

## Ladies First team captain

Blanche

Q&A



Blanche in action

**You are the captain of a side that is unbeaten this season, has scored over one hundred goals and has been promoted, how does that feel?**

It feels absolutely amazing!! Bristol and West Ladies has only been going for 3 seasons so to be completely unbeaten and have scored as many goals is just great. I feel like we have always worked hard as a team and felt disappointed in previous seasons with the results as they have not been a reflection on how amazing and talented the ladies are. Something has just clicked this season and we have been unstoppable! To not loose a game and score so many goals (think we are past the 110 mark now) in our division is unheard of really. Having been with the team since it formed it's a really proud moment as captain and I am lucky to have such a fantastic team both on and off the pitch although gutted not to have nabbed myself one of those goals.

**Are all your team Meldonium free?**

Erm... I hope so!! Ha ... I confirm that the results are down to a lot of hard work both on and off the pitch!

**Last year you finished about mid table, what has made the big difference this year?**

I feel the previous two seasons we were getting to know each other and positions as well as gelling as a squad. The ladies have always had this talent a lot of them like myself had played at a higher level for different teams before so it was a case of coming back to hockey after a break and finding a position within a new team again.

SCORING!! Has also been the other major difference we lost so many games by 1 goal last year and appeared to really lack forwards / consistent scorers we definitely had the same opportunities which was really frustrating. However this season I feel like there is more confidence within the squad goals are coming from a variety of players rather than over reliance on one or two players which has increased confidence in all the girls and their shooting ability.

Also this season we had a dedicated coach Stuart Bryant and he has been an absolute game changer he has helped us gel together as a team as well as working on individual skills within the game. All the ladies really enjoy Stuart's coaching and have so much respect for his commitment, enthusiasm and experience as well as his gentle manner its definitely been a winning formula this year! Stuart has been key in building confidence in the girls as individuals from beginners to the most experienced players as well as bringing out some of the best play within the team.

**What is the feeling in the squad about next year, do you think that you should go for consolidation or can you get promotion two seasons on the bounce?**

I think the feeling amongst the ladies next year is definitely a mixture of excitement and nervousness, we really cannot wait to take on the higher level teams and be challenged however there is some apprehension about being completely undefeated this season and how that may effect confidence going up against more experienced teams next year. This is something we can definitely work on over the summer league we have entered a tough competition and hope to raise our standard again before then!

Two promotions two years in a row would be a dream but we need to be realistic and don't want to go up to quickly without taking stock and developing to end up demoted again so I think we would like to hold our own in the league next year and finish comfortably mid table then go for promotion the year after again.... However if it happens it happens watch this space!

**There is a rumour that some of the ladies have been attracted to Bristol & West because of the fabulous orange shirts and matching socks. What attracted you and what do you think of the club?**

Ha there is some truth in that! For me personally I got asked to come down to a training session by a friend I hadn't been playing for a year and half as I had tried 2 or 3 clubs in the city and they just weren't for me I was almost going to give hockey up! When I came to Bristol and West all the other ladies where really lovely and the club is big enough to offer good quality coaching as well as lots

going on socially. I was looking for the right balance of sport and social mix and feel this club has it for me!

All most all the ladies I know solely through playing hockey for this club and can say they have all become great friends, they are all different ages and from different experience some new to the sport others old timers and all have something unique to offer and so friendly and welcoming to everyone which makes every Saturday almost like a day out with your mates with a bit of hockey thrown in. I don't feel many captains are as privileged as I am to share the field with 10 of their good friends and have such a laugh regardless of the score each weekend.

**What is the skill you personally would most like to improve next season?**

Guess I should learn how to score some goals so I can make a contribution to the next 100!