

THE CULNC NEWSLETTER

lent term edition

CAMBRIDGE DECIMATE OXFORD IN HOME VARSITY

Written by Bella Grimes

On Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd 2025, CULNC sparred with historic rivals OUNC, for 5 Varsity matches, and an Alumni Showcase match. In what can only be described as a decimation of Oxford, Cambridge came away with 5 out of 6 wins, in a brilliant weekend of action at the University Sports Centre.

Saturday saw the Robins and Alumni matches open proceedings. The Alumni match saw an array of talent from both teams return to put on an excellent display of netball. Cambridge were dominant, and the win of 55-33 seemed inevitable from the start. The Robins, formed from the development squad at the end of Michaelmas term, went into the match with a series of wins against local club teams and schools. It was a closely fought match, excellent shooting and fast paced passing ensuring the win 35-33. Confidence in CULNC was building for Sunday.

The Wrens opened proceedings on Sunday morning - Oxford looked stunned at the idea of waking up for a 9am match but the Wrens were unphased - two terms of 8am training meant that this felt like a lie in. The match was exceptionally tight, but the



Photo Credits: Dik Ng

sense of belief this team had that they would win proved to be decisive, along with some exceptional intercepts and level headed shooting. The final score was 35-33

The Swallows were up next. Whilst they ended quarter 1 down, some exceptional shooting and key turnovers meant that the final score was 44-39. By this point, CULNC knew - we had won Varsity!

But the Jays said hold my waterbottle, we're not done yet. Taking to the stage with an increasingly packed crowd, they had something to prove. And prove it they did. A stunning display of what can only be described as liquid netball made their win seem easy - although it surely wasn't. 46-33 to Cambridge, the largest scoreline of the weekend.

Finally, the Blues took to the stage. From the start it became a fight for every ball, and the speed and strength shown by both Blues teams deserves to be commended. Captain Izzy Howse made her return to the court after over a year out on injury, and truly shone, moving with ease around the court and intercepting balls left right and centre. Despite some stunning shooting, and excellent gameplay from every single member, our Blues suffered a tight loss 38-40. Overall, it was an exceptional weekend of Netball, and every person who stepped onto court should be exceptionally proud of themselves. GDBO!

CAPTAIN'S COLUMN

THE 2024-25 SEASON IN NUMBERS

What a year it has been for CULNC! With what may be a record breaking number of newbies to the club, CULNC has seen so much hard work over the course of the season and I am so proud of the progress we have made as a club both on and off the court. All teams this year have trained twice a week (an increase for the Swallows and Wrens) and the Robins were selected before Christmas and were invited to Lent preseason so they could get vital court and coaching time and competition! All teams have seen wins this year, most impressively with our Wrens securing promotion after dominating the league, finishing with a whopping +441 goal difference!

Socially, our annual Christmas Dinner and Kit Nights have been huge successes and of course, Varsity dinner was also enjoyed by alumni, coaches, sponsors and players alike. The annual alumni match in January saw the return of many former CULNC members in a battle against our current club. A toughly fought battle but one that meant a win for our Alumni!

As you've already read, Varsity this year was a triumph for CULNC! 5/6 wins and huge support across the whole weekend for the Light Blues! The hard work put in by everyone was evident over the weekend but a big thank you must go to Issy, our President, for the dedication she showed to the event, and CULNC, all year, as all that organisation is no mean feat! The whole weekend, I was so proud of everyone for the way each team came together and fought in the closely contested matches we saw, and smiles were brought to everyone's faces by the new addition of the lion onesie!

Off the court, Josh and Josh have helped us stay (mainly!) injury free and improve our strength and power all year in S&C, and many of our players also took part in the Cambridge Half Marathon in March, raising money for charities close to their hearts.

I have loved being Club Captain this year, I am incredibly proud of all the girls and the growth we have shown on court and as a club. I place you in the wonderful hands of Hope who will be your new Club Captain for the 25/26 season, and your new Co-Presidents Issy and Emma! Thank you to everyone for this year - it's been wonderful, and I look forward to what next year has to hold!

25

BUCS matches won by our CULNC squad



176

Training hours spent at the University Sports Centre.



21

New Members of CULNC



5

Varsity Match Wins



Promotion for our Wrens to Division 5.

