

Launch of the Infant Agility – Core Skill for Infants

October saw the unveiling of a new programme of activity based on the successful Sportshall Athletics concept. In response to many requests and a growing demand for activity for this age group George Bunner has created a series of activities for the infant age group that seeks to develop core skills and enjoyment of sport.

Schools from the Frodsham High School primary cluster took part in a festival that gave many development officers, teachers and coaches the chance to see the different activities and to see the children enjoying the day. The event was officiated by year 10 students at Frodsham High School that are working on the Junior Sports Leaders Award and they provided a great source of inspiration to the youngsters who all obtained a certificate to mark their achievements.

The Infant Agility programme has undergone a series of trials and development processes throughout the past year and the kit with full resources are available through Eveque Leisure Equipment Ltd at www.eveque.co.uk or 01606 45611.

New Norwich Union Fun in Athletics Season

The 2005-2006 season begins this weekend with under 11 events being held at Norwich and Grantham. These early events have seen some frantic activity by team managers and coaches to prepare their youngsters but all are looking forward to an exciting and memorable time!

This season sees a change to the programme of the past few years with an extra scoring race added. The 4x1 lap hurdles relay will provide another competitive race for the teams and a chance to develop a traditional athletics event as each athlete will be required to clear six barriers spaced 6.5m apart.

Norwich Union are again sponsoring the season of Sportshall Athletics with the support UK Athletics. Many county and local development officers are busy preparing their squads for the older age group competitions that begin at the end of January with regional heats in Scotland and look forward the Norwich Union sports:hall UK Final in Birmingham on Sunday 9 April 2006.

First weekend of the 2005-2006 Norwich Union Fun in Athletics season

The University of East Anglia in Norwich hosted the first event of the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics series on Saturday 12 November and two special guests Olympic Bronze medallist **Katharine Merry** and Daniel Nobbs, Commercial Sponsorship Consultant for Norwich Union met the enthusiastic youngsters.

Over 180 children were selected to take part in the Regional Fun in Athletics event for Under 11s in Norwich, involving six teams from across the East region. This year Essex entered teams for the first time in this age group following an extensive programme of Primary Schools development. This has included teacher training, workshops for students and cluster events in the School Sports Partnerships.

Hertfordshire finished overall winners of both the girls and boys competition, having built up a strong record in sports:hall in recent years.

Katharine Merry who recently announced her retirement from athletics, was on hand to inspire the young athletes. She challenged some of the youngest supporters, in the Under 8 sprint challenge and then joined Daniel Nobbs in a javelin competition with the team managers.

Merry said:

“It was great fun, I took part in some races and I was well beaten in two under 8 races, which shows the talent is definitely there!

"Events like this are invaluable, the kids have fun and make friends, and it is a great introduction to athletics. With the Olympics coming to London in 2012, we need to ensure that we encourage as much sporting participation as possible across the whole of the UK. The Norwich Union grassroots programmes with UK Athletics are really driving this forward.”

The East Midlands event was another success for the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics programme with seven teams from across five athletics counties. The Meres Leisure Centre in Grantham was again transformed into a caldron of noise and excitement that didn't relent throughout the afternoon. Although they were pushed in all events both teams from Amber Valley ran out winners and were presented with their team trophies by **Sean Carrington** from IFTA Canada who was over for a week to share ideas and advice with the Sportshall team in the UK.

Sportshall Athletics development in School Sports Partnerships

Sportshall Athletics is continuing to develop within schools across the country with more and more teachers looking to these activities to develop athleticism in their pupils during curriculum teaching. New courses for teachers have been developed and are being delivered by uk:athletics tutors focusing on the core athletic skills with the use of the Sportshall Athletics equipment range in school.

The key area within our school development work is the introduction and delivery of Fun in Athletics festivals. These take the form of cluster events with neighbouring schools competing for a place in a partnership final. Typically up to 6 schools can compete in each festival within a standard school sports hall and with each team consisting of up to 15 boys and 15 girls.

