

Report of the Sport Experiences Youth Activator Conference

Held at the Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, from 29th – 31st August 2006

This year's Recruitment Conference was attended by eleven hockey enthusiasts from the Unitary Authorities of Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, RCT, Caerphilly and Powys, and involved a fulfilling and intense programme that undoubtedly provided the candidates with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to fulfil the role of a Youth Hockey Activator for the forthcoming year.

The aim of the Youth Activator Programme is to provide support and guidance to youngsters to develop their hockey coaching, umpiring, development and / or event coordination skills. It is hoped that these eleven youngsters will play an important role in running our sport in the years to come, and will also play an integral role in our Club Development programme. All candidates had applied to be a part of the Youth Activator Programme, and had displayed a high level of enthusiasm to develop their skills in the above areas.

The three days included a range of workshops, presentations, practical sessions and problem solving scenarios / case studies to give the candidates a flavour of the opportunities available within hockey, and the skills required to undertake the role of coach / umpire / development officer / event coordinator. Following the huge success of last year's conference, representatives from the RAF once again attended to run a number of sessions that underpin problems and scenarios often encountered when coaching, planning events etc. There were also sessions run by the Sports Council for Wales, a Dragon Sport Workshop, sessions on Hockey Coaching and Umpiring Opportunities, an SAQ practical session, and an update on the WHU and links to the Activator Programme.

All eleven candidates showed a great eagerness to develop their own skills and to work closely with the WHU to increase opportunities both within their own club structure and within their UA. Following the conference, they will now return to their club and UA armed with the skills, determination and the knowledge required to drive hockey forward. All eleven of our new activators have completed a Personal Development Plan that will help identify the skills, experience and type of qualifications they will be looking to obtain over the next few months in order to develop as coaches / umpires, or to assist in the development of hockey within their UA.

The Welsh Hockey Union recognises the importance of recruiting youngsters into our development programme, and it is our aim to provide support and guidance to the Activators by providing them with vast opportunities to develop both their skills and knowledge in the various fields of hockey development, and thereby ensure the continued growth of our sport. Throughout the year, there are a number of opportunities for the activators to gain a wealth of experience by getting involved in initiatives such as the RAF Development Days, the FIH Global Marathon, the International Hockey Experience, the WHU Summer Camp, and the Activators, both new and existing, are looking to team together to implement their various skills to organise and run an 'Activator-led' event next summer.

The conference was therefore undoubtedly a great success, and the Welsh Hockey Union is therefore extremely grateful to all who contributed both before and during the three days. This is an extremely successful and rewarding programme, and we now look forward to working with our new activators over the next 12 months.

Welsh Hockey Union would also like to extend their gratitude to Sport Experiences who sponsor the Youth Activator Programme. Without their support it would not be possible to provide such opportunities to our Activators.