

Equality Event at Nottingham Trent University 17 June 2008

Women and Girls Cricket in Nottinghamshire

Specific Project: England Player involvement on the Chance to Shine Scheme*

An audit of cricket provision for women and girls in the county highlighted strength in the south but weakness in the north.

It was decided that an ECB initiative which involves current England women players being involved in the Chance to Shine Scheme would be used to address this issue. Three Focus Clubs** already involved on the Chance to Shine Scheme were selected Mansfield Hosiery Mills CC, Welbeck CC and Mansfield and Pleasley CC. Each club already had strong partnerships with a cluster of primary schools and feeder secondary schools

The target audience for the project were girls in years 5,6,7 and 8. Priorities within counties are to develop pathways to allow girls to be able to participate _ hence the use of Chance to Shine clubs as catalysts to develop opportunities to participate.

The project was marketed by explaining the advantages of an England player being involved with Chance to Shine clubs and the media interest this would create as well as the opportunity of further funding to both the clubs and schools. Clubs were selected on their ability to make best use of the resource of an England player as well as the geographical strategic need i.e no current girls activity but the opportunity to develop activity in the future.

The England player along with the club coaches deliver coaching sessions to whole classes of children in schools, both boys and girls, in curriculum time sessions. The girls who are interested in developing further are then moved into extra-curricular 'girls only' sessions with the England player at the school and then moved on to further sessions at the club with the England player now being supported by the club coaches to create some sustainability. This provides the basis of a girls section in the club.

Whilst the project is still in its early stages the impact has been to create opportunity for girls to play cricket where previously there was none. In the longer term it is hoped that the sessions will continue and will be linked to a competition structure in the county.

Clubs enhance their opportunity of attracting funding if they are seen to be catering for minority groups _ hence the clubs involved in this project along with their partner schools could benefit in the future.

It is fair to say that girls generally feel more comfortable being coached by women and a barrier to the development of girls as cricketers is the dearth of women cricket coaches. However, the involvement of a woman England player/coach in this initiative has gone some way to removing this barrier. In the interests of sustainability the clubs should look to qualify/appoint a woman coach as soon as possible.

There are no cost implications at this stage. The ECB and Cricket Foundation have provided free resources to the county, clubs and schools.

In summary it is fair to say that this project makes best use of the resources available, however, to make this possible the audit of current provision was vital to meet its aims and objectives.

David Tighe, CDM, Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, 16/06/08

* **Chance to Shine** is an initiative funded by the Cricket Foundation and whose mission statement is 'To bring competitive cricket back into state schools'. It involves partnerships between Focus Clubs and schools, coaching in those schools, both curriculum and extra-curricular time, and a pathway to the club for children wanting to play cricket.

** **Focus Clubs** are those clubs in the county who are deemed to be well organised in terms of a robust development plan, facilities, junior development, qualified coaches, child protection etc. and have either attained ECB ClubMark Accreditation or are seriously working towards becoming ECB ClubMark Accredited.

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Preamble

History will show that Nottinghamshire has a strong tradition in women's cricket. However, most of the work has been done at elite level i.e regional, county and national under the auspices of the Nottinghamshire Women and Girls Cricket Association. Indeed the county has been represented at least seven times at England level.

Despite this, until recently there has been little development at 'grassroots' level and this has created problems for the Nottinghamshire Cricket Board, particularly with the advent of the ECB Improvement Planning Process (IPP)*.

It would be fair to say that historically the 'grassroots' development of junior cricket in the county has concentrated on boys only.

The IPP requires defined player pathways to be in place which, in the case of girls development, has meant a 'top down' rather than a 'bottom up' approach has had to be adopted.

The Nottinghamshire Strategic Plan 2007-10, a redefining of the Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club Cricket in the Community Programme and the Chance to Shine Initiative with England player involvement has gone some way to addressing the situation.

David Tighe
CDM, Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club

* The ECB IPP sets out criteria and targets which each County Cricket Board has to achieve to be able to receive performance related fee payments (PRFP)