

14 September 2007

NETBALL SEASON STARTS WITH A NEW SPONSOR

THIS year's netball season begins next week (18 September) with a new sponsor and a new structure.

The Guernsey Netball Association has secured a two-year sponsorship deal with the Praxis Group

The funds will be primarily used to enhance learning and development opportunities for the GNA Praxis League players, allowing the GNA to run performance sessions, umpire coaching and player courses.

With the new sponsor on board, and in a change from previous years, the GNA is also introducing a plate competition, which will add some excitement to the usual fight for the division titles.

By Christmas the eight teams in each division will have played each other twice. The top four teams will battle it out for the title with the remaining teams competing for a plate trophy.

Last season saw Nerine A come out on top of division one, Nerine D winning division two, Heritage Two taking the division three title and Close Encounters (now known as the Marlborough Delights)

With a fair bit of movement within the bigger clubs with multiple teams, particularly within the lower divisions, predictions are hard to make.

'Most people would probably go with Nerine A for the division one title, but the new line-ups for Nerine B and Sarnians could shake things up a little,' said Bridget Yabsley, president of the Guernsey Netball Association.

'Heritage One and P&J Conservatories One should have a good chance in division two

but Nerine E, Nerine F and the Heritage Hawks are all close contenders. Division three is a lot harder to call; HSBC Honeys, P&J Conservatories Two, Marlborough Close, Autumn Gold and Nerine H are all looking good. Newcomer Fairbairn could cause a few upsets in division four where Heritage Two are the current favourites.'

Mrs Yabsley is looking forward to the new season and the training and development opportunities that it will bring.

'The support from our new sponsor, Praxis, has allowed us to plan for future training and coaching which will be of huge benefit to all players, coaches and umpires. The plate competition will also add a new edge to the league,' she said.

Simon Thornton, managing director of the Praxis Group, said: 'I hope our support will help the GNA in its continued development of the sport on the island. We actively encourage staff to adopt a healthy lifestyle such as getting involved in sport to increase their fitness levels, so sponsoring the Netball League really complements our company culture. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the teams and players in the GNA Praxis League luck for this season and look forward to monitoring their progress.'