



## PRESS RELEASE

### Olympic Badminton Champion, Gail Emms MBE, Guest Speaker at NGHS Sports Awards Evening

After the success of last year's Sports Awards Evening, Nottingham Girls' High School was thrilled to welcome Gail Emms MBE as guest speaker at this year's event celebrating the sporting achievements of its girls.

Gail is an icon of British sporting success with a string of gold, silver and bronze medals to her name achieved in a huge array of international competitions and Olympic Games individually, and with mixed doubles partner, Nathan Robertson.



As one of Britain's inspiring Olympians, Gail Emms represents the very best of the nation's sporting offerings, and girls and staff at the school were very excited about her arrival. Georgia Andrews in Year 10 said: "It's really exciting to meet such a successful and inspirational sportswoman who has won so many medals."

Inspired by her family's love of sport, Gail began playing badminton at the age of four and she has shaped her career around the game, representing her country for the first time in 1995 and going on to consistently reach the top of the world rankings.

Hailing from an independent girls' school herself, Gail is an especially suitable role model and proof of the opportunities and successes on offer in such an environment. Year 8 pupil and fellow badminton player, Sriya Chinta, met Gail when she arrived at the school and had this to say: "I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Gail Emms, and was intrigued by her interest in badminton and her sense of humour. To me, she is an outstanding role model to all girls and women, because of her excellent achievements and her warm personality."

Not afraid to acknowledge set-backs and disappointments, Gail has instead used them to her own advantage and stresses that success can only be achieved through dedication, which she views as the most important skill to have in any environment.

The school's new Head, Julie Keller, would agree with this and believes that an all girls' environment is the perfect place for gender stereotyping and traditionally male dominated pursuits to be challenged, saying: "Most of the girls who are going to break through that glass ceiling are ones from a school like ours and I want to help them do that."

Now retired from professional competition, Gail Emms has turned her attentions to sharing the hugely positive impact that sport can have on life and well-being, working as a Youth Sport Trust and Badminton Sport England Ambassador, inspiring young people to be more active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Jane Skinner from the PE Department said: "It's a real pleasure to welcome somebody like Gail who has had similar schooling to our own girls, who is passionate about sport and who has been so successful in a game which is perhaps under-represented in many schools."



The Sports Award Evening itself was well attended, positive and upbeat - a huge success. Gail Emms spent some time beforehand meeting our own badminton stars and staff before addressing the audience and presenting the many awards. Winner of the Carol Stinchcombe Memorial Trophy for the most outstanding individual contribution to school sport, Dani Ashwell, stated: "Gail Emms was such an inspirational, amusing speaker - a big role model. I was so proud to take part in this celebratory event and it was great to see people's achievements being recognised."

The school is very grateful to Gail for taking part and inspiring a new generation of young sportswomen by recognising their brilliant achievements over the year at this lovely occasion, and proving that success is attainable through hard work, dedication and a supportive environment.

The school has a great record of sporting success in all areas and Year 8 and 9 girls have done particularly well in badminton this year, becoming runners up at the School Games in March, with Year 10 and 11 becoming city runners up in November at Central Venue League Badminton.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Nottingham Girls' High School**

Nottingham Girls' High School is an independent day school for girls between the ages of 4 – 18. Part of the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) Nottingham Girls' High School is the largest school within the group with more than 1,000 pupils.

### **About the GDST**

The GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) is the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK, with nearly 4,000 staff, and 20,000 students between the ages of three and 18. As a charity that owns and runs a family of 24 schools and two Academies in England and Wales, it reinvests all its income in its schools. Founded in 1872, the GDST has a long history of pioneering innovation in the education of girls. For a list of GDST schools go to [www.gdst.net](http://www.gdst.net)