

SSE WILDCATS DELIVERY –



TYNE METROPOLITAN COLLEGE AND NORTH SHIELDS JUNIORS AFC CASE STUDY



Background context

Tyne Metropolitan College and North Shields Juniors AFC jointly run their SSE Wildcats Centre in partnership with John Spence Community High School. The centre is based at the school and was established in April 2018, and has an average weekly attendance of between 15-20 girls. Hannah Marshall, the College Sports Development Officer, co-ordinates the coaching provision and Simon Brown from the club manages the admin for the centre. The lead coach is Olivia Bruce who is a coach at the club and the Women's Football Apprentice at the College

The existing relationships and unique connections between the college, club and school have been central to the success of the SSE Wildcats Centre, as described below:

- The High school is a feeder school for the college, and as a result a strong partnership was already in place prior to the SSE Wildcats Centre being established. Such a strong foundation, has then helped on a practical level when accommodating the on-going practical needs of the centre
- North Shields Juniors AFC are based at the school site, and work in close partnership with the school. This has included developing a new 3G pitch, through a Football Foundation grant, which is now used by the school during the day and club for training and running the centre in the evenings and weekends
- A number of female students from the college are coaches within the club, and two other female students who supported at the SSE Wildcats centre are also now coaching with newly formed girls' teams that have developed at the club as a result of the interest generated by the centre – and supported by the FA Grow the Game initiative

- The geographic proximity of the college and school site (which is only a couple of miles apart) has made a significant difference to the logistics of college students being able to travel to the centre venue, and with the club also being based on the same site girls wishing to transition between the centre and the club are already familiar and comfortable with the venue and club contacts.

The centre is coached and delivered by female coaches, many of whom are coaches at the club, play for the college's NESA Women's Football Academy and all are members of the Leadership Academy at the college.

The support from the school has been championed and led by Adam Pilkington, the schools Director of Sport.

Average attendance of

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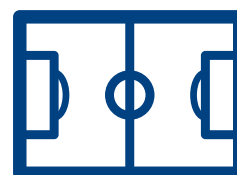
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**Newly formed
girls' teams**

50

**new girls
playing**

**New
3G
pitch**





Growing and sustaining the SSE Wildcats Programme... critical success factors and Top Tips

The collaborative partnership between the school, college and club and the passion of the individuals involved is central to the success of the SSE Wildcats centre.

Clearly defined areas of responsibility, regular communication, accompanied by clear outcomes that are beneficial for each partner has created a solid multi-partner approach.

Graduate players from the Wildcats centre have been inspired to get involved as young leaders. There are two young girls the centre has supported by providing them with the opportunity to support the coaching at the centre's sessions.

Girls' only taster sessions have worked particularly well, not only is the environment very supportive and fun, but the coaches also get a chance to speak to the girls in attendance to encourage them to try the SSE Wildcats centre.

The first session at the centre is provided free of charge, with no obligation to continue attending if the child doesn't enjoy the session.

Each week the SSE Wildcats centre nominates a participant as 'Wildcat of the Week', the winner receives a certificate and their photo (pending permission sought) is also posted on social media networks. The nomination of this award is very much sought after by the participants.

The centre is looking to develop a specific Wildcats noticeboard within the school premises, to further raise the profile of the sessions.

As a result of gaining the school's facilities free of charge and coaches volunteering, this has removed any pressure to hit certain income targets to sustain the centre.

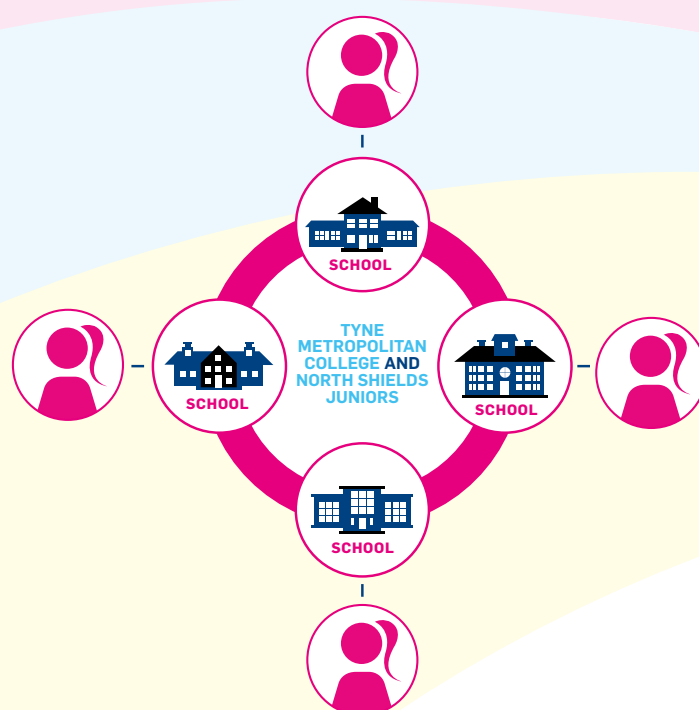
The female only delivery environment created at the centre, not only provides a wealth of positive role models for the girls in attendance but also makes them feel like it is 'normal' for girls to play football.

Potential going forward...

The pool of girls that can access the centre is very significant, and achieved mainly through the local school's network, and the centre will continue to work with John Spence Community High School and its feeder schools to make it accessible to all. To support the long-term development of the centre, girls that have only attended one session will be consulted, to identify if there are any common reasons/trends; recognising that this would provide valuable intelligence to help sustain the centre going forward. There are also further opportunities to develop female coaching roles within the centre, college and club.



