



Participant Case Studies – Chance to Shine

Paul's story

Paul, 11, had changed primary schools 10 times and was expelled from the last two. Both his parents were in prison and several foster placements had been tried without success. Paul had frequent episodes of violent and verbally abusive behaviour, but then through a Chance to Shine coaching scheme he discovered a talent for sport.

Paul was in the school team for a one-day Kwik Cricket Festival and attended after-school cricket sessions at the local cricket club. His outbursts reduced considerably and he has recently taken his Year 6 SATs. His school attendance is now 100 per cent and he has shown talent in maths, art and other areas of sport.

Ian's story

Ian, aged 10, was classed as morbidly obese. He avoided physical education at school since his experiences had been so negative. He was always last to complete any physical task and, as a result, the other children in his class avoided being partnered with him.

In the first Chance to Shine lessons Ian was completely disinterested. The coach tried to encourage the youngster by giving him one-to-one attention, but he rejected it, saying that cricket was 'boring'.

The coach persevered and rather than asking the youngster to take part in the physical side of the game, he encouraged him to approach it from a tactical point of view. Ian was asked to identify gaps in the field or ways that teams might score more runs.

After a few weeks, he became frustrated with the players' inability to see run scoring opportunities, and eventually decided to take matters into his own hands and get involved. He did this successfully and cricket became his favourite lesson. For the first time in his entire school life Ian joined an extra-curricular club: the cricket club.

He further progressed into the local cricket club and took part in competitive house matches. Ian's mother and grandmother came to watch him, and he took great pride in wearing his club shirt. His house team won the cricket cup at the end of the season, and he collected his medal - his first ever sporting achievement. Ian lost weight and, two years on, continues to enjoy cricket both within and outside of school.

Farah's story

Farah, aged 9, is an Asian girl from a poor family. She was extremely conscious of her body image and had never taken part in any school teams.

Farah was very shy and lacking in confidence and self-esteem. She participated fully in the cricket lessons, but was always set apart from her peer group. The coach recognised early on that she would benefit from one-to-one attention and throughout the term gave her individual support and suggested that she contributed to the de-brief at the end of the sessions.

The breakthrough came when the girl suddenly started to participate in class de-brief sessions, answering questions such as 'what did we learn about fielding today?' Her responses were accurate and the class even gave her a round of applause.

Her confidence went from strength to strength. Teachers commented that, away from cricket, she had started to contribute in the classroom and they had discovered she was a very bright and articulate young lady.

Her peer group also realised this and began to involve her more fully in group activities. She continued to participate in cricket lessons, gaining confidence in her physical ability as well as her personal skills.

Farah joined a lunchtime cricket club and was part of the school team to enter, for the first time in its history, into the local Kwik cricket festival. She had been picked for after-school events before but had never asked her parents for permission to attend. Farah not only asked for her cricket team, but gained permission to take part and was delighted when her father came to watch her play.

Danny's story

Danny, 11, has multiple behavioural problems, including Asperger's, Tourettes and Attention Deficit Disorder, but according to his primary school teacher he has been transformed by the Chance to Shine programme.

"He used to get frustrated, lose his temper very easily and struggled to cope with losing or being told he was wrong" says Tracey Miller, a teacher at St John's Primary School, Bethnal Green, London, "He would throw tantrums, everything was unfair or someone else's fault."

For Danny the clarity of the controlled environment of sport has been therapeutic. A gifted sportsman, he is now learning to control his impulses through the discipline and enjoyment of competitive team sport and even captains the team.

"I've built a relationship with him through cricket," says Tracey, "we tell him he's captain now, he has to be responsible and has to be sympathetic if a player drops a catch. "Sport is clearer, more defined", continues Tracey, "so that children can see clearly that the same simple rules apply to all. The raised finger of the umpire is final and this is an authority that is comprehensible to youngsters."

Gareth's story

Gareth Walton, 20, overcame taunting and physical disability due to Poland Syndrome, which meant he was born with no left arm below the elbow, to excel in the sport he loves: cricket.

As a teenage cricketer he defied the odds to become one of County Durham's most celebrated young players and acted as a volunteer Chance to Shine coach for his club's junior section.

He firmly established himself in the squad at Willington Cricket Club as an accomplished bowler, batter and fielder. Gareth became vice-captain and first bowler for the club's under-18 team.

Darren Brown, the club's development officer, said: "Gareth is a fantastic inspiration. He regularly plays for the first team because he's an excellent cricket player. He is talented in all aspects of the game and never lets us down. He is a real inspiration for younger players."

The respect Gareth has earned on the sports field flies in the face of his life as a toddler, when he and his sister Laura were teased about his disability.

Gareth said: "I wouldn't say I was bullied but there was teasing, and once I started playing cricket I came in for some real sledging from other teams. At first they thought I would be easy to play against so they'd bat towards me and even my own team used to try to protect me.

"But I've made some good catches and taken plenty of wickets so now everyone knows me for my cricket, not my arm. I live for cricket and hope to pass that on to others."

He gained the first level of coaching qualifications needed to work with children at Willington and has plans to coach blind youngsters at Durham Cricket Club and hopes to become a full-time coach.