

Raising the Profile of Volunteers

Football Workforce offers some ideas to help you make the invisible team a little more visible not only within the club, but within the local community.

Just occasionally, think about adding some special interest stories about the off-the-field team in your news report to the local paper.

Next time the photographer arrives to take a team photograph, make sure that the volunteers and helpers team is in the picture too. They might even have some T-shirts or baseball caps to give them a sense of identity. This way, if your players award their Team Helper of the Month Award, not only can a picture of the winner appear on the club notice board, but the same picture can be included with the report for the local paper.

You could also use your club newsletter to publicise all the work that goes on behind the scenes. Feature two or three people in each newsletter, perhaps in an interview style, asking them about their role, how they became involved, and the things they enjoy about helping out at the club.

The following examples may help you with some ideas for your own press release or articles for your newsletter.

Success at New Town is a Family Affair

The New Town Colts continued their best ever season last weekend with a 4-3 win at home against their old rivals, Old Town. Player of the match this week was Mark Jones, who has played for the Colts for the past three years. His on-the-field talents are matched by the work he does behind the scenes to support the club.

Mark is working towards his Community Sport Leader Award at New Town High School where he was a pupil. He puts his leadership training into practice by helping out at the club's mini soccer training sessions and is an excellent role model to the younger players. In fact, it's a Jones family affair – dad Martin has been a volunteer at the club since he hung up his boots some eight years ago, and there's hardly a job in the club that Martin hasn't taken on, giving endless hours to make sure that the teams can run out on Saturday to enjoy their football. Mum Jean is always there to lend a helping hand at those essential fund-raising and social events too.

So as the team runs out next Saturday morning at Mid Town, hoping to maintain their unbeaten record through another match, the Jones family will be there supporting on and off the pitch.

Volunteer of the Month – Shereen Bashir

You've never actually played football, so what got you involved?

"My daughters came home really excited about a new after-school football session just for girls. I wasn't sure that this was the right thing for them to be doing – girls and football – so I went along to check it out. The organiser asked me if I would mind helping out with registration and before I knew it, I was involved!"

"The girls then started in the club's girls' team, and once again I came along to look and once again I got involved."

What do you do, and how much time do you give each week?

"The coach said that there should always be more than one adult at the sessions, so I started out just being there. Then one day she asked me to look after one group of players whilst she coached another group. I was terrified! Sixteen girls running in all directions and I was supposed to be in control!"

The experience didn't put you off?

"No, it spurred me on! I've now got a Level 1 Coaching Certificate, and am confident that I can be a real help. I come to the sessions that my girls are involved in, which means that we're here for three sessions each week – I really don't have time for anything else at the moment."

Any tips for other mums (or dads) who would like to get involved?

"There are all sorts of jobs that need doing; some only take an hour a week. We're a friendly group and we'll make you welcome."