1



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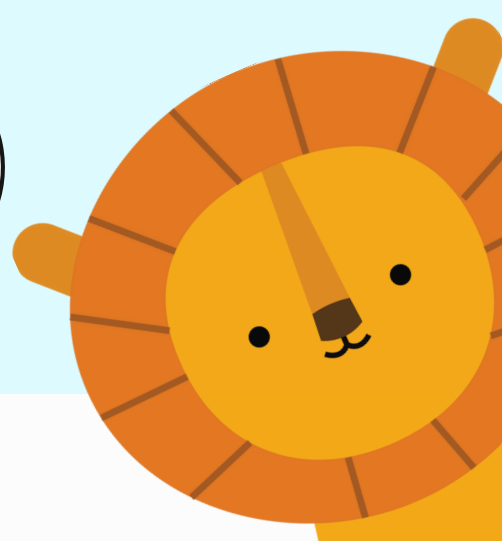


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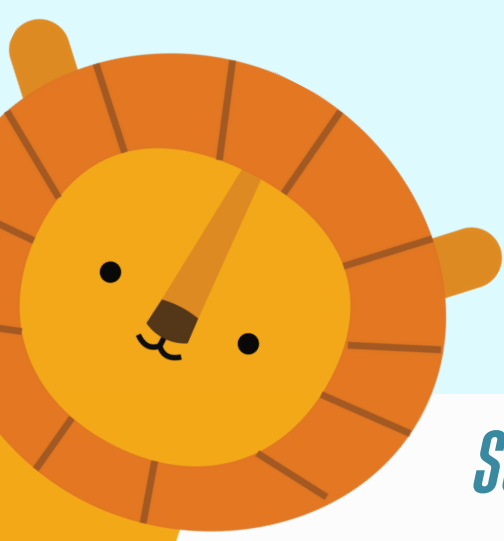
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BLUES

Captain Izzy Howse debriefs us on the Blues action this Lent...

Lent term for the Blues started nice and early in January with BUCS matches starting back up in pre-season. We continued to grow and saw some toughly fought matches: most notable, of course, was our triumph over Birmingham 3s away in Birmingham. We came down from a 5-0 start to win 37-25, and this win was Coach Jess's first win EVER away at Birmingham. The team also celebrated other milestones this term, with my return to court post ACL rupture, and more POMs for Nat (perhaps she made double digits??). The big event of any Lent term has to be Varsity, where unfortunately we were pipped by O*ford losing by only 2 goals - but rest assured there will be a rematch next year we are all determined to win! The Blues finish this year 5th in our league which should ensure we remain in Midlands Tier 1 next year. Whilst next year is looking incredibly exciting due to the influx of freshers to the Blues this year, we are gutted to say goodbye to two dedicated members of CULNC: Jade and Inès. Best wishes go from all of us to you and we can't wait to see your successes in the future! And that just about wraps up this year! Thank you to everyone who has helped us this year, in particular a huge thank you to Jess for simply being the best coach! I can't wait to see what next season has in store.



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JAYS

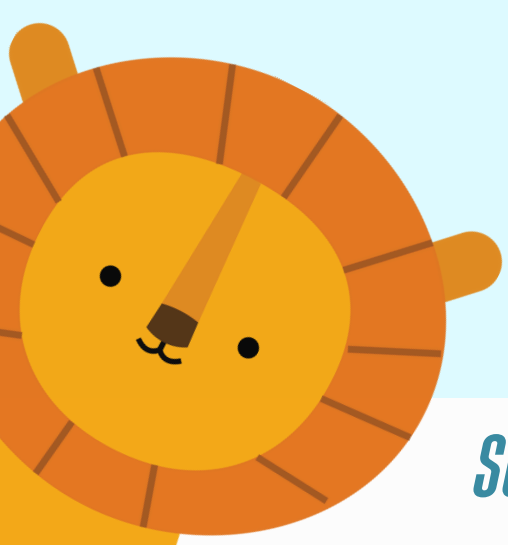
*Captain Issy Davey dives into the Jays
successful Lent Term...*

The Jays this season truly encompassed their team motto of 'Joyful Attitudes Yield Success'. With our fast bonding as a team, we truly played for each other throughout the season, achieving hard-fought wins in our challenging BUCS league, and winning our Varsity match by the largest margin of the weekend. Our depth as a team, combining CULNC veterans with talented freshers, meant our strengths stretched across the court and I am so proud looking back of how much we all developed as players.

