

Case study: School-Club links

Deer Park Archers



Deer Park Archers (Cheltenham) increased the number of young people taking part in Archery through delivery of after school sessions, resulting in many young people joining the club.

Challenges faced

Club members wanted to develop greater Archery activity in a number of local schools. The club found through previous experience in running after schools Archery sessions that they needed to overcome challenges in order to provide sustainable Archery experiences for school children. These challenges involved appropriate documentation and procedures, programme content and equipment, coach availability, suitability and training, and the sustainability of the activity by the school and local clubs. Deer Park Archers also recognised the need to ensure the rest of the club felt engaged and understood the tangible benefits to the club.

Action taken

To overcome the challenges, Deer Park Archers produced their own documents, policies and procedures regarding going into schools. These were for the use of the club and schools. The documents were developed in consultation with the schools and also the County Sport Partnership. The club also modified the standard beginners' course programme in relation to its content, duration, competition and delivery style. The club significantly increased the amount of equipment available and made sizes available for a range of ages. The club trained up four Level one coaches to Level two, working closely with the County Sport Partnership to identify suitable training courses. The club involved school teachers in the shooting and coaching of the programme and a number of them have since joined the club. The club ensured the after school clubs were affiliated to Deer Park Archers, with membership options to either shoot at all club sessions, or nominated sessions. In order to ensure club members were aware of the schools activity, the club increased the size of the committee and improved communication to members on progress and benefits to the club.



Programme successes

As a result of addressing these challenges, the club observed more than 90% attendance at all after school sessions. Of those completing the programme, more than 90% wanted to continue Archery through the after school clubs. A significant number of teachers have joined the club, support the regular after school clubs and want to undertake coaching qualifications. In total, 69 participants have joined the club. With the increased equipment and capacity of coaches, the club is able to run two sessions at different after school clubs each day. The club has found that through the school activities, they have significant access to other events, training and opportunities.

'Thank you for your support. This is the first sport ever that I have enjoyed and what was best was that everyone helped each other, so this felt like a team sport as well as an individual challenge'

Ben, pupil at Kingshill School

Case study: School-Club links

Deer Park Archers



'This is a challenging group of pupils. Their transformation when doing these sessions is remarkable. My attitude to them has changed and this has carried through to normal school activities where I have definitely seen improvements'

Teacher, Sir William Romney School

Lessons learnt

The club learnt many lessons through their schools work:

- Have initial discussions with the schools involved to set clear procedures regarding access to the venue and the impact that Archery will have on other activities on the school field.
- Put agreements in place with the school regarding additional support that may be required for specific pupils.
- Try to take an additional coach along to the sessions, more focussed support can be provided to individuals showing potential.
- Deer Park Archers programme specifically targeted those pupils that have not necessarily enjoyed traditional sports and offered an alternative. The club is interested in ensuring their activities appeal to a wider cross section of the population.
- To ensure the sustainability of Archery in schools, the club believes we must find a way of training the teachers to be able to run the after school clubs. The schools are very supportive but will not invest in their own equipment until they have qualified staff to support the activity. Until then, schools will remain dependant on clubs for equipment and coaching.

'The pupils love it. The problem we have is that they will not stop talking about it and those that want to do it keep on asking when they can start!'

Teacher, Stroud Primary School

What next?

The club is now planning to include an inter-school competition for those schools involved in the programme. The club will also encourage new junior club members to enter the County Junior Championships. The club is looking to start a similar programme, but delivering a field archery course as an alternative.

For more information about the club, please visit www.deerparkarchers.com

