Case study: Multi-Sport Summer Camps at Leigh Cricket Tennis & Bowling Club

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http://leighcc.net/

About the holiday provision at Leigh Cricket Tennis & Bowling Club

The Leigh Cricket Tennis and Bowling Club was founded in 1854 and is affiliated with Lancashire County Cricket Club. Leigh Cricket Club is recognised as a centre of excellence for girls’ cricket.

Originally, David Dove and a number of other parent volunteers ran the holiday camp. Activities were usually held over a week or two in the summer and at first, volunteers used to run the camp by taking annual leave from their jobs to do it. However, when David was made redundant from his day job, it was agreed that he would run the Multi-Sport Summer Camps on a more permanent basis during the school holidays.

The Summer Camps first started on a more full time basis in 2013 and ran for the six-week summer holidays and in 2014 over the Easter holidays, May and the six-week Summer holiday. It does not run during February and October as it usually too cold and wet.

This report shows how holiday provision being offered at a local sports facility can serve its community by offering parents some after-school care and children some great opportunities to develop their skills and physical abilities.

The offer

Around 30 children per day attend the Summer Camps, which cater for ages 5 to 13. The Leigh Club runs a junior cricket session on Friday evenings in Summer for children aged from 5 years. Up to 100 children attend. Sessions cater for boys (under 9’s, under 11’s, under 13’s) and girls (under 10’s, under 11’s, under 13’s). These children can then stay with the club and progress further, either into cricket, tennis or bowling.

A mixture of parents, both working and not working, make use of the Summer Camps, and some come from as far away as Shevington, which is approximately 17 miles away.

The Summer Camp provision is open from 9am, closes at 3.30 each day, and costs £10 per day. Children bring their own packed lunches. For an extra £4 per day, afternoon care provision is offered and around five children whose parents need to work use this service. Bookings can be made at the club. The Club prefers parents to book in advance; however, children can be booked in on a daily basis.

There are two changing rooms for boys and girls and a large area for indoor activities/lunch and toilet facilities.

The activities available for the children include: cricket, quick cricket, football, tennis, bowls, rounders, softball, den building and free play. If the weather is bad the children stay indoors where they can do arts and crafts or play board games.

A safeguarding policy, Public Liability insurance and all other policies required are in place and are reviewed annually. (England & Wales issue Clubmark to clubs with the correct policies and procedures in place. This is a cross-sport accreditation scheme for community sports clubs.)
Staffing the provision

All staff are qualified at either BTEC/Level 2/Level 1 coaching or are volunteers, and around 15 to 20 coaching staff are available to work in the holiday camp. When children reach the age of 14, they can become ‘young people’s helpers’ in order to gain the ‘voluntary work’ section of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and they also gain accreditation for their schools. Once coaching staff have reached 17 years of age they are DBS-checked.

People who excel at cricket and have historically been involved with Leigh Cricket Club offer their services to develop the up-and-coming children involved at the Club, whether through coaching sessions or helping at Summer Camps. For example one person has gone on to represent Lancashire County Cricket Club.

The main challenges in setting up a running the Summer Camps

The biggest challenge for the Leigh Tennis Cricket and Bowling Club in keeping this provision going is competition from other providers. For example, there is a ‘Sports Village’ located close by that offers heavily subsidised camps which include SEN provision over the holidays. (Some providers are subsidised by the local authority for example, and can provide free activities.)

The camps are advertised on Leigh Cricket Club’s website and word-of-mouth does some of the marketing.

The challenge of competing with other providers also requires a varied marketing approach. Dave says the that he has offered a personal opportunity to schools to help promote cricket in schools with the opportunity to then provide cricket coaching at the Club and/or to attend the Summer Camps. Some of the schools visited have included Gilded Hollins and St Joseph’s in Leigh.

Supermarket noticeboards are used to promote the club, as well as local free newspapers, and also the Leigh Journal. The Club also has a Facebook presence with lots of followers. People can also download a booking form from the Facebook page.

Also, to make parents who are not already members of the Leigh Club aware of what is offered, Dave puts posters around the Town, in local business premises, in libraries, supermarkets, and so on.

Dave says he is not entirely sure how many children attend as a result of particular types of advertising/marketing. He would like to add a question about this to the booking form, which may help to refine his marketing approach, but printing is a big overhead and to have all the posters/booking forms re-printed is not possible at present.

Another challenge, but only initially, was ensuring that members of all the sections within the club understood the benefits of promoting a range of sporting activity that might ultimately benefit the respective sporting sections as well as the club itself. This was done through liaison with Club Council which oversees all activity across the Club.

What are the benefits?

‘Fun for children,’ says Dave. ‘They’re introduced to many sports and it brings kids from the community together. They make new friends and they develop skills, agility, balance, co-ordination and so on.’

‘The Camps also allow parents to see a community facility being used for both a social and sports purpose. Also, the young coaches feel they are giving something back to their community.

Where to now?

In future, Dave intends to gather more feedback to help him evaluate and improve what he offers. And, Dave’s advice to other holiday activity providers?

‘You need to be passionate to succeed at running this sort of provision,’ says Dave. 'Being passionate about the sport you are offering makes it work.'