The network of Specialist Sports Colleges provides the backbone of the administration and delivery of PE teaching within schools. The Partnership Development Manager (PDM) uses their team of School Sports Co-ordinators (SSCo's) that are based at each secondary school within the partnership to develop primary PE teaching in their 'cluster'. It is, by being part of this system that Sportshall Athletics can continue to thrive and become accessible to every pupil and teacher in the country in both primary and secondary education.

By introduction to athletics through these festivals we have seen a great interest from children to pursue further coaching from feeder community clubs and the desire to then seek membership to the local athletics clubs. This introduces a clear pathway into the uk:athletics school to clubs link programme.

Sportshall Athletics has found a home in many partnerships across the county and many more established programmes are being developed to bring them into line with the School Sports Partnership network.

The Vale Royal School Sports Partnership has worked closely with the Sportshall team to roll out a full partnership development model, which has been operating since its creation in September. All primary schools within the borough have been preparing for their November cluster events with each festival officiated by the JSLA students with close involvement from each SSCO. Teacher training is also planned and equipment and resources for the sustainability of the project is also a key aspect being looked into by the PDM **Anthony Hildrup**.

More information on School Sports Partnership development can be obtained by contacting the team at Sportshall with your details, development@sportshall.org

Scotland Fun in Athletics

The Norwich Union Fun in Athletics programme in Scotland took a slightly different format this season with primary festivals held in just two areas, Edinburgh and Highland. Both of these local authorities piloted an updated approach to the Scottish Fun in Athletics programme by offering Sportshall Athletics training to development officers, active schools co-ordinators, coaches, teachers and students a month before the festivals and then used festivals in the area to promote a wider programme for Sportshall in the future.

The new approach in Scotland has been lead by youth development officer Jamie McDonald with the team at Sportshall Associates. The hope is that by creating sustainable programmes of primary activity in two contrasting areas others will be able to use the experiences gained by the local partners to help develop their own models and development of athletics for the age group.

The festivals in Scotland were as enjoyable as ever with some very excited and talented youngsters competing. The class teachers attending with the school squads also ensured that the noise levels were kept as high as possible throughout each two-hour event!

Well done to those involved in the programme so far this year and we look forward to continuing this work in further areas.

For more information on Norwich Union Fun in Athletics and sports:hall please go to www.sportshall.org

For more information regarding athletics initiatives in Scotland please go to www.scottishathletics.org.uk or contact **Jamie McDonald** jamie.mcdonald@scottishathletics.org.uk

North Wales Norwich Union Fun in Athletics

The Norwich Union Fun in Athletics programme in North Wales commenced in September, with 7 county festivals taking place throughout the region with the support of Welsh Athletics, local authorities, dragon sport officers and primary schools.

The festivals were all divided into small and large school competitions, with over 90 schools participating in their local events. The winning schools from each county were then invited to participate in the first North Wales Fun in Athletics final for several years held at the North Wales regional Indoor Athletics Centre (NWAC) located at Deeside College.

NWAC was officially opened by **Colin Jackson** in January 2005; the centre provides a full range of running, jumping and throwing facilities and complements the existing 400m track. Clubs and athletes come throughout North Wales and across the border to use the facilities for individual and squad training. As part of its development programme the centre is used for local and regional sportshall athletics events, as well as the local club, Deeside AAC hosting North West sportshall competitions.

The final saw 8 schools from Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and North Powys contest the event. Eventual winners of the North Wales small and large schools titles respectively were Gwernffrwd and Bryn Coch both from Flintshire.

We hope to build on the success of this regional final by encouraging all counties to attend in future years. Additionally, we aim to encourage older pupils from local secondary schools to act as helpers and hopefully progress to becoming qualified officials.

Congratulations to those involved in making this years programme a success, and we look forward to moving forward again next year.

For more information regarding athletics initiatives in Wales please go to www.welshathletics.org or contact **Sarah Friday** at fridays@deeside.ac.uk

Bumper Norwich Union Fun in Athletics weekend

Over 1000 children participated for teams across the south of England as the new-year got off to a very busy and noisy start!

