



Bishop Wordsworth's School

Exeter Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2ED

Telephone: 01722 333851

Fax: 01722 325899

E-mail: admin@bws.wilts.sch.uk

Website: www.bws-school.org.uk

Head Master: Dr S D Smallwood BSc (Hons) PhD NPQH

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Dear Parents/Guardians

Unlike last year the big freeze is yet to hit us and we have managed to play all our fixtures without cancellation, save one to preserve the 1st XI pitch. This term has been tough, really tough for some of our sportsmen with gruelling tests against some of the best in the country be it Bristol Met for basketball, Bradfield College for football or Whitgift for rugby. It is fair to say our young men have taken themselves out of their comfort zones. With this has come real growth, endeavour and most of all, resilience.

Chapel assemblies, a new display in the sports hall foyer, meetings with Paul Gustard, Ben Ryan, myself, Mr Oldham and the rest of the team, have focused on instilling our values and culture. Key to this is resilience, a quality you can't coach, but more comes from within, an attitude you either have or you do not. We are very lucky to work with scores of young men who have it in abundance and so when we are not the biggest or strongest, especially in the lower years compared to opponents, we are able to rally and get up even when knocked down for the umpteenth time. I have at times questioned if we'd got it wrong, had we bitten off more than we can chew, but then in the last few weeks the boys restored my trust and faith in what we are trying to do and put in some unbelievable performances.

Dr Smallwood has presented the staff with our unique selling points as a school, one of those being our extra-curricular provision. To be unique however we have to test ourselves, we have to push ourselves and we have to take on the very best in order to discover how good we really are, understand our strengths and eradicate our weaknesses – this term has been a huge learning curve for many, and I have no doubt we will all come out the other side all the better for it, and importantly in a better place to ensure we remain able to take on the very best.

Badminton

Mr Hole took both KS3 and KS4 teams to the local round of the school games winning all their matches and not dropping a game and they progress to county finals in the New Year.

Basketball

Basketball really got going in the second half of term as Mr Duckett covered the length and breadth of the South West to play from Ivybridge to Bristol. Most years have played a host of pool matches so far with the shake down to come in the New Year. The U14s however again breezed through their pre County tournament to reach finals in January, while the U13s as guests in the same tournament, came 2nd playing a year up, a notable performance.

Cross Country

The cross country teams have been at it once again, under the guidance of Mr Griffey. All four teams won the local league with all bar one individual medal going to a BWS runner. Due to their success, 20+ boys have been asked to race at the county trials in January with a number expected to make it through to regionals and then nationals in March. The runners have already experienced

success on a regional and national level. The Junior Boys make it to regionals while the Inter Boys spearheaded by Rob Jones went to the national finals. The team came 11th overall with Rob personally finishing 11th.

Football

The U16 team this year is an exciting prospect, working hard in training to understand the BWS philosophy. The team progressed to Round 3 of the ESFA Premier League Schools Cup losing to a well organised QE Wimborne team. With the WSFA competition and Area Cup, to continue post the holiday season, we believe the players have potential to win both. The team has seen notable performances from captain Thomson Barrett and a host of U15 players who have been the back bone of the team. This is the makings of a future BWS 1st XI.

Led by captain Jojo Jenner, with new players, a new formation and style of play, the 1st XI has adapted, and recognised their strengths and weaknesses. A small squad of players have demonstrated solidarity when faced with any challenge, scoring late goals and coming back from precarious positions whilst believing in their ability and our philosophy. The ESFA National Cup runs have come to an end, reaching the last 16 in the Elite Schools Cup, and also reaching the last 32 of the ESFA Trophy. Whilst these are both commendable achievements, the team is capable of greater things. The team is relentless in its winning streak in the WSFA competitions, a trophy we intend to win. The challenge for the players now is to reflect and learn from our cup runs and build a challenge in the ESFA League and WSFA Cup. Jonny Timperley needs to keep up his habit of scoring hat-tricks whilst Barney Duffy has made a huge impact with his technical and tenacious style of football. The players this season have worked tirelessly to understand the formation and their role and responsibility within it, they have shown they can play and need quality opposition to further their development. With Japan on the horizon there are some exciting prospects to come, with Thomson Barrett and Vaughn Covil proving they are ready to play 1st XI football. We are looking forward to the New Year and working with the players to realise their potential. (Mr Podger)

Rugby

This year has been one jam packed full of fixtures from the bottom to the top, from both state schools and independents. There are very few in our region that we have not played as we continue to take on anyone in our pursuit of self-improvement.

A real effort was made in ensuring our youngsters got plenty of game time across a wide spectrum of opponents including other state schools in Perins and Poole Grammar, our local prep school friends at Salisbury Cathedral and Chafyn Grove, but also the prep school heavy weights Millfield, Caldicott, and Whitgift. Year 7 really started to come together in October when they played Kingswood and then Whitgift before half term. While Year 8 took a little longer, really putting a performance to be proud of in at Beechen Cliff. As with Age Grade policy and our cultural shift we've had a real focus on performance and playing without fear in the belief a focus on this will bring the results down the line. I have no doubt the youngest in the school will be providing real talent for years to come.

