Team Leicester
Year in Review
2016/17
Team Leicester

Following the initial success of Team Leicester’s season in the early months of the 2016/17 academic year we reflect on what has been a truly remarkable season for the University’s sports teams.

Back in December we made a momentous stride forward by breaking our record membership numbers for Team Leicester, ending the first semester with 1966 as our total. Our hope was that we would be able to break the 2000 mark for the first time in history, and that is exactly what we did in January 2017. At present the total number of Team Leicester members stands at 2012, excluding our 26 sports scholars, whereas just 5 short years ago we had 1384 members. This incredible progression not only represents the growth of sport at the University, but also pays homage to the fantastic efforts that our sports clubs have made in recent years. Our student members are the driving force behind Team Leicester and without their willingness and motivation to go the extra mile we would not be in the position we are in today.
Team Leicester’s growth in the early stages of the year certainly proved to have a positive effect on performance. Having finished in a record 46th place in BUCS for the 2015/16 season our students looked set to break records once again, ending the first semester in 37th place. Our students showed no signs of letting up in the business end of the season following the Christmas break, cup runs and league successes became almost common as the points flowed in; amassing a current total of 960 points compared to last year’s record of 779.5 and sitting 36th in BUCS. Furthermore, if you take a look back at Team Leicester’s history you’ll discover that just 5 years ago we sat 86th in BUCS. This gargantuan rise of 50 places in such a short space of time is made even more remarkable when examining university sport across the region. Many midlands based universities, the very universities we face regularly throughout the year, have seen massive investment in sport in recent years. Loughborough, Nottingham, Oxford Brookes, Nottingham Trent and Warwick have all seen great investment and focus on sport throughout their institutions. Therefore, Team Leicester’s successes are made even more impressive when considering the teams they battle it out with almost weekly attend these sport focused institutions. At present Leicester sit as the 8th highest BUCS ranked University in the midlands, arguably the most competitive region in the country for elite sport. We hope our clubs can continue to exceed expectations in the years to come.

As the BUCS seasons for most of our clubs came to a close all attention turned to one of the highlights in the sporting calendar, Varsity. The annual competition sees many of our sports teams battle it out with local rivals De Montfort University in an attempt to claim the bragging rights as best sports university in Leicester. Despite De Montfort’s considerable expenditure and focus on sport in recent year Leicester were able to come out on top for the 25th year straight, the score standing at 30.5 – 17.5 with two fixtures remaining; notably Men’s Outdoor Cricket on 14th May at Grace Road. All of our teams showed an incredible competitive spirit and a fantastic attitude in their approach to the competition this year, here’s to making it 26 years in a row next year!

As a service we are also extremely proud of the efforts our clubs make to give back, both locally and nationally. This year we have witnessed an extraordinary amount of selflessness from our clubs, with charity fundraising efforts throughout the academic year and many playing a pivotal role in the recent University Volunteering Week. Whether it be bake sales, pub quizzes or even the eccentric naked calendar our clubs have raised several thousand pounds this year, for charities covering everything from mental health to women’s aid. Additionally, our clubs have acted as impeccable ambassadors for the LGBTQ+ community, uniting with Stonewall during our first ever Pride Week; driven by our Sports Sabbatical Officer Rasteen Riyahi-Boni. All of our clubs rely on a dedicated group of enthusiastic student volunteers to manage club affairs as part of a committee. These leaders take it upon themselves to develop and maintain their club throughout the year, all through an unrivalled passion for success and growth.

This year our committees have excelled in their efforts, creating new opportunities for members both on and off the pitch. This was notably seen in the recent Volunteering Week, with our clubs giving up more than 150 hours of their time and raising over £3000 in the process.

The sports scholarship programme has also seen fantastic levels of success this year. The quality of applicants for this year’s programme was exceptionally high; leading to an unparalleled level of elite sport compared to recent years. With many scholars competing on the world stage in various competitions our athletes have helped to raise the profile of Leicester as a top sporting institution. Many of our scholars have also been a driving force behind the success of our BUCS teams this season, unquestionably playing a key role in the success we have seen across the board this year.

All in all, this year has seen Team Leicester excel beyond any expectations we had at the beginning of the year. With incredible individual and team performances throughout the year contributing to our most successful sporting year on record at the University.

League wins
- Women’s Football 1st
- Men’s Football 2nd
- Men’s Football 3rd
- Men’s Football 4th
- Women’s Squash 1st
- Men’s Rugby Union 1st
- Men’s Lacrosse 1st
- Men’s Futsal 1st
- American Football

League wins
- Men’s Lacrosse 1st – winners conference cup
- Men’s Rugby Union 1st – ¼ final national cup
- Women’s Waterpolo 1st – semi-final conference cup
- Women’s Football 1st – semi-final conference cup
- Men’s Basketball 2nd – semi-final conference cup
- Women’s Basketball 1st – semi-final conference cup
- Women’s Squash 1st – semi-final conference cup
American Football

American Football have enjoyed a fantastic year on and off the pitch, focusing heavily on performance and fundraising efforts.