It is so special to be able to spend a season playing and training week in week out with people who are both teammates and life-long friends. The group of women in this team inspire me on and off the court, and it has been an honour to captain them this season. Best of luck to those who are leaving Cambridge this year, and I can't wait to continue playing with those staying next year!



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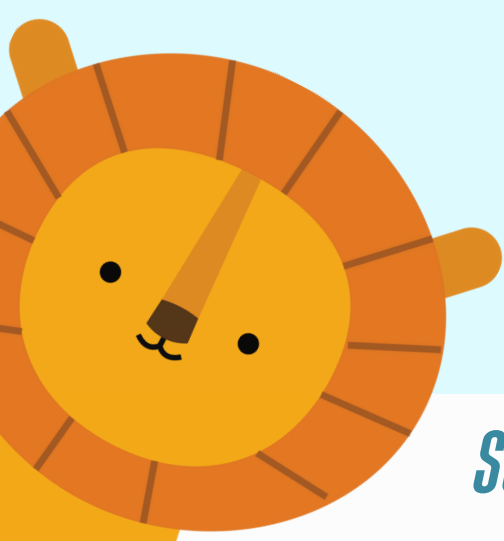
SWALLOWS

*Captains Fran Shutt and Anna Thompson
reflect on the second half of the season...*

The Swallows have taken BUCS Midlands Tier 3 by storm, only losing 2 league matches all season and finishing runners up despite only being promoted to the division this season. This included two wins over O*ford 2s, a win against Warwick 2s and two close, well-fought games against a physical Birmingham side. Alongside this, we took an incredible 44-39 win at Varsity, keeping hold of the trophy for another year! We want to thank our amazing coach Milly, who has been so supportive this season. The Swallows have thoroughly enjoyed this season both on and off court, and we have loved captaining this amazing team this year.



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WRENS

*Captain Lydia Khan reports on her teams
unprecedented success this term...*

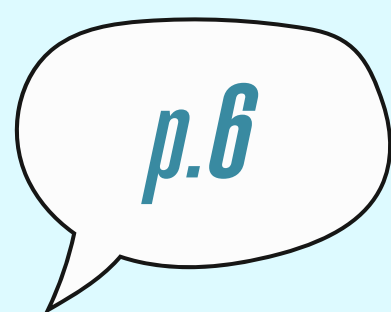
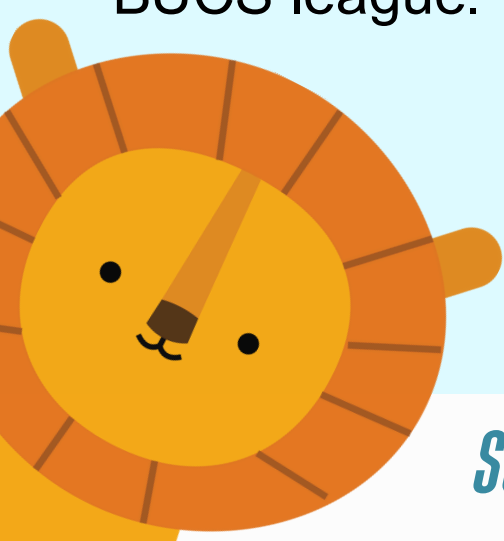
It's been an absolutely unforgettable season for the Wrens. In January preseason the Wrens faced one of their toughest matches yet against The Perse School, but despite the opposition putting up a tough fight the Wrens stole the win in the second half, setting the tone for the term that followed. The second half of the season was equally as successful as the first, starting Lent term with a huge 61-18 win away against De Montfort 2s. When we played them on home territory just a few weeks water, we pushed the win margin even further, winning 77-16. In the remaining BUCS games, we convincingly beat Northampton 2s 68-24, and Lincoln 4s 73-14, sailing straight to the top of the league by an enormous margin, meaning the Wrens will be promoted next year. The Wrens have also been unstoppable in the Midlands Conference Trophy, beating Derby in the quarter finals by a staggering 73-21. This win meant we went on the face O*ford away just days before Varsity. With the stakes being so high, the pressure had never been so high for the Wrens. After a tough game, the Wrens came out on top in their closest game yet, winning 37-34, setting the stage for an epic showdown on varsity weekend just days later.

