

Castle vs Manchester City 2

20th October 2013

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Dave Attwood, Dave Webb

Division Y: Tom Shave, Reuben Hillyer, Clare Dadswell (Anouk Andeweg, 40 mins), Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Gordon Banks Leisure Centre

We opened the season at home with a close game against Manchester City 2. After trailing all of the first half and most of the second we stayed in contention and eventually pulled ahead 11-10 in the second half, tantalising close to the end, only to lose 13-15 at full time. It was nonetheless a very good opening against one of the stronger teams in the league. Castle managed to play with a full eight (quite a novelty from last year) with goals evenly spread at both ends, although all from the boys. The girls provided excellent support play and we'll be looking to exploit their attacking ability to a greater extent in the upcoming games. The match also saw Anouk Andeweg's debut, subbing on for Clare 10 minutes into the second half. Despite the disappointing result, all in all it was a promising start and a good base to build upon for the rest of the season.

Final Score: Home loss

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 13

Manchester City: 15

Castle Scorers: Dave Attwood (5), Dave Webb (1), Tom Shave (5), Reuben Hillyer (2)

Castle vs Manchester Hawks 2

3rd November 2013

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Clare Dadswell, Dave Attwood, Dave Webb

Division Y: Tom Shave, Reuben Hillyer, Anouk Andeweg), Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Gordon Banks Leisure Centre

The second match of the season (also at home) opened with more promise than the first - everyone was there in good time, we had some balls (of the korf variety), Dave Attwood remembered his shorts, Tom Shave remembered to put his shirt on and, in the second match of the CERL2 season, we recorded our first win, running out 13-5 victors to last year's league winners Manchester Hawks 2.

In an at times quite physical game, we more than held our own and won by a very comfortable and satisfying margin, leading from the outset and never really looking threatened, with goals in abundant supply at both ends.

As of today's match we also have a new lucky charm in 16 week old Jessica Allinson, attending her very first Castle match. Happily we are no longer reliant on British Summer Time for wins.

Final Score: Home win

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 13

Manchester Hawks: 5

Castle Scorers: Dave Attwood (6), Dave Webb (1), Eleanor Hopkins (1), Tom Shave (4), Reuben Hillyer (1)

Castle vs Sheffield Hallam University 1

10th November 2013

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Clare Dadswell, Dave Attwood, Dave Webb

Division Y: Tom Shave, Reuben Hillyer, Anouk Andeweg, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Gordon Banks Leisure Centre

Castle's third home game in a row saw a 13-5 loss to Sheffield Hallam University. A two minute silence was observed before the start of the game and this proved to be the most peaceful part of the entire afternoon. The game was marred by the at times unsporting conduct of the opposition and saw the rare

appearance of a yellow card against one of Hallam's boys. Hallam is quite a physical team, with a lot of height in both the boys and girls, and they counted amongst their number quite a few basketball players. Hallam front defended and marked the ball lines extremely well, intercepting balls and making it difficult for us to both pass out of defence and within attack, although we began to come back and make headway in the last quarter of the game. Anouk did an excellent job of marking out feeds when Ann's girl ran around the post, with Ann switching to Anouk's player in each case - a tactic that worked well and quite smoothly. Clearly used to playing in a larger hall, Hallam were happy to take on (with mixed results) what Castle might consider unfeasibly long shots.

All in all, Hallam were a highly competitive team, but let themselves down with their constant and vocal bickering at the referee; hats off to Jon for keeping control of things and to Castle for not letting ourselves get ruffled by their behaviour. Neither side ended the game feeling particularly good about it, even the victors - a sure sign of things being amiss.

Final Score: Home loss

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 5

Sheffield Hallam University: 13

Castle Scorers: Tom Shave (3), Dave Attwood (2)

Manchester University 1 vs Castle

24th November 2013

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Dave Attwood, Dave Webb

Division Y: Tom Shave, Jon Allinson, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Armitage Centre, Manchester

Our fourth game of the season and first away from home saw us at the Armitage Centre to play Manchester University 1, fresh from their exploits of the previous day at the Regionals. Unfortunately for Castle, Man Uni did not seem to be suffering any ill effects after a long weekend of korfbal. The newly sprung floor at the Armitage Centre also proved very slippery and Dave Attwood suffered an injured ankle towards the end of the first half, going off for ice and assessment and returning in the second half to play zonal korfbal on one leg. This saw Dave Attwood largely covering the post (with some brave attempts at goal and shutting down his opponent) and Dave Webb selflessly playing 'outfield'. However, despite our best attempts we lost 18-8.

