



I Play for England: Peace A

My name is Peace. I play netball at an elite level; I have represented England Under 17, London Pulse Under 17/19/21, and Turnford netball teams. Over the course of my netball career, I have achieved numerous individual and team awards. I've won 35 gold medals and been part of the England Under 17 team that won the 2020 Netball Europe Championships. My netball journey has taught me some important life lessons, three of which I would like to share in this article.

Do not despise small beginnings.

Rather, set progressive targets while keeping your end goal in mind; excelling in any endeavour takes time and dedication.

My netball journey started when I was in Year 4 at St. Aubyn's School. It was my first introduction to netball and like many beginners, I was confused about the rules. Due to my inexperience, I began the year in the lower 'C and D' teams; nevertheless, I set myself a target to progress to the A team by year-end. During games lessons, I would observe A-team players and replicate their standards of training. I was also not shy about asking for help whenever I needed it. By the end of the year, I had rapidly progressed through the ranks and joined St Aubyn's A team.

Since then, I have adopted the same approach in the pursuit of my goals. When I first joined Turnford Netball at the start of Year 5, I remember walking out of the training session with mixed emotions – I was happy to be exposed to such a high level of training, but at the same time I knew I was behind the rest of the group – once again, I started in the lower team and made my way up to the A team within a year.

The moment I had been waiting for finally arrived in August 2018 when I got invited to England Summer Camp. All the years of hard work and long hours in the gym had finally paid off!

Let adversity make you stronger.

The road to success is hardly ever a straight line, there would be bumps and setbacks; however, I have learnt to view my challenges

as improvement opportunities. Like Maya Angelou said, 'It is necessary to encounter defeats so you can know who you are and what you can rise from...'. I have faced numerous challenges in my netball career. In 2015, I fractured a bone in my foot and the injury side-lined me for many months. As a result, I missed my trial for the U16 Satellite that year. The injury disrupted my career progression, but I was determined to come back better. Post injury, I worked hard to return to court, re-trialled for Satellite in 2016 and was selected into Regional Academy.

The COVID-19 crisis is another unforeseen disruption that I am learning to deal with. Despite lockdown restrictions, I have adhered to my home training fitness programme and used this opportunity to improve weaker aspects of my game through matchday video analysis.

Remain dedicated to continuous improvement.

I believe the day you stop learning is the day you stop growing. I am constantly seeking ways to improve my performance and my biggest competition is myself – I strive daily to become the best version of me. Dedication in this context involves sacrificing your free time, getting uncomfortable, taking risks, facing failure, and delving into the unknown.

I am also truly fortunate to have an amazing support system at Queenswood School. The school has helped in tailoring my strength and conditioning programme and offered me a personal mentor to monitor my progress in sports and academics. Schooling in such a conducive environment has really helped improve my on-court performance.

My netball journey is still unfolding; in future, I plan to use any public recognition or exposure I get from netball as a platform for making positive societal change – especially on matters of female empowerment. Netball for me is more than just a sport, it is a personal affirmation that 'glass ceilings' can be shattered, and self-erected limitations can be overcome. Whether it be netball or any other endeavour, my advice is to always follow your dreams, face your fears, and be the best version of you.