**New Zealand coaching team begin new era for Loughborough Lightning**

*Attached picture: Marg Foster (left) and Shelley Norris*

Loughborough Lightning’s new coaching team for the 2014 ZEO Netball SuperLeague season has been in town for a whistle stop tour this week to meet the players for the first time, and also acquaint themselves with the University campus and local area.

Head coach Marg Foster and her assistant Shelley Norris have been recruited from New Zealand. Both have coached at the highest level, including in the highly regarded ANZ Netball Championships, in which former Lightning favourite Joanne Harten participates in.

Since arriving at Loughborough Marg has been impressed with the facilities on the University campus saying:

“The University facilities are absolutely outstanding. I walked into the Powerbase gym and you can be training beside on Olympic track runner or swimmer, that’s immensely inspiring from an athlete’s perspective. I would recommend to all our New Zealand sports stars to get over here and have a look at the resources.”

Marg has been involved in coaching for over 20 years across a range of settings from schools to international squads. But why at this stage of her career has she chosen to coach in England?

“The timing was right for this opportunity. So when the call came out to see if I wanted to take on this role I thought ‘yes’ that could be me. To be able to impart my knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the team, and in a different environment away from New Zealand, it’s pretty cool.

“Plus having Shelley with me here is really important to what we are looking to do. So we will have two experienced coaches here who have been through every situation and scenario that you could possibly come up with in a team.”

Marg has been impressed with the players that she has worked with in training this week, but will be looking to add players she knows well from back home in New Zealand.

“I’ve met all of the players and was really impressed with the girls, their attitude and effort. But I also want to lead the way at Loughborough by being innovative and create a culture where New Zealand players come over here to play.

“So we will have three imports who are borderline ANZ Champs players who will lift the standard of the players around them, but then go back to New Zealand and be able to make it in the ANZ franchise teams. “So we will have Elizabeth Hayman and Moniek van Rossum from Canterbury Tactix and Jessie Waitapu from the Waikato Bay of Plenty Magic joining us. Jessie was in the team that won the ANZ Champs last year.”

The appointment of Marg and Shelley also begins a new era for Lightning, who are hoping to bounce back after a disappointing campaign in 2013.

However 2014 promises to be a season not to be missed, with Marg stating:

“I can guarantee you one thing, we will be playing entertaining netball and create our own ‘Lightning’ style. All the fans will love the girls, who will be amazing ambassadors for Lightning and will produce the best that they can do for the team.”

Lightning will start their 2014 ZEO SuperLeague season with a home fixture against Yorkshire Jets on Saturday 1st February. Tickets are now on sale via the Loughborough Lightning website.

<http://loughboroughsport.com/loughborough-lightning>