Slough School Sports Network - New To Netball

Tuesday, 30 Jun 2015

Netball

Bring Your Project To Life:
The Network initially applied for Sportivate funding for these netball sessions with the long term view of establishing a netball club in Slough. Although the sport was played in all secondary schools in the borough, there was no local netball club exit route and it was hoped that some Sportivate funding could kick start the beginnings of a netball club.

We work closely with the Heads of PE in the Slough secondary schools and we asked them where (in terms of target age group) the sessions would be most suited. We started off with sessions for girls in Yrs 7&8 and soon had requests for girls in older year groups to take part.

The sessions are based at Montem leisure centre – this works well for a number of reasons. Montem is centrally located within the borough and so is not too far from any of the secondary schools. It’s on a public transport route which makes accessibility easier for the girls that attend and as it is a neutral site for activity (as opposed to a secondary school site) the girls are happy to travel here (getting students to activities on other school sites is often a barrier to participation).

Zoe is the level 2 netball coach and is just brilliant. Zoe works full time as a PE teacher at a college in Egham and is mum to a 10 month old baby (so Zoe had a few weeks off when on maternity leave at the start of last term) but is so committed to what we’re trying to achieve with these sessions. Zoe herself is local to the area, an avid netball player and is keen to support the development of these sessions and netball in Slough.

Was There a Particular Stand-out Participant?
There isn’t one individual that has really stood out; rather we have seen changes in a number of girls that have been attending. Not only has the ability of the girls improved in terms of their netball skills and game play on court, but you can see how so many of them have gained in confidence over the weeks, made new friends and some of the older girls have acted as mentors to some of the younger girls coming through. The girls that come to the sessions are from across 6 secondary schools and until the netball sessions started, did not know each other. New friendship groups and relationships have developed and it’s been great to see.

What strategies did you use to engage and retain participants? Were these successful and why?
The girls that come to the sessions are all netball players in their schools and were keen initially to take part in netball outside school. To start with, places for the sessions were limited and so Heads of PE were asked to nominate girls that wanted to come along to additional netball club sessions. We started with pilot sessions for the girls that were well attended and the Sportivate funding enabled us to continue with these sessions further. To be honest, we haven’t used strategies as such to retain the girls; they all enjoy their netball, are keen to develop their skills further and have a fun time during the sessions. Zoe switches up the sessions week on week to keep the sessions fun and engaging. The cost of the sessions also means the coaching they receive is affordable – the girls can pay £3 per session to come and ‘pay and play’ or they can pay for a block booking of a terms worth of sessions (that works out cheaper than paying for sessions on a weekly basis). This has worked well for the sessions.

What strategies have you used to sustain participation beyond the initial 6/7/8 weeks? Have they worked and why?
As I have noted above, the girls want to play and enjoy coming to the sessions at the leisure centre. We have been successful in applying for additional pots of money from England Netball and also for the satellite club programme to keep things going. The Network works closely with Slough Community Leisure (operators of the leisure centre) and we have been able to negotiate great rates for use of the sports hall; they are happy that the leisure centre is the home of the netball sessions. We’ve also been able to supply the girls with a club t-shirt and hoody so the sessions have an identity and the girls feel like they’re part of something. We also had a visit from an England Netball player who helped to lead a coaching session and did a ‘Q&A’ slot with the girls too (featured in the press).

**Provide Some Detail About the Wider Impact of the Project:**

A number of the girls have approached me to say that they are using the netball sessions as the ‘Physical’ element for their Duke of Edinburgh awards. They have had to document their sessions and then I as the assistant coach, sign them off. Staff in the secondary schools have also commented to me that the sessions have really helped the girls form on court and that this has been noted in fixtures and PE lessons!

Source: Sportivate