The middle of the school have almost had polar opposite experiences. The U15s experienced our best schools cup run at that age grade for a long time, losing narrowly to Beechen Cliff in a game that really could have gone either way. They have had great wins against Sherborne, Canford and Bryanston, but similarly have suffered defeat, keeping them grounded and leaving room for improvement as they move into their senior years. The U14s by comparison have had probably the toughest season, but have stuck at it and their perseverance has rewarded them with a county cup final in the New Year after defeating Bryanston by the narrowest of margins. The camaraderie and attitude of the boys has been exemplary.

The U16s as always have focused not just on the field, but their values and behaviours off the field. They have helped on a weekly basis in the canteen and made a point to meet together one lunchtime a week as a team. Their season and journey was probably best epitomised in their 15-15 draw with Beechen Cliff – a side full of young aspiring professionals. They fronted up magnificently

and used their own creativity to score a fantastic set piece try. Once again, this is a mark of our boys as they take ownership on the field to solve problems and find ways to overcome the trickiest of opponents. Six of the U16 squad have also represented the 1st XV this season.

This term we have also had the pleasure of welcoming local state schools Stonehenge, Trafalgar and Wyvern for fixtures, something I hope we can continue to do and grow in order to develop rugby; not just in our school but in these other schools and the community and not just for players, but also referees, without whom we cannot play.

The 2nd and 3rd XV's have struggled to get going this season, but as always have been well supported, and despite results not going their way, have had a good time against some of the best schools in the business. I must thank both Kai Sainsbury and Ronan Cons for their help with running and selecting both teams and their leadership has been outstanding throughout.

The 1st XV led brilliantly by captain Matt Hick and his vice Huw Hallsworth are undefeated at Britford which is a fantastic achievement, made all the more impressive with wins over rivals Sherborne, Marlborough and Canford, helping us achieve our joint best ever position in the Daily Mail league table. A mid-season blip ended the cup journey against a PGS side who executed their game better than us, however since then the boys have been unbeaten, including their final match against Canford where they posted a 51-0 scoreline. Trust and self-discipline have been a huge part of our conversations over the year; by maintaining our core values (through the HERRD acronym) we have the potential to challenge anyone.

I plan from May until March for either an outing to Twickenham or Rosslyn Park for the National 7s. This year it will be the latter and I can't wait for the next 3 or 4 months as we ramp up our efforts in preparation for two days of nationals, with tournaments at Seaford, PGS and Canford along the way. The boys leaving have been in my charge for 3 years and it has been an absolute pleasure working alongside them and watching them take to the field growing as rugby players, but also young men, from the 3^{rds} to the 1^{sts}, they have all been a credit to the school.

The team as a whole have been outstanding, but I must make a special mention of Xav Hastings who has been exceptional this season. Bath Academy have taken note and he is rewarded with a starting spot this weekend in the academy league and an opportunity to show case his skills at another level. Likewise Seb Jones who once was our most improved now does not surprise me with the things he does, one of the first names on the team sheet he was selected to play for the Irish Exiles earlier in the year.

With our 7s and football seasons to come, plus athletics and the small matter of Japan beyond that, I encourage all our boys to not stop, but have a little break for Christmas and then go and play for a club, keep the engine and hunger ticking over ready for next term. For the seniors go and play some colts' or even mens' sport, or get in the gym, jump on a rower, get running, do something to keep active and fit.

Tour/Sponsors/Volunteers

Blue Frontier and Fawcetts continue to support our sport, with the money used to provide match balls and also help develop our S&C programme throughout the school. We also have two substantial sponsors for the 40 boys on the Japan Multisport Tour in Clarify and Johnson Valves, who are kitting out the boys for the trip of a lifetime. Thanks must also go to Mr and Mrs Paden and the team for the £240 raised for the Rugby Tour.

Before we tour however we have the pleasure in welcoming our first international football tourists from Australia, Merewether High, Sydney. A great opportunity for our footballers who I know will gain a huge amount from the experience. I am also pleased to say the Cathedral School, Townsville will be visiting again in September to play rugby.

As always, a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us this term. With limited PE staffing and more boys than ever we cannot run without the good will of others. 17 staff, 10 parents (of current and past boys) and 8 old boys have volunteered their time over the course of the rugby season. In addition the 1st XV and senior players have coached and refereed the youngsters in morning matches before their own, while the sports leaders host the U12 7s tournament on the last Wednesday of term. It truly is a monumental team effort and so I thank you all for playing your part, the support we receive is overwhelming and thoroughly appreciated. Should you ever wish to help at all please do come forward as we are always in need of more volunteers.

The football dates are being pencilled in as we speak, the cross country is already in as are the rugby 7s, plus some indoor cricket, hockey and table tennis. We have never had so much going on!

http://www.bws-school.org.uk/Sports/Sports_Fixtures/

Have a great festive season and please encourage the boys to get out and keep on top of things as we wish to hit the ground running come the New Year!



R Demain-Griffiths
Director of Sport