Final Score: Away loss

Manchester University: 18

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 8

Castle Scorers: Tom Shave (3), Dave Atwood (1), Dave Webb (1), Clare Dadswell (1), Christine Wilson (1), Jon Allinson (1)

Leeds University 1 vs Castle

8th December 2013

Division X: Anouk Andeweg, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Dave Webb

Division Y: Tom Shave, Chris Betteridge, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Gryphon Centre, Leeds

Our fifth game of the season, and last of 2013, was against Leeds University 1 at the Gryphon Centre. The build up to the game saw a number of injuries, with Dave Atwood testing out his injured ankle at Tuesday night training only to aggravate the injury and, in the adjoining county, Eleanor coming a-cropper to a posh South Cheshire College korfbal post. Pictures on Facebook and Jon's understated email, "El's fingers look awful and her thumb is missing" filled a young captain's heart with dread. With Dave out of commission and Reuben in full swing "Operation-Move-Down-South" the time was more than ripe for a debut by promising newcomer Chris Betteridge, and Anouk Andeweg kindly slotted in a 200 mile round trip amid her exam preparations to cover for the (temporarily) one-handed Eleanor. Despite a strong line up, coming back to briefly lead 5-4 towards the end of the first half (which finished 5-5), and taking the first goal at the beginning of the second half, we eventually lost the match,

somewhat downheartedly, 13-9. On the positive side, Chris put in an excellent C1 performance and scored a debut goal, which holds lots of promise for the future.

Final Score: Away loss

Leeds University: 13

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 9

Castle Scorers: Dave Webb (4), Jon Allinson (2), Tom Shave (1), Clare Dadswell (1), Chris Betteridge (1)

Manchester Hawks 2 vs Castle

12th January 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Tom Shave

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Parrs Wood School, Manchester

Our sixth game of the season and opening match of 2014 saw us away to Manchester Hawks 2 at Parrs Wood School. We had beaten Hawks at home earlier in the season with a comfortable 13-5 win and so travelled to Manchester with some hope of reversing a recent run of losses. Team Captain Ann had also taken the decision to mix up our divisions, switching the girls to see if we could improve our form.

Despite six different faces in the Hawks' line up from our previous encounter and an obvious improvement in their form since then, Castle took the lead in the first half and were winning 8-7 at half time. However, although we scored the first goal of the second half within 5 seconds of the restart through Eleanor Hopkins, the second half was a very nervy affair with Hawks quickly scoring a succession of goals which saw them draw level. Most of the second half was played at a frenetic pace, as though there were only minutes of the match remaining, and towards the end the lead swung back and forth with both teams looking likely winners.

Castle's ball retention and shot recycling throughout the game was good, leading to increased goal opportunities and experienced Castle heads saw us regain the lead when it mattered most. A coolly taken penalty by Tom Shave towards the end of the match seemed to give Castle momentum and, when the scores were level at 16-16, a well-placed Webb runner and a trademark Attwood long shot saw us sitting pretty two goals ahead with minutes to go. Indeed, the gap was enough to secure the win, with Castle eventually trotting out 18-16 winners in a nail biting finish.

In a highly competitive match it was a good team performance from Castle with strong play from everyone on court and an outstanding number of goals scored by Dave Attwood, who almost took the Club record for most goals in a single regional level match.

Final Score: Away win

Manchester Hawks: 16

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 18

Castle Scorers: Eleanor Hopkins (2), Jon Allinson (2), Tom Shave (4), Dave Attwood (8), Dave Webb (2)

Sheffield Hallam University 1 vs Castle

19th January 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Chris Betteridge

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: English Institute of Sport, Sheffield

Castle had not been looking forward with great anticipation to the return match against Sheffield Hallam University 1. A long drive for an evening match in South Yorkshire, albeit at the English Institute of Sport, against opposition who had lacked discipline in their match against us at the Gordon Banks did not fill anyone with great relish. The game was played in the middle court of a large hall on a long,

narrow court and, I think to everyone's surprise, Castle took an early 2-0 lead. A competitive first half saw Castle keep Hallam within touching distance throughout and the half time score was 9-6 to Hallam.

The second half continued in the same competitive manner but we were unable to close the gap and, despite our best attempts, saw it slowly widen, with the final score 19-11 to Hallam.

Chris Betteridge put in another great and much appreciated performance, his second for Castle 1, tracking both his original player and second half substitute with great energy and making a number of important interceptions. Goals came from a variety of sources and Castle dealt much better with Hallam's ball line marking, not struggling as much as we did in our first encounter to play the ball around in attack or out of defence.

All in all it was a good match, we gave a good account of ourselves, the opposition contained the unsporting behaviour that had marred our first encounter and it turned out to be a worthwhile trip after all.

