



# NECHELLS WELLBEING CENTRE LAUNCH EVENT

ROCKETS FACILITY  
REFURBISHMENT  
OPEN DAY

SPECIAL EDITION  
PROGRAMME



Saturday 11th September 2021

Al-Kayyem



SPORT  
ENGLAND

Birmingham  
City Council



waterlogic



NEWSTAD CLARK

SPORTSERVE

DYNAMIK

CINCO

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

During the pandemic, COB Rockets, as you will see today, never isolated the fact that the club needed to continue its growth in our ambition to be the top basketball development club in the country. To that end, I want to personally thank the Board, Rob Palmer, Peter Mintoft, Ricardo D'Alva, Jamie Bunch, Martin Lansley and Nechells Wellbeing Centre manager Dean Treasure for their efforts in making this possible.

I would also like to thank Councillor Paulette Hamilton, Chair of Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board, Professor Geoff Thompson MBE DL, Deputy Chair of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee and Chair of the UN Accredited Charity, Youth Charter, Stewart Kellett, CEO Basketball England, and Viveen Taylor, Director of Equality Diversity and Inclusion at Sport England for their attendance today.

None of this would have been attainable without 2K Foundations in the UK. When we were contacted by 2K UK, to say it was surprising is an understatement. We were one of the first clubs outside the US to be awarded funding that made this all more than a pipe dream. We are grateful to the City Council under the leader Councillor Ian Ward and the Head of Wellbeing, Councillor Paulette Hamilton and their officers for allowing the refurbishment of the sports hall which sees a basketball show court, netball show court, seating, basketball goals, scoreboards, and badminton mats. The City Council upgraded the lighting, which, as you can see, vastly improves the arena for all activities. The floor competes with anything you will see in the UK in its design. Thank you, Dynamic Flooring and Sportserve.

The most important thing to me is that this will continue as a safe place for children, youth and adults in our great city; we attract hundreds every week, meaning we provide a service for the community and the city and long may that continue.

I am sorry I can't be with you today; the fact is I didn't choose the COVID; the COVID chose me...

Kirk Dawes

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Today marks an exciting time in our club's history. The recent pandemic was a challenging time for everyone and here at the club we shared the frustration, pain and loss of loved ones within our own Rockets community.

The silver lining and ongoing motivation during the lockdown period came from an out of the blue email from 2K Foundations back in April 2020. The opportunity presented to both the club and Birmingham City Council related to investment into the facility here at Nechells Wellbeing Centre.

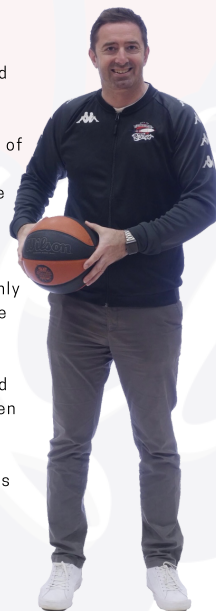
We believe that Nechells Wellbeing Centre now provides a playing and spectating experience equal to any junior basketball facility in the UK. The investment will not only enthuse and motivate our existing Rockets basketball community, but will also enable us to attract and engage further participants from around our wonderful city.

Our thanks go out to 2K Foundations, Birmingham City Council, Basketball England and all of our suppliers who have been involved with the refurbishment work that has taken place over the past months.

I look forward to meeting and speaking with you all over the coming weeks and months as we enjoy our eighteenth season as a club and our first in this fantastic facility.

Yours in sport,

Robert Palmer



# CLUB HISTORY

Founded in 2003, our primary ambition starting out was to provide basketball opportunities for young people in Birmingham.

In the time since, we have embarked upon an incredible journey that has seen us work with thousands of young people – playing our part in their progression and development both on and off the court.

We now operate a Performance Programme consisting of 15 teams and 150 members alongside a Community Programme which provides coaching to over 750 young people across the city.