Events in Paignton, Crystal Palace, Portsmouth and Burgess Hill attracted under 11 teams from School Sport Partnerships, clubs and county's as well as many parents and officials to support at each of the events.

Again each of the children had the chance to participate in the full range of Fun in Athletics events on offer and, as usual, there were many fantastic performances that show a great effort from the team managers and coaches in preparing their youngsters before the festivals.

Congratulations to all involved during the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics season so far, there a few more festivals left this season after which a full review will be posted.

Ron Pickering Memorial Fund – Sportshall Collection 2006

Once again the Sportshall road team are collecting for the Ron Pickering Memorial Fund at each of the Norwich Union sponsored events this season.

The total so far has now exceeded £1000 and with 16 events left there is plenty of opportunity to match last seasons total of £3300.

Keith Hancock is training hard to tackle the London Marathon course for the fourth time in aid of the fund and we would like to help him on his way by exceeding our fundraising targets.

The fund has now been in existence for over ten years;

‘During this time more than £350,000 has been given out to approximately 700 young athletes, some of their coaches and for the provision of Sportshall Athletics equipment around the British Isles. It has become an established element in the support of young talented athletes and it is very satisfying to see more and more of these young athletes being selected for international teams at all levels.’

Jean Pickering

More information regarding the Ron Pickering Memorial Fund can be found at www.rpmf.org.uk

Norwich Union sports:hall Scottish regional results and finalists

OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKENDS of January, regional Norwich Union sports:hall heats have taken place at Aberdeen (North), Edinburgh (East) and Clydebank (West).

With an excellent 21 local authorities entering the heats there was fantastic and - as always - noisy competition.

Teams were competing for a place in the Scottish sports:hall final at Dundee on Saturday 25th February. The top two team finishers in each heat in both under 13s and under 15s have now qualified for the final. Also in the under 15 events, the top individual finishers in the all rounder competition will also qualify for the final.

With so much activity going on in packed arenas the officials and team mangers played a huge part in making the events run so smoothly.

QUALIFYING TEAMS FOR SCOTTISH FINAL:

UNDER 13 GIRLS

Shetland Isles
Perth and Kinross
North Lanarkshire
Fife
Argyll and Bute
West Dumbartonshire

UNDER 13 BOYS

Shetland Isles
Highland
Fife
North Lanarkshire
Argyll and Bute
South Lanarkshire

UNDER 15 GIRLS

Perth and Kinross
Shetland Isles
North Lanarkshire
East Lothian
Argyll and Bute
West Dumbartonshire

UNDER 15 BOYS

Shetland Isles
Perth and Kinross

North Lanarkshire
East Lothian
Argyll and Bute
Dumfries and Galloway

INDIVIDUAL GIRLS

Michelle Mackay – Perth and Kinross
Jennifer Wardhaugh – North Lanarkshire
Lucy MacNulty – Argyll and Bute

INDIVIDUAL BOYS

Michael Heubeck – Shetland Isles
Sean Hook – East Lothian
Sam Jespersion – Argyll and Bute

Norwich Union Fun in Athletics Regional Festivals Review 2005/06

With all of the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics regional festivals completed for this season there is a chance to review the stats from the past few months on the under 11 programme.

88 teams represented across 10 regional festivals

approx **2288** Children competing and enjoying their festival

around **264** Coaches and team managers providing the backbone of each team

approx **4576** Parents and spectators cheering and transporting the teams

250 Officials and judges ensuring the events go smoothly

53 boys leaping 5.50m & 50 girls clearing 5.30m in the triple jump

150 athletes jumping over 40cm in the vertical jump

142 athletes completing over 50 speed bounces in 20 seconds

64 girls jumping 1.80cm & 40 boys leaping over 2.00m in the long jump

58 girls throwing over 15m & 31 boys throwing over 20m in the Soft Javelin

Congratulations to all involved that ensured another bumper year for the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics programme. We look forward to planning another season.