Final Score: Away loss

Sheffield Hallam University: 19

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 11

Castle scorers: Eleanor Hopkins (1), Jon Allinson (2), Dave Attwood (4), Dave Webb (2), Ann Diskin (1)

Manchester City 2 vs Castle

2nd February 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Chris Betteridge

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Sale Leisure Centre, Manchester

Castle travelled in a state of confused optimism to play Manchester City 2 at the Sale Sauna this afternoon. We were optimistic since our opening match of the season had been a thoroughly enjoyable, well contested affair that we narrowly lost, but confused as since that time Man City had been riding high in the league, currently sitting second, whereas it would be fair to say that Castle had suffered a more chequered season.

Man City, as might be expected, fielded a slightly stronger home team than the team that travelled to the Gordon Banks Leisure Centre, but we managed to stay in contention throughout the first half and at half time, somewhat to our own surprise, realised we were only trailing by one goal (10-9). Our excitement was palpable as the second half started, especially as it opened to a Castle goal. Fortunately, unlike on a few previous occasions, the excitement wasn't misplaced and was channelled into positive, confident play as we managed to stay largely in control of proceedings. A flurry of goals were scored by both teams and Castle pulled ahead in the last five minutes to a comfortable three goal lead and eventual 20-17 win.

This contest proved another enjoyable, competitive game. It was pleasing to see the girls get in amongst the goals this time and Clare and Ann made Jon a particularly happy coach with their switching (apparently the first training session technique that any of us have ever bothered to apply in a match situation). Dave Attwood took another huge goal haul, equalling his Manchester Hawks record, and Jon wasn't far behind.

According to resident Stato (aka Jon, powered by Dave Attwood's sour Skittles and unbridled joy) on the drive back down the M6, today's win represents Castle's finest performance since records began in 1750 or, to be more accurate:

- ☐ Castle's highest regional league goal scoring exploit since November 2000 (which was away against Sheffield Uni on a Thursday night, 20-6)
- ☐ The first time Castle has had 2 wins in January since 2009
- ☐ The first time Castle has won 2 games outside of British Summer Time since 2011
- ☐ The first time a Castle player (Dave Attwood, we mean you) has scored more than 6 goals twice or more in a season since 2008
- ☐ The first time ever a team has scored 17 goals against Castle and still lost

- The first time 2 different players have scored 7 or more goals ever

Car trips with Jon are FUN.

Final score: Away win

Manchester City: 17

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 20

Castle scorers: Eleanor Hopkins (1), Christine Wilson (1), Jon Allinson (7), Chris Betteridge (2), Dave Attwood (8), Dave Webb (1).

Castle vs Leeds City 2

9th February 2014

Division X: Tom Shave, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Chris Betteridge, Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson

Venue: Gordon Banks Leisure Centre

Leeds City came to the Gordon Banks riding high, second in the regional league table. However, Castle, although mid table, had been undergoing somewhat of a renaissance in recent matches and so it proved today as we got off to an immense start, very quickly leading 5-0, to a mixture of our own delight and incredulity. We managed to maintain the lead to half time, catching a breather at 8-5.

The second half saw Castle remain in control, not conceding the lead at any point, and with goals abundant in both divisions. The lead up play to both of Christine's goals, in particular, was a classic demonstration of controlled and patient attack, with excellent ball retention and two masterfully taken opportunities.

Castle ended a very competitive and sporting match with an impressive 16-10 win and our best performance of the season to date. Indeed, Jon has now taken to referring to us (not so) privately as the Castleteers.

Chris B finally got to play a home game and now has a 100% record to defend and Dave A (current league top scorer) seems only willing to score in multiples of four. It's hip to be square.

Final score: Home win

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 16

Leeds City: 10

Castle scorers: Tom Shave (4), Dave Webb (3), Eleanor Hopkins (1), Christine Wilson (2), Dave Attwood (4), Chris Betteridge (2)

Sheffield University 1 vs Castle

1st March 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Tom Shave

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Concord Sports Centre

After two good wins on the trot Castle had an ill-timed three week hiatus before our next match, well and truly disrupting any momentum we might have been building. However, with Sheffield Uni languishing second from the bottom of the league we had hopes of winning our third match in a row.

So it was we faced Sheffield University 1 at the Concord Sports Centre in Sheffield in a match rearranged from the Sunday to the Saturday (due to hall booking problems and not just to suit Sunderland fan Clare who had plans to watch her team in the Capital One League Cup on the Sunday - hard luck Clare, by the way).

The game proved to be a very stop-start, bitty affair throughout. Sheffield seemed reluctant to take shots whereas Castle were the reverse, taking numerous shots, most of which stubbornly refused to drop. However, at half time Castle were leading 7-3 and we seemed to have a nice cushion. Unfortunately, that cushion didn't remain for long with the resumption of the second half, Sheffield quickly scoring three goals and bringing themselves back into contention. Fortunately, we kept our heads once again and began to sink some goals and pulled back ahead. Christine scored a lovely running in shot, expertly jiggling past her opponent and, although she didn't score, Clare had the measure of her player, running her constantly and always finding herself in lots of space. Ann continued her trend of only being able to score in South Yorkshire, sinking a long shot, and Dave Attwood and Tom were their consistent reliable selves. Although quite a low scoring game this was due in large part to an excellent defensive performance by Castle.

