

Youth Development

'Nearly half of all children and young people are members of sports clubs outside school'

Young People and Sport
National Survey 1999.

The development of youth is key to the long-term sustainability of every club. This insert looks at how to recruit and retain youngsters and examines child protection considerations.

Recruitment

The key to recruiting young people into your club is making partnerships with a range of people and agencies that are involved in providing opportunities for children to participate in sport. Each of these partners see the club as being an essential element in the life-long participation of that child in sport and are therefore keen to make partnerships with clubs who are looking to establish links.

The future of Clubs

School Club Links

School sport provides an excellent context for young people to participate in sport out with the PE curriculum. Most schools recognise the vital role sport plays in both school life and the major contribution it makes to the wider community.

The majority of school sport, out with the curriculum, is delivered by teachers working in their voluntary time. Therefore the support and expertise of qualified club coaches, in this context, is greatly appreciated, especially where a school would struggle to deliver.

What are the benefits to the club?

By linking with a school, a club will have a base of children to draw from. This school session could act as a 'satellite' centre for the club and it may be possible for youngsters, out with the school to access the session. The club could also arrange for posters advertising the clubs activities to be circulated on notice boards throughout the school.

It may also be possible to access school facilities and resources to the benefit of the wider club.

So how do we make links with Schools?

There are two key people within schools who should be contacted by clubs wishing to create links with schools.

School Sport Co-ordinators (SSC's) now exist within every Secondary School in Tayside. Their aim is to develop extra curricular sport in schools and integrate school sport with the wider community. Therefore, part of the SSC's role involves working closely with community clubs and associated primary schools.

Active Primary School Co-ordinator's (APSC's) are part of a new initiative from **sportscotland** that aims to increase the range, frequency and quality of opportunity for primary school aged children to participate in safe and enjoyable physical activity and sport. Currently there are only a few APSC's working in primary school clusters throughout Tayside but the aim is to have a co-ordinator within every Scottish primary school within 10 years.

It is clear that by making effective partnerships with either co-ordinator, both the club and the school will benefit.

Hot Tip:

Your local Sports Development Officer will have all the contact details for School Sport Co-ordinators and Active Primary School Co-ordinators within your area and will be able to give further information on making links.

Youth Development

Who else can we link with?

Local Authorities (LA's) are instrumental in providing opportunities for youth participation in sport. Local Authorities see clubs as a valuable partner in the delivery and development of sport in that they are key to ensuring an obstacle free pathway exists from schools, to club. LA's offer a range of after school and holiday activities in a variety of sports. There are a number of ways that clubs can link to LA Programmes that will enhance youth participation numbers within the clubs.

For example, a club may link with a local authority to run a holiday camp. The club and Local Authority would need to establish the role of each party, costs, marketing arrangements, facilities, equipment, coaches and so on. The club would then be able to encourage the children to come along to club sessions.

The important thing with partnership working is to ensure that each party is clear about what they want to achieve and realistic about what they can deliver. Remember, strong communication is key to ensuring successful partnership working. Contact your local sports development officer to discuss your ideas.

What other issues should we consider?

- Is your club junior sessions on at appropriate times for youngsters?
- Where are your sessions held and is this easily accessible without a car?
- How much does your sessions cost and is this realistic for youngsters?
- Does your club offer participation opportunities for children, young people or adults with a physical, learning or sensory disability?
- Do you have fully qualified coaches, with knowledge of child protection issues for your youth sessions?
- Do you have appropriate equipment and resources for young participants?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, please contact your local sports development officer for further help and advise.



So now you have young people involved in your club, how do you hold on to them?

In the most simplistic terms, the way to keep youngsters in your club is by ensuring it is a fun and enjoyable

experience for them, irrespective of their age and ability.

How can I ensure my club is fun and enjoyable for youngsters?

The primary reason children join clubs is to take part in sport. By its very nature, sport is competitive and therefore all youngsters should have the opportunity to take part in competition at an appropriate level and clubs have a responsibility to ensure this provision exists for its youth members. Competition exists in a variety of forms:

- Festivals
- Internal Club Competitions
- 'Friendlies' against other clubs
- Local Leagues
- Regional Competitions
- National Competitions

It is important to remember that factors such as growth, personality development and social skills will have a large impact on a child's skill level. Therefore not all children of a similar age will be at the same ability level.

If a child is participating in competition that is not appropriate for their level, they will soon become demotivated and is more likely to lose interest in the club and perhaps the sport.

Hot Tip:

When creating partnerships it is good practice to get some form of agreement in writing of what each partner is offering and what each is looking to get out of it, before the commencement of any activity.

Youth Development

In addition to competition, there should also be in place an identified pathway that enables youngsters to develop to their highest potential. Clubs are the first stage in this pathway and it is therefore important they consider the opportunities out with the club environment, such as local and regional development squads, to assist with their development. Contact your local sports development officer, or your National Governing Body for information on opportunities available within your area.

What about social activities?

Social activities are an essential way of retaining an active interest in every club. Mixing and socialising with peers offers social and personal development. In addition, you should remember that a large proportion of youth membership comes from existing members encouraging their friends along. Therefore an active social programme within the club is a good incentive for retaining existing members and attracting new members.

What are examples of social activities?

You should try to be as creative as possible when organising social activities.

Try to think about the age of the children and organise activities to suit. You should try to make activities as attractive as possible to the group you are catering for. In addition remember to ask the youngsters what type of things they would like to do!

Some examples of social activities include:

- Trips / Tours away to compete against other teams;
- Discos;
- Trips to sporting events;
- Awards nights;
- Ten Pin Bowling;
- Cinema.



Child Protection is an important consideration for every club working with children and young people. It is an issue that many people within clubs feel uncomfortable with. However it is essential that clubs consider Child Protection issues so as to protect everyone involved.

There are a number of courses available to get information on child protection issues. These courses are the best way of getting up-to-date advice on areas such as Child Protection Policies,

Child Protection Officers and SCRO checks. Clubs should actively encourage any person working with children to attend. Information of what courses are running and when, and what assistance is available can be obtained from your Sports Development Officer.

What other Child Protection Guidelines should we have in place?

In addition to a Child Protection policy, it would be recommended that the club establish some 'ground rules' on what behaviour is acceptable. The best way of doing this is by agreeing codes of conduct for both coaches and athletes. Some of the issues that should be covered include:

- A statement of commitment from the club, athlete and coach.
- An outline of what is acceptable behaviour / personal conduct.
- What is the clubs policy of alcohol, drugs, tobacco / sexual intimacy.
- What would be the course of action / discipline procedure if the code is broken.

Your Sports Development Officer will be able to provide you with examples of codes of conduct for your club.

Hot Tip:

Linking social activities with fundraising is a good way to get the youngsters involved in raising money and also works as a social activity for them. Some examples include car washes, bag packing, sponsored walks / runs etc.