Festival winners

Region	Girls Winners	Boys Winners
East	Herts Phoenix	Herts Phoenix
East Midlands	Amber Valley	Amber Valley
London	Waltham Forrest	Waltham Forrest
North East	Durham Sport	Durham Sport
North West	St. Helens	Liverpool
South	Wights Widgets	Wights Widgets
South East	Malling & Sevenoaks	Kent Hoppers
South West	Cornwall Crushers	Somerset Spartans
Yorkshire	Sheffield Blaze	Sheffield Blaze
West Midlands	Solihull	Warwickshire

More information on the Norwich Union Fun in Athletics programme can be found from the Sportshall team – development@sportshall.org

Eveque and Lancashire Evening Post - Fun in Athletics Festival

Following the Eveque sponsored 'Get Active!' promotion across the county by the Lancashire Evening Post, five winning schools arrived together at Myerscough College to take part in a Fun in Athletics festival. Each of the schools have collected a fantastic amount of tokens from the paper to get through to the event and pick up further individual prizes with the promotion winning school, Catforth Primary, collecting a massive 82 tokens per child!!!

After receiving a training session with their new Eveque Sportshall Athletics Kit, won in the promotion, each of the teams arrived at the college ready for a busy and very noisy afternoon of sportshall athletics. The coaching paid off as many of the children recorded excellent results during the event as they competed for team points.

Collecting the winning trophy for their school were the children from St Mary & St Andrew's, who also took back an Eveque Target Throw to use in PE lessons as their prize.

Hopefully the 6-week promotion across Lancashire will again make more children, parents and teachers think about the amount of activity they take part in on a daily basis.

Congratulations to all involved throughout the promotion, particularly all the children that collected tokens for their schools, but also the Lancashire Evening Post and Myerscough College for providing a fantastic venue for the final and also their student for working hard as coaches/officials during the event.

www.eveque.co.uk for further information regarding Sportshall Athletics Equipment and more.

www.lep.co.uk for the Lancashire Evening Post

www.myersough.ac.uk for information of courses at Myerscough College

Youngsters warm up the crowd at the Norwich Union Indoor Grand Prix

Ensuring that the crowd in Birmingham was ready for the top international event at the National Indoor Arena under-11 teams from across the West Midlands competed in a Norwich Union Fun in Athletics Festival on the famous track.

All of the teams performed fantastically well over the usual Sportshall Athletics activities for this age group, especially when you add the pressure of the large Birmingham crowd building around them in the arena. There was great encouragement by these spectators throughout the Fun in Athletics Festival.

Congratulations to the **Solihull** team that came out close winners - we look forward to seeing many of the athletes competing again on the indoor track again in the years to come.

More international honours for previous Sportshall athletes

After seeing Kelly Sotherton, Sarah Claxton and Jade Johnston compete against each other at the Norwich Union Indoor Grand Prix at the NIA in Birmingham we are pleased to see many more previous Sportshall Athletes in the news this winter.

This weekend there is a strong squad of junior internationals representing Norwich Union Great Britain and Northern Ireland Teams at the annual Under 23 and Under 20 Combined Events Indoor International against France and Spain at Eaubonne, France, on 25 and 26 February who began their early athletics life with Sportshall.

We would like to wish them luck as they represent GB and hope they continue to impress on the international scene.

Competing at the weekend;

Under 23's

Phyllis Agbo - Norwich Union UK sport:shall All Rounder Champion 1999 & 2000
Edward Dunford – Sportshall Finalist, Birmingham

Under 20's

Meghan Beesley – 2nd UK All Rounder 2005, Birmingham
Dominique Blaize - 3rd UK All Rounder 2003, Surrey
Gemma Weetman - 9th UK All Rounder 2003, Shropshire
Francis Baker – Sportshall athlete for Norfolk
Daniel Gregory – Finalist 2003, Cheshire

Norwich Union sports:hall UK Final Report

Jack Harrison, Jade Ellans and Bunmi Awokoya take top honours at the National Indoor Arena.

The Norwich Union sports:hall UK final took place at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham on Sunday 9 April providing another glimpse of the future for British athletics, thirty years after Sportshall Athletics was created by George Bunner in the North West.