Their labours were rewarded as they secured won their league losing just one game all season, paying dividends to their additional fitness and tape sessions they added at the start of the year. Away from the field the club are in the process of attaining sponsorship from several local businesses to boost their club fundraiser account, in turn this can help the club to develop more next year. A real fundraising highlight of the year was their annual Super Bowl Party, securing a large source of income for the club.

Running & Athletics Club

The Running & Athletics club have been largely focused this year on creating further sporting opportunities for their members.

A record 20 members participated in the North Midlands Cross country run, the Men’s and Women’s teams finishing 10th and 9th respectively. A further 19 athletes represented the University in February at the BUCS Cross-country, whilst more casual runners were able to benefit from the club’s strong link with Parkrun; even organising one run each term providing over 20 volunteers. Additionally the club were heavily involved in the organisation and delivery of the Pride Week Colour Run, with over 200 students participating.

Men’s Football

The Men’s Football club have introduced a new ethos of hard work and focus to their performance this season.

With additional training and new coaching staff three of the clubs four teams were able to achieve promotion, a feat never before achieved by the club demonstrating their exceptional progress this year. Away from the pitch the club were also able to raise over £250 for the British Heart Foundation with a 150km bike ride alongside the Women’s Football club.

Women’s Football

The Women’s Football club have sought to raise the profile of their club throughout the year.

Having added a brand new 2nd team at the start of the season recruitment became a priority, with the club expanding vastly on last year. These new members and previous players helped to aid the 1st team to promotion with an unbeaten season and the semi-finals of their cup, whilst the 2nd team narrowly missed out on the top spot in their first league season. Furthermore, the club have been consistent with charity efforts throughout the year, notably their Operation Christmas Child drive in December.
Men’s Rugby Union

The Men’s Rugby Union club have enjoyed another stellar year as one of the University’s largest sports clubs.

The 1st XV’s commitment to training and additional gym work led to an unbeaten league season in division 1A and a quarter-final spot in the National Cup, the 2nd and 3rd XV also put in stellar league performances over the year. The club kick started the year by securing a lucrative sponsorship deal with Sytner, enhancing their fundraising account substantially. The club has also sought to give back with charity and fundraising efforts, notably with hefty donations to the Dan Hickey Fund; a charity set up in memory of a Leicester alumni.

Trampoline

The club’s main priority at the start of the year was offering members more opportunities to enjoy the sport.

This has been achieved across the board starting with doubling their training time, enabling more time to develop their skills. Additionally, through the Leicester Academy one member was able to attain a Level 1 Trampoline coaching qualification, allowing more opportunities for new members to improve. This additional time on the trampolines has not prevented the club from their charity efforts, raising over £100 for Save the Children earlier in the year; a fantastic achievement for one of our smallest clubs.

Tennis

The growth of the Tennis club over this year has enabled them to continue their development over the last few years.

With greater participation at training selection has been hotly contested for, with the Men’s second team using twelve different players over the course of the season. Furthermore, the proportion of female players has grown even more, with the club currently boasting 25 female players (30% of their membership). This increased membership has led to strong BUCS performances throughout their season. The club have also helped to use their skills to benefit the local community, with two current members also coaching at local clubs in the region.

Dodgeball

The Dodgeball club have improved steadily in performance in recent years, this year arguably the biggest step yet.

The Men’s 1st team remain unbeaten in their league, meaning the club would be one of the top 8 best university teams in the country if the sport were to be adopted by BUCS. The women’s team have also impressed, finding themselves 3rd in their league having been promoted last year. Moreover, the club have engaged with a wide variety of sporting and non-sporting campaigns throughout the year. From Pride Week to the Anthony Nolan Drive, HeForShe to Leicester Academy the club have done it all.
Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee, arguably our most eccentric club, have shown continued development in regards to performance this year.

The mixed team managed a 4th place finish at the indoor nationals, whilst the women’s team came 3rd at indoor regionals making them the 9th best University women’s team in the country. The growth of the sport at the University has also allowed the club to enter two men’s teams into the outdoor league for the first time in their history. Additionally, the club have sought to raise the profile of the University within the sport by hosting national outdoor tournaments at the institution.

Jiu Jitsu

Jiu Jitsu have progressed greatly this year, both with a growth in membership and higher levels of performance.

With a jump in membership from 20 to 38 the club have successfully increased numbers at training sessions throughout the year. At their annual trip to a national competition in Exeter the club brought back 9 medals, their highest ever total. In partnership with Leicester Rape Crisis the club also organised a self-defence session to improve safety in the local community.

