

Present: Mike Oakley, James Cudmore, Margaret Nicholls, Charlotte Nicholls, Danny Thorrington, Bill Cox, Jean Cox, Tania Spurling

Apologies: Steve Benson, Jonathan Price, David Finn, Terry McEntee, Colin Stiff, Cathy Churchyard, Bob Kimber, Lis Henderson, Neil Gilmore.

Playground to Podium:

- Develop Club Links
- Involve coaches from across the network to gain experience, and have the opportunity to coach disabled athletes
- Promote athletics and clubs. This is a particularly important challenge as athletes will take place in a range of sports - athletics being one of the activities.
- Changes have been made to the delivery of Playground to Podium. County Sports Partnerships are now to facilitate the organisation of County athlete assessment days. Suffolk to deliver their first athlete assessment day by July 2010. Essex already hosted an athlete assessment day at Chelmsford last year, to be repeated in 2010 (dates to be confirmed)

Coach Mentoring: Through feedback and discussion with network coaches, it appears several clubs/coaches are keen to gain experience of coaching disabled athletes and would like to observe/work with other coaches to gain confidence and experience. All agreed that coaches that are assisting with mentoring in the network should be paid expenses. Coach mentoring system to be implemented.

Open Sessions: Orwell Panthers Open Sessions would allow coaches from across the network to come and observe / assist coaches at their training session to gain experience and the opportunity to coach disabled athletes. Margaret / Mike to discuss with the club committee and if all are in agreement, dates to be set for open events during the year.

Discovery Project:

Danny Thorrington discussed the Discovery project in partnership with Westbourne and Copleston School Sports partnerships. There is the possibility for the network to be involved through:

- Athlete recruitment - athletics festivals, invitation to open events for selected athletes
- Opportunity for coaches to become involved in the project through coaching in schools
- Identifying disabled athletes in mainstream schools and linking with clubs.

Athletics Festival:

The group discussed the possibility of organising an athletics festival for identified athletes through the Discovery project and training sports leaders to help officiate at the event.

Athlete recruitment

- 'Have a go' sessions, targeting the recruitment of disabled athletes in groups based upon the type / classification of disability e.g. wheelchair athletes

- Investigate the possibility of hiring /approaching manufacturers (Huntingdon) to have appropriate wheelchairs available at open events
- Involve current athletes such as Brian Alldis and Peter Downing in training days / open events.

Disability athletics workshop – This would be open to all network clubs/coaches to come and take part in a session to gain experience and further knowledge of coaching disabled athletes / catering for disabled athletes within clubs. Possibility of linking with the panther Challenge. Deliverer of the workshop to be further discussed.

Competition:

- Quadkids competition
- Panther Challenge
- Jerry Everett memorial trophy meeting
- Further investigate opportunities for competition through the network

The group would welcome feedback from clubs/coaches across the network, to help identify how they would like to be supported by the disability athletics working group. If you have any suggestions, feedback or ideas please contact Tania Spurling (tania.spurling@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk / 07824414510)