



Changing Lives Through Rugby!

Introduction

Rugby offers a great alternative for kids who do not engage with other sports, it also offers a number of additional benefits.

- Physicality, where aggression can be channelled in a positive way
- Teaches respect for adversaries, authority and fellow team mates
- Encourages self-discipline and control
- Promotes community and team spirit
- Provides positive role models

Rugby is seldom offered in most inner-city schools in the Birmingham area, often due to a lack of grass or suitable playing surface.

Football as the predominant sport tends to attract the majority of male students, who have any sporting orientation. This means running a rugby coaching after school session, in a single school, is limited due to the minority attendance.

A high proportion of children in the inner-city areas come from dysfunctional families and in many cases do not get close family support or encouragement to take up sport. In the more affluent surrounding areas, rugby is well attended by both male and female children of all ages and is well supported by parents who are willing and able to transport their children to and from school events and rugby clubs. These children get to taste the benefit of the sport and the inclusive and caring community that it provides.

Bringing rugby into the Erdington and surrounding areas, will have a significant impact on the lives of those who become involved and offer an opportunity to steer a generation, of impressionable young males in a positive direction, away from gang culture and crime. The rugby community provides positive role models, particularly for young males from single parent families, who often do not experience this in normal family life.

Geographically Erdington Rugby Club is ideally located with 51 senior schools within a five-mile radius of the Spring Lane ground with 31 within 30 minutes public transport time, making transportation from schools to one location, to create a mixed after school club a reality. Holding a mixed school club will create a lasting bond between youths from different post code areas and hopefully avert future gang tensions between these areas.

Proposal

ERFC intend to provide after school coaching for male students (currently) between the ages of 14 – 15 years, targeting particularly those with behavioural issues.

The sessions will be held at Spring Lane every Tuesday from 3.45pm until 5.30pm and involve around 1 hour 15 minutes of intense physical activity, broken down into skill and game-based scenarios.

ERFC are also keen to encourage young people who may not be physically inclined to play, but who may want to be involved in the sport, by offering the opportunity to take up rugby refereeing.

Following the coaching session's, the attendees will be given a hot evening meal and encouraged to sit together to eat, to increase the bonding and team ethic.

The sessions will be attended by multi schools from the Erdington and surrounding areas, these schools have students from a broad spectrum of social, cultural and religious backgrounds and of a wide racial diversity.

To support the program and get initial engagement from the students and the school, in-school taster sessions will be provided.

The schools currently considered in the first year of the project are:

Stockland Green School
Erdington Academy
Sir Edmund Campion
Hodge Hill Academy
John Henry Newman School
The Greenwood Academy
Smiths Wood Academy
Aston Manor

The schools who have agreed to take part, have stressed that transporting the students to Spring Lane is not a viable option for them on a long-term basis, due to the wider use of minibuses for other sports and general low staffing levels.

To overcome this obstacle ERFC are working on a proposal with a number of transport companies to get the kids to the ground and back safely.

To enhance being part of the club/team and provide a positive gang outside of the normal gang environment, it is essential to get the attendees into the same kit as soon as possible. Based on discussions with teaching staff, getting parents to pay for any kit is unlikely and if some this could create a divide between the haves and have nots. It is therefore the intention of ERFC to provide elements of the kit as a reward for attendance and application at the sessions:

- Drill tops for attending over 5 sessions out of 8 possible consecutive sessions
- Shorts and socks (once the drill top has been achieved) for attending 3 of a possible 5 consecutive sessions
- Playing shirts 1 per month awarded to player of the month for effort, teamwork and respect

It is the intention of ERFC to run the club through the normal closed season in its non-contact format of touch rugby, this is to provide a focus for the students during the summer break and keep them engaged.

Following the summer break ERFC will continue to offer coaching and club membership to those students from the previous year 10, who may go into local further education or employment etc.

It is expected that the impetus of the initiative will increase numbers across the year, especially in September with the new year 9 intake, whilst retaining the previous year 10 students.

In conjunction with the schools and the attendees, an assessment will be made prior to the summer break, to determine the success of the project and to see if the project can be expanded into other schools in near proximity to Spring Lane, in-particular in the direction of Aston and Nechells, toward the city centre.

The assessment will also determine the suitability to start a parallel project for girl's rugby in the Erdington and surrounding areas.

Financial Assessment

All normal running costs associated with the club house, pitches and coaching/support staff will be provided by the club, however additional funding will be required to support the subsidised nature of the project. The annual costs of the additional funding are highlighted below.

Weekly Costs		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Number of weeks		2	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	3
Transport per child	£2	0	10	30	40	40	40	40	40	40	10	30	40	40
Food per child	£1.20	10	15	30	40	40	40	40	40	10	30	40	40	40
Guest coaching	£20	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 Total
In school taster coaching	£20	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4
		£224.00	£552.00	£784.00	£1,140.00	£592.00	£592.00	£740.00	£592.00	£528.00	£980.00	£912.00	£684.00	£8,320.00
One Off Cost														
Drill Tops	£30			10	15	15					10	15	15	
Shorts	£5				20	20						20	20	
Socks	£4				20	20						20	20	
Shirts (player of the month)	£35	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Boot support	£20	10								10				Total
		£235	£35	£335	£665	£665	£35	£35	£35	£235	£335	£665	£665	£3,940

Conclusion

This proposal offers an opportunity for the local youth to participate in an alternative sport and become part of a community that can change their lives. The full impact of rugby will not just be seen in the current generation of players, but as is seen in established rugby communities in their children and future generations.

Andy Trueman
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