SCOTTISH CUP 2017-2018

The Shetland Ladies netball team travelled away on the 4th Novemeber to take part in the Scottish Cup qualifier tournament held at the Oriam Sports Complex at Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh.

Shetland, in group 2 were alongside Onyx of Edinburgh, as well as two Glasgow based teams, Harmony Row and Bella Houston. The standard of play on the day was high with many faces from the Scottish National team completing with their club team sides.

Shetland were up against Onyx in the first game, Onyx had knocked Shetland out of the competition last year in the later rounds, so the Shetland team knew it was going to be a tough first fixture. Onyx were first to mark the scoresheet but Shetland were quick to reply, Shetland managed to hold Onyx from an immediate break but with a few turn overs, Onyx found their rhythm and pulled ahead leaving the half time score 13-7. Shetland’s Sanna Aitken unfortunately suffered a knee injury in the first half of the game and was unable to continue. Onyx changed 5 out of 7 players at half time and Shetland’s Tahnae MacLennan made her debut for the senior team at WA. Shetland pulled back to 15-20 with sharp play from Claire Morris at C and some accurate long distance shooting from Kirsti Leask GS. Onyx defence were tall and physical making Shetland have to work hard to keep possession in and around the shooting circle. With interceptions from Onyx Iona Holmes (a familiar Shetland face) WD and Ella Christie GK Onyx held their lead to the end with game finishing 27-16.

Up Next Shetland had Harmony Row. Shetland started strong pulling ahead 6-1 in first few minutes of the game. Victoria Duthie WD and Maisie Unsworth GD demonstrated determined defending forcing errors and allowing Kim Johnson GK to drop off her player and hunt for the interception in the circle and the first half finished 9-2 to Shetland. Going into the Second half Tahnae MacLennan moved from the bench into GS and Emma Leask came in to WD. The Shetland defence continued to prove difficult to penetrate picking up lots of loose balls and converting these into goals to increase the lead. The Shetland team finished comfortably with a final score of 19-8.

The final game of the day was against Bella Houston 2. This game was the most physical so far which caused some scrappy play in the mid court as Shetland tried to settle into a different style of game. Victoria Duthie demonstrated good mental strength in C, after enduring some resistance from the Bella C. Shetland pulled ahead and managed to hold the score at 14-9 for half time. Vicki Smith swapped to C in the second half and Victoria moved into WD. Shetland appeared much more calm and dominant during this half and started to gain some momentum. With 3 minutes to go Kirsti Leask sustained an ankle injury and Tahnae Maclennan came in to the shooting circle once again. Shetland managed to hold their lead and finished the game 29-16.

Overall Shetland finished in second place in their group, this was the position the team had aimed towards and this has secured them a place in the Scottish Cup competition. The top two teams in each group enter the Scottish Cup competition and the 3rd and 4th place teams enter the Evelyn Beattie Quaich. The team should find out this week their overall seed and who they will face in their first game of the knock out rounds.

Coach Kirsti Leask was proud of the team’s performance on the day, the team gelled really well together especially with some new faces joining the squad. Each year we continue to build on previous performances and show mainland sides we are a strong team to contend with. The Scottish cup is a great way for Shetland players to gain experience and have the opportunity to play against some of Scotland’s best club players as well as Scottish national team players. A big thank you to Morag Fox for travelling with the team as our umpire on the day.