Basketball

The Basketball club has shown exponential growth this year, largely down to their exciting and eye-catching promotion on social media.

This, combined with strong recruitment at Freshers Fair, has led to the clubs membership doubling in size, from 52 last year to 105 at present. This increased membership steered the club to improved BUCS performance, notably with the Men’s 2nd team who finished 2nd in their league and reached the cup semi-finals. The women’s team also surpassed expectations by reaching the semi-final of their cup. The club has also sought to raise the profile of Basketball at the University, whilst also raising funds for the club, by introducing Friday Scrimmage Sessions for all University students.

Women’s Rugby Union

The Women’s Rugby Union club have continued to grow this year, largely down to the hard work of their committee at Freshers Fair.

However, these new members have not resulted in the club losing ties with alumni, their annual Old Girls event had its biggest to date. Having introduced an extra Sunday session new members were able to get to grips with the sport quickly, several of first years featuring in throughout the season. The club have also been greatly involved with charity and volunteering efforts this year, notably campaigning for Marie Curie in Leicester City centre as part of the University Volunteering Week.
Lacrosse

This year the Lacrosse club have managed to exceed their huge membership total of 99 last year, currently boasting 104 members.

With two men’s and two women’s teams the club now has more playing opportunities for members than ever. The Men’s 1st team enjoyed an incredibly successful year, remaining unbeaten throughout the season winning both their league and cup. The club have also focused on stabilising their finances by producing club merchandise for members, this will only go to help the club progress in future years. The club are also due to host their very own charity tournament in the coming weeks with all funds raised going to MIND.

Mountaineering

Mountaineering have been working tirelessly to take the club to new heights this year.

With all of the committee undergoing a Wilderness First Aid Course at the start of the year the club have been able to give their members a safer experience. They have also secured sponsorship from The Climbing Station in Loughborough granting access to a higher standard of coaching than in previous years. This has benefitted the club massively from this, achieving their highest BUCS points total in the last three years. Moreover, the club have increased their social media presence this year in an attempt to raise promote the sport at the University.

Futsal

With just two BUCS teams the Futsal club have introduced inventive methods to increase club membership.

Adding a new team into local league allowed members to have more competitive playing opportunities, further enhanced with increased development on the club’s own intramural league. With more playing time came great results in BUCS, the Men’s 1st team winning their league and gaining promotion to the BUCS premier division. With 72 BUCS points to their name the club has also contributed the second highest amount of any club at the University.

Squash

Beginning the year with a 36% growth in membership, from 69 last year to 94, Squash has become one of the largest in Team Leicester.

The Women’s 1st team led the way in terms of performance, going unbeaten in their league and securing promotion. The Men’s 1st team also showed strong performances in division 1A, eventually finishing in a respectable 3rd place. The club also gained national recognition for their victory at the annual Roehampton tournament. With the focus on improvement the club have instilled on their members we’re sure to see more silverware in the future.
Cricket

Cricket has developed immensely this year at the University, both in size and profile.

The club added new talent to the ranks at Freshers Fair growing by nearly 20 members on last year. Inevitably this benefited performance, with the Men’s 1st team progressing further in their cup than ever before. The club also delivered the ‘UOL Dart Championships’ in February, a fantastic new event which raised £700 for Cancer Research.

Fencing

Fencing continue to be the University’s highest scoring club in terms of BUCS points.

The Men’s 1st team were able to secure their position in the Premier division, whilst new members have also shown great progression. The club also organised their own Leicester Open competition, attracting players from the across the region. This helped the club raise for their fundraiser whilst simultaneously increasing the profile of the University sports service.

Men’s Hockey

The Men’s Hockey club were looking to bolster their ranks at the start of the year, having lost many graduates at the end of the 15/16 season.

Their efforts at Fresher’s Fair enabled them to pick up 17 1st year members, securing a solid 3rd team squad. Extra sessions for new members and new coaches have also ensured that the club’s new members will be able to progress greatly during their time at the club. The club were also key figures in Pride Week, sporting rainbow laces for all matches.

Women’s Hockey

The Women’s Hockey club have acted as outstanding ambassadors for both the sport and the University this year.

The committee strove to involve the club with more charity and outreach work, notably succeeding in efforts for Operation Christmas Child and hosting their own pub quiz for Alzheimer’s UK. The club also added significant funding for future years by winning the PWC quiz, bringing in £1000. Performance has also been strong throughout the club, arguably down to large increase in membership from last year’s total.
Swimming & Waterpolo

Performance has been impressive from the Swimming & Waterpolo club this year.

With the Women’s 1st Waterpolo going unbeaten in their UPOLO league and making the semi-finals of their cup. Additionally the swimmers were able to see off De Montfort in Varsity, bringing in two vital points for the University. Club members also took part in the Town & Gown 10K run for Muscular Dystrophy UK, raising an extraordinary £665.