NETWORK





Delivering an SSE Wildcats Centre has been fantastic for our female students to gain their first coaching experience in a safe, supportive and female only environment without the pressure of coaching a team. In turn, the young female students have helped to inspire the next generation of girls' footballers in North Tyneside and are fantastic role models to all of the participants. The success of our Wildcats centre is testament to the fantastic partnerships with North Shields Juniors AFC, John Spence Community High School and their feeder primary schools. There is a very clear pathway to support playing and volunteer opportunities for young girls in North Tyneside and it's something we are extremely proud to be a part of.



**Hannah Marshall,
Sports Development Officer,
Tyne Metropolitan College**



When we first started planning an SSE Wildcats Centre we had no idea the impact this would have. The programme has been the catalyst for the partnership approach with Tyne Met College and John Spence Community High School to provide a football pathway for both female players and coaches in North Tyneside. As a result, there are now girls playing in teams, who maybe never would have, and young female coaches with the confidence to run their own teams, with the next generation ready to follow. Absolutely Fantastic.



**Simon Brown,
North Shields Juniors AFC**



Lessons learnt and common challenges faced

Although the club and college initially started the SSE Wildcats programme as separate provision, they realised their objectives were aligned, and it was clearly evident that they would benefit from delivering the centre collectively rather than being in competition with one another.



The club and college also recognised that they could bring different skills and resources to the centre, making it more sustainable in the long-term. A sample of the benefits gained by each partner as a result of the SSE Wildcats Centre are detailed below:

College

- Provides college students with coaching opportunities and support with gaining access to coaching qualifications/experience via club links
- Raises the profile of the college amongst feeder schools
- Access to free school facility hire for the SSE Wildcats Centre

School

- School students are provided with opportunities to develop their leadership skills
- It supports an effective player pathway for school aged girls wishing to play football
- Hosting the centre increases the school's community profile

Club

- Enabled the club to establish new girls' teams and create a base of female coaches to support with the management and coaching of the teams
- Joint funding opportunities have been explored (e.g. Grow the Game)
- Brokered access to the North Tyneside School Sport Partnership

The providers of the centre have not yet engaged parents in the work of the centre to date, but were hopeful that by encouraging them to watch the sessions this may help to encourage them in the future as the centre gains more experience

The diverse abilities and age ranges attracted into the SSE Wildcats centre was sometimes a challenge for delivery staff. If only a limited number of girls were in attendance, it was not always possible to split the group into different age groups and was therefore difficult to create a session that was suitable and equally engaging for a 5 year old beginner and a talented 11 year old.

The college and club recognised that the way in which they publicise the SSE Wildcats Centre could adopt a more consistent approach, rather than relying on intermittent campaigns so that the profile is retained throughout the year.

Recruitment and retainment of delivery staff

To assist with the retainment and development of delivery staff the college and club provide a seamless coach development pathway, with the centre initially providing a safe, supportive and female only environment for young leaders to develop their confidence and coaching skills.

If the young leaders wish to progress further the club will support them financially and practically with the attainment of coaching qualifications, in return for voluntary hours which further assists the club with developing their capacity to run girls' teams. They will also be supported through the club's Coach Development Programme.

The college's Leadership Academy which was formally established this year, provides a structured and incentivised volunteering package for students wanting to access a wide range of CPD opportunities and a Level 2 Multi-sport qualification. The SSE Wildcats Centre supports the Leadership Academy by offering volunteering opportunities, which for some students has provided them with the experience to then progress into paid coaching roles. One Wildcat's student coach has also been nominated for The FA National Leadership Programme, providing further opportunities to progress and develop in an inspiring environment with other young leaders across the country.

Recruitment and retainment of participants

The college and club used a number of methods to recruit participants into the centre, examples included:

- The hosting of a Schools Festival during Girls' Football Week where over 300 local school girls played football for the very first time, many of which were then inspired to attend the SSE Wildcats Centre

- The club hosts a mixed weekly Soccer Skills session on Saturday mornings, aimed at 3-6 year olds and 7-10 year olds. Any girls demonstrating an interest in accessing further coaching or would prefer a girls' only environment would be signposted to the SSE Wildcats Centre
- The college provides via student coaches/leaders taster sessions at local feeder schools, Football Factory events, and holiday sports activities based at the college, and take the opportunity at all these activities to promote the SSE Wildcats centre
- Proactive use of social media platforms, with each partner re-tweeting to create traction and increase levels of interest across their own networks.

A fun and engaging short video has also been produced by the centre providers, which reinforces the unique girls' only philosophy of the centre, and provide parents and potential participants with a great visual introduction to the SSE Wildcats programme. To view the video please click [here](#)

Participants of the SSE Wildcats centre were actively retained as a result of the wide range of choices offered, which included:

- The option to simply continue to attend the SSE Wildcats centre (with no pressure to move on)
- Provision of a 'Wildcats Plus' session for girls aged up to 16 years old, who wish to access recreational football
- The opportunity to access competitive opportunities via the newly created girls' teams based at North Shields Junior AFC

As a result of the connection with North Shields Juniors AFC, girls attending the SSE Wildcats centre felt a strong 'sense of belonging' to a bigger club network.

300

**local school girls
played football for
the very first time**

For further information about this case study, please contact...

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