We formed a Senior Men's team in 2014 to provide a seamless transition into the senior game for our junior players and the incredible redevelopment at Nechells Wellbeing Centre will undoubtedly benefit our junior and senior teams alike as we continue to develop as a club.

In 2016 NBA Legend Hakeem Olajuwon joined us and has since helped us to activate our International Summer Camp Programme and raise the profile of our Academy Programme and our club.

Rockets Academy Programmes now provide educational partners to support 30 full-time students aged 16-19 years old whilst Rockets Camp Programmes are accessed by 250 youngsters annually, providing opportunities during school holidays to young local people in addition to others located both in the UK and overseas.



*Since 2005 the club has participated in several overseas tournaments including Belgium, Sweden and Ireland, providing many young people with an international experience and exposure to a variety of cultures. Our recent partnerships formed with Spanish and Portuguese clubs further enhances these opportunities. As a forward-thinking organisation, our eyes are firmly on what is ahead of us. The renovation of Nechells Wellbeing Centre demonstrates our continual desire to grow and reach as many people as possible and we are thankful for all the support that we have received from everyone involved in the process.*

*This facility will provide a world-class experience for those taking part in club activities. We have big dreams and aspirations to positively impact thousands more young people as we move forward.*

*As well as the investment in Nechells Wellbeing Centre as a facility, the generosity of 2K Foundations will enable us to provide additional sessions, further weekly games via a 2K league, as well as supplementing with transport to the facilities for those who need it across the city.*

*However, we are very proud of our past and what we have achieved. From humble beginnings, thousands of success stories have emerged. Every young person that has been through our programme is a success story. To mention just a few, some are now professional basketball players, royal marines, teachers, engineers and police officers.*

*Whatever route their path has taken them we could not be prouder of the young people that have been involved with us. They will always be part of the COB family.*



# THE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

City of Birmingham Rockets Basketball Club and Birmingham City Council are delighted to showcase the redeveloped Nechells Wellbeing Centre following the funding issued by 2K Foundations.

2K Foundations is the philanthropic arm of 2K that supports and inspires underserved communities by directly investing in local enrichment programs. Over the last year, 2K Foundations has grown its efforts to support a number of projects, representing communities around the globe and showcasing the program's expansion, to include career and learning initiatives, expanded access to sports through golf clinics and tournaments, community enrichment opportunities through music and upgraded studios and much more. This marks one of the first 2K Foundation projects in Europe and we are incredibly grateful for their investment in our club and in the city of Birmingham.

The investment has provided the Rockets with an exceptional facility that will undoubtedly stimulate the rapid growth and development of the game of basketball within the city.

This redevelopment project is the centre's first renovation since its opening in the early 2000s and will enable COB to provide more outreach and community initiatives; whilst also providing our first teams with an incredible playing facility.

The training space at the Nechells Wellbeing Centre in Birmingham has undergone redevelopment, complete with two improved training courts, a show court enabling the club to host home games with a full audience, improved lighting facilities, new nets and scoreboards.

We would like to extend a thank you to the specialist support that we received from Sport Serve in importing and installing FIBA Level 1 portable goals and scoreboards.

Sports flooring specialists Dynamik got to work on installing the show court whilst Hussey Bleacher Seating was also installed; all with the shared ambition of transforming the experience for our players and spectators alike.



## Time

10:00am

10:45am

11:30am

12:20pm

13:10pm

14:00pm

14:55pm

15:20pm

16:05pm

16:50pm

17:10pm



# IMPACT OF THE WORK ON THE CLUB

## Event

*We had invaluable support and advice from Basketball England; whilst Birmingham City Council have been very supportive and we thank them for their co-operation.*

*Rockets Managing Director Rob Palmer said: "We have been blown away by the support that we have received from 2K Foundations. We quickly built a very positive relationship with 2K UK who have helped guide us through the process from start to finish.*

