that are particularly well developed in a team sport setting, and these are likely to have diminished without physical activity involving more than one person. We are keen to confirm and develop these skills back to their normal levels as quickly as possible.



RETURN TO COMPETITIVE PLAY

We know how important competitive sport is to the girls' enjoyment of school life, and both pupils and their coaches are keen to reestablish match play as quickly as possible. We are excited both by the challenge of ensuring we raise the girls together to their pre-lockdown levels of physical fitness, and by the opportunity to confirm and develop the core athletic competencies that make for top-level athletes.

Our sports programme is therefore designed to prepare our teams for match-level fitness, ensuring that all aspects of athletic fitness are confirmed in order to minimise injury. We will begin with core movement patterns before confirming levels of coordination and agility in a team sport setting. We are confident that this will produce better young athletes ready for the competition season when fixtures reopen.



INTERNAL FIXTURES

Match play will form a significant part of our programme of sport and we will return to fixtures in an internal format as soon as possible.

Run under the new National Governing Body rules, competitive intensity will rise appropriately through measures such as half-court or reduced-time games. This should satisfy the girls' desire to compete and test their skills, while preparing for competition in a graduated manner that minimises injury risk.

These sessions of modified match play will soon develop into full games. A programme of internal fixtures will be introduced as soon as we feel each team is at an appropriate fitness level. Competitive inter-house play will begin in House Games next week.



In addition, we are keen to provide some opportunity to girls who were disappointed not to participate in summer sports. Our Saturday afternoons will also feature staffed tennis sessions and we are also opening tennis courts to boarding houses on Sundays as part of our Weekend Activities Programme.

REVIEW AND FLEXIBILITY

Our sport programme is flexible and will move at the rate at which the pupils are ready for higher degrees of intensity and rigour. Some groups may reach match fitness before others. We will review the progress of our teams constantly and make sure we balance fitness levels and injury risk against the desire to get back to competitive match play.

ENSURING SAFE SPORT

We have fully implemented government guidance to ensure the safe return of the majority of our sporting activities. Each sport has been risk assessed within the Wycombe Abbey context and control measures developed based on action plans produced by sport National Governing Bodies. We have worked closely with these bodies in the development of our plans as well as other independent boarding schools.



Our aim has been to provide as many activities as possible to enthuse and motivate all girls to participate in some form of physical activity. While some adaption is required, we have worked hard to make our sporting provision as close to what the girls are used to as possible.

Please do contact us if you would like to see our sports risk assessments or have questions about how we are implementing covid-safe measures in the sports environment.

We are sorry not to be able to offer a limited number of sports. We are unable at this stage to clean trampolining or climbing facilities to a suitable level to ensure safety. At the moment, we are also not running any off-site trips including for riding, polo and rowing. We know how much girls enjoy these activities, and we will review their status regularly in the hope that we might be able to restart them in the future.

Covid-safe Measures for Sport

- Cleaning hands and equipment before and after activities, and at appropriate points during training.
- Following amended rules and restrictions in place from National Governing Bodies.
- Organising activities using outdoor facilities as far as possible.
- Restricting use of indoor facilities to single year groups with cleaning procedures carried out between use.
- Implementing a one-way system throughout the Davis Sports Centre.
- Following a comprehensive equipment management process to prevent the sharing of equipment and ensure thorough cleaning before reuse.
- Strictly limiting group sizes depending on the sport and facility being used.
- Prohibiting shouting during play.
- Additional procedures in place for specific sports or activities.

REVIEWING OUR SPORTING OFFERING



We know the importance of sport to our pupils and want to offer an experience as close to normal as possible.

We are regularly reviewing procedures to ensure that they meet the needs of the pupils, comply with government guidance and match the regulations of National Governing Bodies. We will write again if we make any significant change to our sports offering.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Sport, Mrs Bryett-Windle, at windles@wycombeabbey.com if you have any questions about our sports programme.

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