In the final of the cup, the Wrens were set to face Nottingham 6s. In the Wrens toughest game to date, the girls gave it their all, staying within close reach of the opposition for the first half before slipping away in the second, losing 59-34. Despite the result, this is the Wrens only loss this season and to be runners up in the cup was an absolutely amazing achievement.

However, without a doubt the highlight of the season was our 35-33 win against O*ford at Varsity, a nail-biting, incredible performance from the Wrens. This was the perfect way to top off an unforgettable season, and I couldn't be more proud of the performance the girls put on at Varsity, and throughout the whole season. It has been a privilege to captain such a hardworking, talented and wonderful team, and our Varsity and BUCS wins are a testament to all the hours of training and hard work we put in throughout the season, as well as to our incredible coach Jess. I have every faith that the Wrens will continue the successes of this season next year and I wish them the best of luck in their new BUCS league.



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A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



This season has been one of CULNCs most successful to date. We welcomed record numbers of members, achieved some of our hardest fought victories, and celebrated our incredible 4-1 overall Varsity win. Looking at how far we have developed as a squad, I am so proud of every single player and the grit, passion and dedication that they have shown. Our Robins, coached by CULNC's own Dev-Squad Officers, shone at Varsity. They played an incredibly high standard of netball and secured our first, critical win of the weekend. The Wrens reached a CULNC-first Cup final, as well as going unbeaten in their BUCS league. Our Swallows fought impressive battles in

their newly-promoted-to division, with highlights including a hugely impressive win against Oxford 2s. The Jays won their Varsity match for the first time since 2022, and achieved critical wins in their challenging BUCS league. And our incredible Blues, with a record-number of freshers, demonstrated their immense talent throughout the season, being true role models as the brilliant, inspiring sportswomen they are. The future of CULNC is very bright. None of our achievements this season could have happened without all of the amazing people behind the scene. Thank you to our sponsors, Brown Shipley and Oxbow Partners, for continually supporting us and allowing us to keep

University Netball accessible, so that we can play the sport that we love. Thank you to the amazing CULNC committee, for the hours and hours of work that you have put in to keep the club running. Thank you to the Cam Uni Sport team, our amazing coaches Jess and Millie, and our S & C coaches Josh and Josh for helping us keep the standard of netball so high. And finally thank you to every CULNC member, for making this club the best anyone could ask for, and making this season so special.

Here's to another incredible season, I can't wait to see what's to come.

SOME GOODBYES...

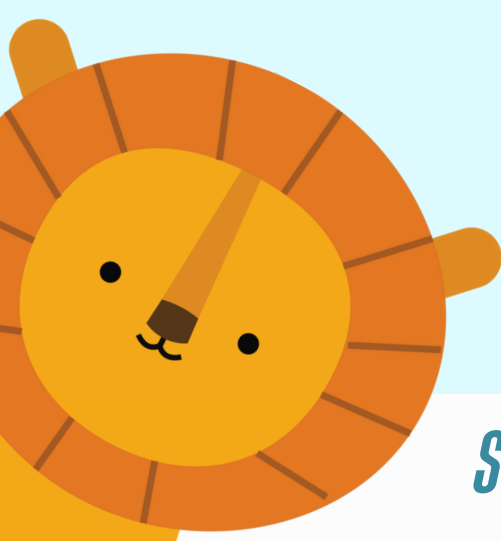
As the 2024-2025 Season ends, we have to say goodbye to some very familiar faces at CULNC, as some of our players take the next step in their lives: be that starting work, further education, year abroads, or simply a well deserved rest! We wish you all the best of luck in your futures, and hope that you will stay in contact through our Alumni network (or return to study and CULNC). You have all added so much hard work, laughter, and joy to CULNC and we hope that you look back at your time with the club with fond memories.

Jade Popoola
Lucy Thompson
Scarly Knight

Camille Phelps
Anna Thompson
Ines Lefranc

Phoebe Chapman
Bella Grimes
Kate Godsmark

Fran Shutt
Lydia Khan
Abbie Burton
Lauren Dawson



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