Archery

The Archery club have enjoyed their first season of representing the University in BUCS this year.

Doubling their membership from 14 to 28 this year pays dividends to the clubs commitment in promoting the sport at the University. To further development the club have also sought to improve their relationship with a local archery club, hoping that new members will learn from experienced participants.

Rugby League

Rugby League were able to surpass their own targets for membership this year, ending with 36 after hoping for 32.

Having lost over half their membership at the end of the last academic year this ensured the club will be able to progress in the future. The team were also able to progress to the last 16 of the National Trophy, a demonstration of the hard work their new members have put in this season.

Netball

Once again the Netball club have shone in their efforts this year.

Increased membership led to the retention of their title as the largest female sports club at the University. With 7 teams and extra playing opportunities for social members the club have ensured everyone has the chance to improve. The club were shortlisted for every Club of the Month award this year, demonstrating their consistency and hard work. Their recent pub quiz also raised an impressive £292 for Women’s Aid.
**Boat**

The Boat club have been dedicated in their efforts throughout this year; with members seemingly always using the club’s Erg room. With 104 members the club also stands as one of the largest at the University, arguably down to the wide array of abilities the club cater for. Performance has been the driving factor for the club, constantly putting in hours on the rowers or in their club run circuit sessions. The club also raised £1170 for their fundraiser through a 24 hour row conducted in the new Fielding Johnson Square.

**Equestrian & Polo**

Despite being one of the University’s more niche sports the Equestrian and Polo club boast a respectable 43 members. Organising taster sessions for potential new members demonstrated the club’s welcoming approach. The club also raised for their fundraiser and the charity Coppafeel through a naked calendar and bake sale. Additionally, some club members aided in the delivery of the festive Santa Run in December.

**Golf**

The Golf club has thrived under its bursary programme this year, allowing 20 talented players to train and play at Leicestershire Golf Club.

The quality of applicants for this year was incredibly high leading to some fantastic golfers joining both the teams. Both teams have performed well over the course of the season, most notably demolishing De Montfort with a 6-0 win at Varsity.

**Badminton**

Following their immense growth in the 15/16 season the Badminton club have continued their rise, reaching a record 74 members this year. The Men’s 2nd team have performed admirably this year, almost securing promotion from their league, while new members have been able to develop in local leagues. The club are also looking to help secure their financial status by working on a partnership with a local sports shop for equipment.
Kayak

Despite being the smallest sports club at the University the Kayak club have enjoyed veritable success this year.

The have increased membership this year, hopefully enabling them to continue to grow next year with more bodies at Fresher’s Fair. Platinum Sports Scholar Ryan Hunt has also won several key events over the 16/17 season, such as the BUCS Wildwater Sprint race in November 2016. Ryan also secured selection for the GB team in 2016 having placed 17th at the senior world championships.

Karate

The Karate club have continued to grow the influence of the ancient martial art at the University this year.

With an increase in membership to 24 from last years total of 17 the club have been able to enjoy larger training sessions. These have clearly paid off, with one member has attained a bronze medal at a BUCS tournament, as well as qualification for the European University Games in July.

Ski & Snowboard

The Ski & Snowboard club have continued to be one of the most socially active clubs at the University this year.

However, it is often forgotten the lengths that the club go to in order to provide opportunities for their members. The club regularly transports members to competitions throughout the year, as well as organising annual ski trips for members and students at the University.

Taekwondo

Despite not being a BUCS sport Taekwondo have seen good numbers at training sessions throughout the year.

The club have one of the most active international membership groups within Team Leicester, however they are dedicated in their attempts to grow the sport amongst local students as well.
Volleyball

Volleyball is another club that has contributed to Team Leicester’s immense growth in members this year, boasting 11 more members than last year’s final total.

The club have benefited massively from their new experienced coach, with all abilities progressing over the year. Both the Men’s and Women’s teams were able to secure their position in their leagues.

Table Tennis

The Table Tennis club have been able to engage well with international and more local students this year.

With large numbers at taster and training sessions the club have been able to retain their membership. Their league success has been limited but the Men’s 1st team have been able to secure their place in division 2.

Mixed Hockey

The Mixed Hockey club have attracted 17 new members this year, jumping to 66 after ending last year on 49.

These new members have enabled the club to continue entering two teams into local leagues, with heavy rotation allowing players to develop and progress.

Surf

Even with the nearest beach being over two hours away our landlocked Surf club have still been able to make their mark this year.

The club regularly arrange trips both nationally and internationally, with destinations ranging from Newquay to Fuerteventura. The club also enters BUCS competitions throughout the year, creating competitive opportunities for their members to test their skills.