There was the usual drama as the events unfolded with the team honours not being decided until the final relays and single points making the difference between the elusive gold medals and runners up position.

In the Under 15 All Rounder competition, Warwickshire's **Jack Harrison** took the individual trophy, securing the title in the final round of the standing triple jump with a leap of 8.40m for third place after winning his first two events; the 2 lap race and speed bounce. Second place went to **Emmanuel Okpokiri** (Essex) and **Ben Newman** (Birmingham) secured individual Bronze medal with three solid performances.

Jack Harrison, who trains at Stratford AC with last year's winner **Stefan Ellis**, said:

"I was really nervous going into the final round of the triple jump. I knew my last jump was so important to me, if I still had a chance of winning the overall title.

"I took part in the All Rounder competition last year and saw my club mate Stefan win the title, which inspired me. I thought if he can do it, so can I!"

Birmingham came out on top, in the battle for the Under 15 Boys team title, sealing their victory with a fantastic win in the 4 x 2 lap relay chased home by a strong team from County Fermanagh, which brought the excited crowd to their feet. Essex finished runners up with last year's winners Warwickshire taking the Bronze medals.

The final result in the Under 15 Girls All Rounder competition was a shared place on the top of the podium for **Jade Ellans** (Avon) and **Bunmi Awokoya** (Hertfordshire), tied on 282 points after a nerve-wracking shot competition decided the medals. The individual Bronze went to **Emma Spragg** (Birmingham), who moved ahead of **Kitan Eleyae** (Essex) after the final event, by just one point.

The Under 15 Girls team competition came down to a single point separating the top two teams. Surrey secured enough points in the final two events on the track to steal the title by the narrowest of margins. Surrey's victory made it their sixth win in seven years at the UK final, their winning streak only broken by Birmingham last year.

The boys from the Isle of Wight started the day as reigning champions, in the Under 13 Team Challenge with hopes of finishing amongst the medals again. It came down to the relay finals and the Isle of Wight swept the board, winning the 4 x 1 lap, Obstacle relay, 8 lap paarlauf and 4 x 2 lap to seal their victory overall. Birmingham finished second by thirty points and County Fermanagh were delighted to take third place.

In the Girls Under 13 Team Challenge, Essex took the honours, finishing the day one hundred points ahead of last year's winners Birmingham who had to settle for second place. Cheshire took the Bronze medals and County Donegal finished a very respectable fourth, demonstrating good strength in depth from the Ulster teams.

London Secondary School Sportshall Athletics Finals 15 & 16 March 2006

Brunel University hosted three Secondary Sportshall finals that brought together the top school teams from across London into a great two days of exiting competition.

It is four years now since this competition was started and it has grown from strength to strength. This year saw more schools enter than in any of the previous years, so for the finalists it was a greater achievement.

The competition was started to encourage the promotion of Athletics in London. One of the great features is that many more schools are now doing athletics much earlier in the school year – and that is good news for the children and the sport.

This year more of the heats have been run using the School Sport Partnerships and this has helped enormously. Many teachers have been vital in the organisation of matches throughout the year.

Winning schools for 2005/2006

Year 7 Mixed	Wimbledon College / Ursuline
Year 8/9 Girls	St Thomas More
Year 8/9 Boys	Enfield Grammar School

Sportshall Summer Update

As a busy summer outdoor track and field season draws to a close our attention is drawn to the Sportshall UK Championship season. This begins with leagues across the country beginning to select their squads from September.

The team at Sportshall hopes that this will be another fantastic series of exciting competition. We would still like to hear from team managers about their local picture as well as ideas and thoughts on how we can continue to improve our delivery and organisation of the Championships.

It has been another busy summer for the Sportshall team with our attendance at the major national and international events with the Norwich Union agility:challenge. This has allowed many children to experience some of the most recognisable Sportshall Athletics activities before enjoying the varied programme at these meets.

We are also currently in the process of re-designing this website and accompanying resources so please click back soon to see what is new and on offer!!!

We look forward to confirming details of the new UK Championship season with Team Managers soon.

The Sportshall Team

For more information
email development@sportshall.org