



THE COLESHILL SCHOOL

Coventry Road, Coleshill, Birmingham, B46 3EX

Telephone: 01675 462035 www.thecoleshillschool.org



Two star members of staff from the Coleshill School swapped the classroom for the basketball court last week when they played for Team GB in Italy.

Head of School Rebecca Brindley and Year Leader Amani Rodriquez-Thomas at Coleshill – which is part of the respected Arthur Terry Learning Partnership – helped Team GB win the bronze medal in the FIMBA Masters European Championships, which took place in Pesaro, Italy.

Ms Brindley said: “I’ve been playing for Team GB for 2 years now, and we recently won the gold medal in Croatia in the World Cup. To win bronze in Italy was another unique and unforgettable experience, both in winning the medal and in getting to compete internationally again.”

According to Ms Rodriquez-Thomas, the tournament was both physically taxing and rewarding, and the team’s success was a testament to their strength and dedication.

She said: “It was an amazing experience, and to come away with a medal was just out of this world.

“I knew it would be tough, but the physicality was like nothing I’ve ever experienced. We were all covered from head to toe in bruises by the end of the tournament!”

For both teachers, the tournament in Pesaro was the apex of a lifelong passion for the sport.

Ms Rodriquez-Thomas started playing basketball in Year 7, receiving a scholarship to East Durham Basketball Academy when she was sixteen. In her hometown, she played for three national league clubs – Ealing Tornados, Richmond Jaguars and London Westside – before moving to the West Midlands and joining Worcester Wolves, Birmingham Mets and Bromsgrove Bears.

While she wasn’t able to compete in Croatia last year due to a broken ankle, she continued to train and made the squad for Italy.

This spirit of hard work and persistence is one of the most valuable things Ms Rodriquez-Thomas has learned from basketball, and something she says contributes to her work as an educator.

She said: “Growing up in London, basketball helped me stay focused and achieve so much academically.

“Now, the experience of international sport has given me a mindset of working hard and never giving up. We lost our first two games but kept practicing and made it to the semi-finals. When one of us hit the deck, no matter how tired we were, we ran to scrape them up and motivate them to keep going.

“To be able to use this experience to inspire young people as an educator is so important – to show them you can achieve so much through perseverance and teamwork.”

Ms Brindley began playing basketball in Year 9 and has seen many achievements throughout her sporting career. Every step in her education was marked by success in the sport, playing in the School Championships, joining the Taunton Tigers Academy, being national college champions while at Richard Huish College, and even playing National League for Plymouth Racers while at university.

Even as she left to pursue her career in education in Birmingham, Ms Brindley continued to play National League, winning Division 2 with Birmingham Mets and currently playing for Bromsgrove Bears.



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She says the skills she has learned from the sport permeate her work as an educator.

She said: “There’s a huge link to education through skills like leadership, resilience, working through setbacks, managing emotions and organisation – things that make you a good role model for the students.”

And, according to both teachers, the students at the Coleshill School have congratulated them with pride.

Ms Rodriguez-Thomas said: “The students have been amazing and it’s been lovely sharing the experience with them. A lot of them have now shown a huge interest in basketball and want to know how they can get into playing!”

Ms Brindley added: “It’s about being a positive role model for all. The students are proud of our success, which is humbling.

“I want to show them that no matter your stage in life, you can continue to do the things you love, with people who share the same passion and compete at the highest level.”





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