
Gloucestershire Celebrates its own Festival of Disability Sport

On 24th September at Oxstalls Indoor Tennis Centre, Gloucester, Active Gloucestershire in partnership with Local Authorities and School Sports Partnerships held its annual Gloucestershire Youth Games for disabled children from schools throughout Gloucestershire.

The event was funded by The Barnwood Trust, Gloucestershire County Council, Rotary Club of Gloucester Severn and Quest and this increased backing enabled the event to host 265 children from 25 schools.

Participants at this year's event had the opportunity to participate in structured coaching sessions in a wide range of sports organised by community clubs such as; The Blazers Basketball Team; Gloucester Rugby Club; Oxstalls Springers Trampolining; and Gloucestershire Dance, To raise awareness of the Paralympics the Paralympic Challenge was held with the aim to identify talented young disabled pupils. The participants that were identified at the Games will be invited to take part in the county Playground to Podium programme in the future.

For those who fancied taking a break from the sport, the 2008 Youth Games was also able to offer a musical experience with local music workshop "Baby Head" hosting sessions which encouraged those involved to make up songs and lyrics and try out their skills at being a DJ.

To continue the Paralympic theme, the event had two very special guests on hand as both Stephen Thomas a Paralympic Sailor and Gloucestershire's Simon Laurens, who took gold and silver medals in Hong Kong equestrian events. Stephen and Simon talked about their recent Paralympic experiences to participants and met with participants during the course of the day. They were also joined by Gareth Picken from Leckhampton Primary school, who was lucky enough to attend the closing ceremony at the Beijing Paralympics as part of the handover to Team GB for London 2012.

This year the event also benefited from a 60 strong volunteer workforce drawn from The National Star College; Hartpury College; Gloucestershire College; The University of Gloucestershire and the Rotary Club of Gloucester Severn, who ensured smooth running of the Games. A big thank you to all those who volunteered their time to make the experience for the young people much more enjoyable.

Anne Andersen, Active Gloucestershire's Sport and Physical Activity Development Officer for Disabled People and event organiser said "The wider more varied approach to the Games proved hugely successful and as a result we will hopefully see more children taking part in more sport and physical activity in the community, It is an exciting time with a lot of development in Disability Sport in Gloucestershire and more and more opportunities arising for young people".

Here are just some of the comments from school staff and young people attending the event:

Special School Teacher: "A really well organised event, good to see them having fun, the good range of equipment and adaptations gave them so much fun"

Chloe Ball Hopkins: "They told me I play tennis really well and want me to do more"

Rosa Spencer: "It's the first time I have worked as a team and I really enjoyed it"

For further information on any aspect of Disability Sport within Gloucestershire, please contact Anne Andersen on 01242 715201 or visit www.activegloucestershire.org/disabilitysport

Note to news editors:

• **Gloucestershire Youth Games Aims and Mission Statement**

This event has been developed around certain, easily recognisable, core principles that have been established for young sports people, as well as the organisers and coaches who participate in the programme. These principles are that the Gloucestershire Youth Games should:

- Be accessible and equitable
- Be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding for the individual
- Be a showcase of grass roots development programmes and future sporting talent
- To make sure the events at Youth Games differ from activities participated in during PE
- To make sure the activities reflect activities open for SEN pupils in the community. i.e. clubs, leisure centre
- Use Youth Games to promote community opportunities
- Develop ideas for inclusive PE to School Staff
- To use the Beijing Paralympic Games to promote Disability sport locally
- To use Youth Games as a vehicle to increase volunteer opportunities for disabled young people
- Encourage the development of new working partnerships
- Encourage the personal development of young people
- Be sustainable

Should you require any further information regarding this press release please do not hesitate to contact the event organiser on the details below or Kelly Conibere, Marketing and Events Officer for Active Gloucestershire, on 01242 715191 or email kconibere@glos.ac.uk

Event: Gloucestershire Youth Games 2008

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