### Mini Basketball (5-10 year olds)

*"When we found out about the funding, we were keen to provide a high-class playing and spectating experience for Birmingham. The results of the work were even better than we hoped for. We hope everyone who visits the facility will agree that we now have the type of basketball arena we have always aspired towards. In addition, the centre will now also provide an improved experience for a range of other indoor sports.*

### Community Players (11-18 year olds)

*"Today is a celebration and an opportunity for the club to thank 2K for their investment and showcase this amazing facility to not only our own community but the rest of the basketball community in the UK."*

### Under 12 Mixed

### Under 14 Boys

## CENTRAL VENUE LEAGUE

### Under 16 Boys

Rockets' work in the community has long been an integral part of our delivery and has enabled us to deliver basketball to thousands of young people across Birmingham since 2003. The relationships we have formed within the Birmingham School's network and the high standards that our coaches work to have ensured that the club has been at the forefront of basketball development in the city. There has been huge growth in recreational and performance level basketball participation in the region which we are proud to have played a part in.

### Under 16/18 Girls

We are now delighted to announce that thanks to the support we have received from 2K Foundations and Birmingham City Council we will now be further growing our community activity including the delivery of new Central Venue Leagues at Nechells Wellbeing Centre every Sunday commencing October 2021. These new competitions will enhance the competition pathway for young people in Birmingham and ensure that a well organised and formal league is set up in the heart of the city!

### Dignitary Speeches

- Geoff Thompson MBE
- Viveen Taylor
- Stewart Kellett
- Councillor Paulette Hamilton
- Jordan Dawes

These new Central Venue Leagues will operate for boys and girls Under 11,13,15 and 17 age groups and be delivered by Rockets own community staff. This promises to be a great new addition to the Rockets Programme, and we are excited to get the games started!

For more information on how to get involved please contact us at [cobrockets@gmail.com](mailto:cobrockets@gmail.com).

### Under 18 Boys

### Women's First Team

### Alex Anderson / Sam McPherson Performance

### Men's First Team



# ROCKETS IN THE COMMUNITY



Here at COB Rockets, we believe that we are more than a club. Part of the way we demonstrate this is through our wide range of community work and outstanding youth programmes. We deliver a variety of developmental sessions and training camps for young people. Our goal is to teach participants important fundamental life skills and improve their basketball ability whilst promoting a happy and healthy lifestyle.

We connect with the local and wider community through a range of activities. We deliver a variety of holiday camps across Birmingham and the wider region to provide opportunities for children to experience Rockets basketball in their local community.

In 2021, post-pandemic, we operated a number of camps across Birmingham. These camps provided over 200 hours of basketball to 250 young people and enabled the club to provide positive activities after a challenging eighteen months during which many young people had very little activity. Basketball is more than just a game, and we are more than just a club. Our philosophy includes helping each individual participant to realise their full potential on and off the basketball court.

Our community outreach work provides some of the most deprived and underprivileged young people in Birmingham with access to affordable or free basketball within their own community. Recent projects have included school delivery to over 650 children in 8 schools in the Nechells ward which is highlighted as one of the most deprived areas nationally. Other partnership work has resulted in the delivery of free basketball schemes across the city whilst our exciting new under 16 Central Venue League planned from October 2021 will provide competitive opportunities for young people from across the city to come together on a regular basis.

Our central Birmingham home, Nechells Wellbeing Centre, is at the heart of the city and the location is emblematic of our commitment to deliver a high-quality experience to the diverse communities of our great city. Our Rockets community of players, coaches and volunteers represent the incredible talent the city has to offer. We are proud to provide a basketball club to represent the people of Birmingham.

Foundation Basketball Coordinator Ricardo D'Alva said: "The development programme at the Rockets has progressed to become one of the biggest providers of grassroots basketball in the country.

"We are proud to be able to offer a productive outlet to a large number of young people in Birmingham and we look forward to using this fantastic centre to enhance our continued growth.

"I am very proud to be part of this amazing project and am looking forward to using my experience of playing and coaching abroad to aid our development."



