



GIRLS PATHWAY CHAMPION AFC FRADLEY

Hi, I'm Laurie. I'm a mum to three wonderful children (1 boy and 2 girls), and I am thrilled to be a part of AFC Fradley and take on the role of Girls Champion.

I am such a fan of football and am very proud to be a part of the AFC Fradley Beaufighters women's team. I began playing football with my brother in the garden and would go and watch him play every week whilst my Dad coached. I was always having a kick about with his teammates and always wanted to be a part of their team. Things were very different all those years ago, as girls were not allowed to mix as part of a boys team (luckily for my brother, as I was always so much better than he was!)

Fast forward a few years and I began playing for a women's team, the first women's team at that club and loved every second. After a few years of playing, I then had to hang up my boots as weekend work and my season ticket to WBA got in the way!

Fast forward quite a few more years and my son was born. As he grew older his love for football grew and grew, meaning I was able to have a kick around with him, making me realise how much I missed the game and how much I loved to play.

So, with the powers of social media, a post about a women's football training session was uploaded, I went along, and I haven't looked back since!

I scored my first goal for The Beaus last week, whilst my son was watching me this time!

Why do you ask, am I waffling on, or why did I want to become the Girls Champion? My answer is incredibly simple. Football gives everyone who loves it so much joy, confidence and happiness and it teaches you resilience, self belief, pride and shows you the power of what true teamwork really looks like. All these attributes are incredible life skills to have as a young girl. All children need to witness that feeling of losing a game in order to have the feeling of winning.

Football should be accessible for all, both girls and boys and I am very passionate about girls saying they play football and being proud to admit it. This well-loved game brings communities together and friendships get built. If you are part of the team, volunteering to run the line, being the coach or standing there in the wet and cold rain whilst you cheer on your pride and joy. It brings people together.

Going forward, I have many ideas to implement, fundraisers, events etc on how to expand girls football within AFC Fradley. I believe this football club has coaches and the belief in each other that we will provide girls with a football team that believes in each girl as a player, before that player believed in themselves.

My aim is to have 100 girls playing in girls only teams for AFC Fradley by Christmas 2024.

So watch this space! Please look out for me at Wildcats sessions and make sure you say hello when you see me!



Chairman Darren Peck says,

Girls' football is essential for us to become a complete football club.

Since day one, we have aimed to represent girls and boys, women and men. We are proud to be well-represented; our Director of Football is a professional women's footballer currently playing full-time at Southampton, and Anna Wilcox, our Head of Skills Camp, used to play full-time as a pro for Coventry.

Our Wildcats Centre, which caters exclusively to girls from 4 to 11 years old, is thriving.

We have a team of 51 coaches and volunteers, and I am proud that 25% of them are women.

We have 26 women who have signed up and are playing competitively for AFC Fradley.

I believe the club has many women for our girls to look up to and aspire to follow in the footsteps of. We have many girls playing in mixed teams, but with Laurie's determination, drive, ambition, and motivation, several girls' teams will play competitively. I am excited about where we will take girls' football in the Midlands.

Watch this space!