In the end, Castle won ugly (in a good spirited match) running out 10-8 winners. We face Sheffield Uni again next week in the home fixture; will it be an unprecedented four wins on the spin?

Final score: Away win

Sheffield University: 8

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 10

Castle scorers: Dave Attwood (3), Tom Shave (3), Jon Allinson (2), Ann Diskin (1), Christine Wilson (1).

Castle vs Sheffield University 1

9th March 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Jon Allinson, Chris Betteridge

Division Y: Dave Attwood, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Malbank School & Sixth Form College

The return leg of our Sheffield University match saw Castle turn out at our temporary home venue of Malbank High School. The sun was bright, the air was warm, we hefted poles, bases and baskets into the hall, the opposition found us despite the road works...

Played on a comparatively much wider, shorter court, than Sheffield's long, narrow court of last week, we started strongly, taking an early lead in spite of Dave Attwood being really quite unwell, Christine suffering from a cold (and requesting that we make her calls for her) and Ann with her runny nose. Dave was dosed up on paracetemols and not helped by his team mates who managed to strike him forcefully in the face with the ball on three separate occasions. Nevertheless, at half time we were leading 7-5 and stretched this lead with a few more goals in the opening minutes of the second half, but then Sheffield Uni began their slow, relentless upswing. Despite our best efforts, they took the lead for the first time with about ten minutes remaining and held onto it grimly, finally running out 10-11 victors. In a much more cohesive match than that played in Sheffield we rather let this one slip through our fingers.

This match was brought to you courtesy of Eleanor's car trailer, Ann's one woman second half "Castle!" shout (where were you teamies?), the return of the Coopers and Dave A's oddly shivering knees. Next week, University of Manchester 1.

Final Score: Home loss

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 10

Sheffield University: 11

Castle scorers: Dave Webb (4), Dave Attwood (3), Chris Betteridge (2), Ann Diskin (1)

Castle vs Manchester University 1

16th March 2014

Division X: Eleanor Hopkins, Christine Wilson, Dave Attwood, Chris Betteridge

Division Y: Tom Shave, Dave Webb, Clare Dadswell, Ann Diskin (c)

Venue: Malbank School & Sixth Form College

Castle lined up against Manchester University 1 at the Malbank this afternoon.

Things did not start auspiciously as Clare and Ann entered the hall only to find it in complete darkness with Dave Webb at the other end, discernible only by the glow of his mobile phone screen as he searched for a light switch (which was conveniently placed on the other side of a locked door). Fortunately a member of staff was on hand with a set of keys, unfortunately the keys did not seem to fit the locks. Like Sheffield last week, Man Uni had already arrived at the venue en masse ahead of us, and looking disconcertingly tall, energetic and not the least bit hungover.

Shortly into our warm up we realised we'd forgotten to check how Tom was getting to the venue and to double check he knew it was at the Malbank. Both teams were also in purple, but Eleanor who possesses an Aladdin's Cave of korf goodies (i.e. the boot of her car), had a selection of bibs to hand.

Tom arrived and we fielded a full team in the light (albeit it with an injured Eleanor) but, nevertheless, started badly, allowing Man Uni to open first a 4-0 lead and then move 6-1 in front. By halftime we'd stopped the rot and pulled back to a more respectable 5-8. Taking the first goal in the second half, it looked like we could push on and reverse our fortunes of last week, winning from behind this time rather than losing from in front.

Dave Webb earned a penalty (which Tom duly sank) when his opponent, whom he'd run, crashed into his back in a failed attempt to recover his defensive position.

Clare, who'd waited all season to open her account, duly scored two goals, one of which was a rather lovely runner, and the injured Eleanor, who could choose to either run or balance (but not both), sank three.

Two goals behind, with only a minute remaining on the clock, saw Castle admirably regroup rather than give in to the inevitable, putting in a burst of extra effort, aware just how quickly a goal can be scored. Dave Attwood duly got one for us, bringing us tantalising close to the draw. However, sixty-seconds proved not quite long enough and Castle succumbed to another frustrating one goal defeat, losing 13-14, having never gotten our noses in front.

Ann closed the match by asking Castle to give Man Uni "Three Years". It was a hard day; incarceration appeared to be the obvious solution.

Next week sees Castle back on more familiar ground (and hopefully winning ways) at the Gordon Banks for our last home game of the season against Leeds Uni.

Final Score: Home loss

Castle (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 13

Manchester University: 14

Castle scorers: Tom Shave (4), Dave Attwood (3), Eleanor Hopkins (3), Clare Dadswell (2), Dave Webb (1)