This is an incredibly exciting time for sport in Birmingham with the 2022 Commonwealth Games now less than a year away. The club has already attended several promotional events relating to the games and look forward to continuing our involvement in the coming months and promoting the Basketball 3X3 event which will potentially include GB international Myles Hesson, who started his basketball journey with us here at Rockets.

The young people of Birmingham have an incredible array of talents. As a youth organisation, we are always looking at innovative ways of providing opportunities to showcase these skillsets. This can come in the form of performing artists, event support and management, or in one of the many basketball related roles that the club can offer. Often members of our Community Programme possess many other talents off the court and we are able to provide pathways for those to flourish within the club environment.

For more information on our Community and Schools Programme, visit our website or contact us directly at [cobrockets@gmail.com](mailto:cobrockets@gmail.com).

# FIRST TEAM UPDATE

## MEN'S TEAM

We are delighted with how our Men's First Team roster is taking shape for the upcoming season and we look forward to seeing their development under the stewardship of Coach Paul Douglas.

One of the leading player development coaches in the UK, Coach Douglas will have a vast array of talent at his disposal this season.

Young prospects such as Faaris Mughal will be complimented on the roster by more experienced and journeyed players. Gatluak 'Mike' Thiep (below), for example, has BBL experience alongside his notable stints around Europe and time spent playing in the USA.

Fan favourite Stephanos Kontopyrgos (right) returns to the team and will undoubtedly provide leadership and focus to the younger players at the club.



Nathan Ramsdale-Owen, who found time to volunteer as a Health Care Assistant during the pandemic, came through the ranks with the Rockets before going on to play for Worcester Wolves in the BBL for the past two seasons following a stint playing in Italy – we are delighted to have him back with us for the 2021/22 campaign.

More announcements are coming soon as Coach Douglas rounds out his roster for the upcoming campaign, so stay tuned to our website and social channels for the latest news on all things Rockets!

## TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

MATCH TICKETS	ADULTS: £5	CONCESSIONS: £2.50
SEASON TICKETS	ADULTS: £50	CONCESSIONS: £25

BOOK ONLINE AT: [WWW.COBROCKETS.CO.UK/GAMES-EVENTS-AND-TICKETS/](http://WWW.COBROCKETS.CO.UK/GAMES-EVENTS-AND-TICKETS/)

## WOMEN'S TEAM

Rockets Women's First Team are competing in National League competition for the first time in the club's history this season.

Coach Peter Mintoft holds a vast array of experience at all levels of the game amassed during his celebrated coaching career. He will lead the Rockets team as we embark on this exciting new chapter.

Speaking ahead of the upcoming season, he said: "It is with great optimism that I look forward to the City of Birmingham Rockets Women's team making its mark in our first season of National League competition.

"The Club is making a concerted effort to further establish the female game in the city and with an influx of new players, the team is optimistic of success."

"Competition in Division 2 North will be keen and the players are now working hard to hone their skills ready for the October start."

With Felicitie Umahoza and Milly Harrison already announced as our first two players, we are looking forward to announcing the remainder of our roster in the coming weeks!



[www.cobrockets.co.uk](http://www.cobrockets.co.uk)



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# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE ROCKETS!

SUPPORT BASKETBALL IN BIRMINGHAM!



We have a number of sponsorship opportunities available for the upcoming season and can offer a range of promotions to ensure your business is marketed to the audiences that matter most to you.

From individual match sponsorship opportunities to player, team sheet and matchday programme promotions; we are keen to add to our growing list of commercial sponsors at a very exciting time for the club.

By partnering your business with us, you are not only gaining exposure and increasing interest and awareness in your company – but also supporting one of the fastest-growing basketball clubs in the country.

For more information, please contact us at [cobrockets@gmail.com](mailto:cobrockets@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU TO FLY ENTERTAINMENT FOR PROVIDING  
THE ENTERTAINMENT FOR TODAY'S EVENT!**

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