

24<sup>th</sup> September 2012

St Colms were in Cork last weekend to participate in the U18 National Cup Qualifying rounds. The girls were the sole representatives from Limerick as they competed with the top 20 teams in Ireland for the most sought after title in underage girls basketball.

The girls were included in a very tough pool that comprised last year's winners and strong favourites for this season's title, Brunel from Cork. The other teams were Dublin's top side DCU Mercy, Galway's sole representative Titans as well as a second Dublin team Tolka Rovers.

4 teams were playing for the second qualifying spot, as in truth Brunel are simply a class apart from any other team in Ireland. As expected Brunel easily topped the pool with 4 comfortable wins.

The girls started the weekend with a game against Tolka Rovers. The first quarter was an edgy affair with both teams slow to settle. Once nerves were set aside, our girls started to play and sealed the win with an excellent second quarter performance where they outscored their opponents 19-8. The second half was an opportunity for all the players on the panel to get court time. The girls won out 37-24 with Caoimhe Gleeson 10 and Becky Cleary 8 top scorers for Colms.

The girls next faced Brunel in their second game. Brunel showed their class opening up a 15-1 lead before our girls could draw breath. They cruised through the rest of the game easing to a 69-31 win. Ciara O' Halloran and Caoimhe Gleeson led the scoring for Colms on 14 and 10 points respectively.

Things did not get easier for our girls, as they faced up to their third game on Saturday against DCU. Both teams came into the game with one win each and a defeat to Brunel. The winners of this game would put themselves in pole position for the second qualifying spot. The girls were again slow out of the blocks allowing their Dublin opponents an early 9-0 lead. The girls regrouped to cut the deficit to 8-11 by the end of the first quarter. The second quarter followed suit with our girls allowing DCU 3 cheap baskets from silly turnovers. The girls spent the rest of the game playing catch up. They were also not helped by missing a staggering 23 free throws throughout the game. The final score of 62-39 certainly flatters DCU although nobody cannot argue that DCU deserved their win. Lynsey Purcell top scored for Colms on 14 followed by Ciara Stapleton on 7.

The girls were a little deflated as they faced up to Titans in their fourth and final game on Sunday. The sides were level 23 apiece at the interval as a result of our girls lack of intensity in defence. They were also not helped by Caoimhe Gleeson sitting out most of the first half after getting into early foul trouble. Defence was rectified in the third quarter after a stern talking to by their coach Ray Slattery. They were never in danger in the second half and eased to a 40-34 win with Lynsey Purcell top scoring on 14 followed by Ciara O' Halloran on 11 and Chloe Dineen on 6.

The girls played exceptionally well over the weekend, and with all bar one of the players underage again next season, hopes will be high that the girls will make the

breakthrough. The u18 panel last weekend were Lynsey Purcell, Ciara Stapleton, Grace Kavanagh, Aoife O' Connell, Chloe Dineen, Fiona O' Connell, Becky Cleary, Caoimhe Gleeson, Aileen O' Connor, Eimear Dollard, Aoife Keegan, Roisin Duggan and Ciara O' Halloran.

Next weekend the girls start up their Cork League campaign with an away trip to Douglas to face Fr Mathews. Our U15 girls are also in action against Fr Mathews as they play their maiden game in the Cork league.

The club are starting up a Juvenile Wheelchair Basketball section this season. Training takes place every Wednesday from 6.30 to 8.00 in CBS Gym, Sexton Street. The session is open to all players under 16.