

Sport Unlimited Case Study

Get into gear with Street Cheer



CSP: TYNE & WEAR SPORT

ACTIVITY: STREET CHEER

LOCATION: RYTON - GATESHEAD



Simon Goldsmith from SIRC had the opportunity to catch up with StreetGames Coordinator for Sunderland & South Tyneside, Gemma Hollywood, to find out what Street Cheer is all about...

WHAT IS STREET CHEER?

Street Cheer is a brand new element of Cheerleading, a unique fusion of street dance and Cheerleading moves. You'll find the funkier, most up to date dance moves combined with Cheerleading chants and cheers. Ultimately, it brings a fresh and interesting twist to both the street dance style and to traditional Cheerleading. Unlike Cheerleading, Street Cheer moves originate from Hip-Hop and Street Dance styles. The execution is more relaxed and less technical, but the same power and energy is required. The music is always very current and younger audiences identify with it.

HOW AND WHERE IS STREET CHEER DELIVERED?

Street Cheer is delivered by a range of different people and organisations and that is what helps make it work so well. Deliverers range from those who have little or no dance and cheerleading experience to those who have been involved in dance and cheerleading participation and instructing for years. The way that the level one course is designed and delivered enables those who have no dance experience to develop the confidence and technique to then coach. Of the 4 courses held in the North East so far, those attending range from PE teachers, youth workers, University and College students, young volunteers, dance instructors, cheerleading coaches and Local Authority coaches/deliverers. Once they have completed the course they are urged to sign up to the 'StreetGames' network where they can receive support in setting up their own community club/session.

Street Cheer is running at various sessions across the North East, usually in community and youth centres where the young people perhaps already attend a youth club. One particular session, running in Ryton in Gateshead, is part of the Sport Unlimited programme and proving to be popular. It is hoped that this will be built upon in the next year of the programme. Street Cheer has been incorporated into an existing youth group session and those who already attend the youth group are going half an hour earlier to their usual session and doing an hour's street cheer and then joining back in with the youth group session afterwards.



"The young people really enjoy the fact that they are accomplishing something - they come away from a session and they have actually learned a dance routine which they can go away and practice".

WHO IS ATTRACTED TO STREET CHEER?

Observations from sessions suggest that Street Cheer is really appealing to female's aged 12 - 18 years. Some of the young girls who attend have always had an interest in dance and cheerleading however many girls are new to it and it tends to be those who do not take part in traditional sports. It differs from mainstream activities because it is a new activity to everyone who tries it therefore at the first session everyone is in the same boat - no-one has done it before. This encourages the confidence levels of those attending. Individuals attend the sessions in friendship groups and see it more of a social opportunity and not as a health activity. The music and style of dance moves suits that age group and they are given quite a bit of freedom to come up with their own routines and ideas for choreography and themes.

BENEFITS?

Aside from the health benefits there is also the confidence building aspect. It takes a lot for the girls to feel comfortable dancing in front of their peers however they do it because of the way the sessions are delivered. The level one course encourages the instructors to introduce the techniques slowly and in a way that the young people sometimes don't realise they are being asked to do something out of their comfort zone.

ENJOYMENT?

Young people learn about the beats of the music so can eventually learn how to choreograph their own moves into the routine. They also enjoy the opportunity to perform and take part in competitions and events. Street Cheer works very closely with 'StreetGames', the nationally recognised body for developing youth sport in disadvantaged communities, and through this partnership Street Cheer competitions are a major feature at the StreetGames Regional Festivals. This enables the young people to show off their skills and routines in front of like minded groups of young people - which they really enjoy.



HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE SIGNPOSTED?

The youth clubs play a major role with young people who are perhaps already attending youth club sessions but are not taking part in physical activity whilst at the youth group. The session worker at the Sport Unlimited sessions talked to a group of the girls asking if they would be keen to try Street Cheer and the feedback was very positive. Arrangements were made to get sessions up and running whilst the interest was fresh. Street Cheer is also being introduced in the schools so they are getting a taste for it in curriculum time and it is important that there are community sessions available as an exit pathway.

IS IT SUSTAINABLE?

It is sustainable due to the popularity of the level one course currently being rolled out, especially in the North East. Over 60 people attended two courses recently meaning there are people out there who are delivering straight away. The sustainability is also maintained as the young people who are attending as participants are expressing major interest in becoming trained instructors so they can keep their own sessions running. The UKCA are also a great support with regional representatives who offer continued support to those who have qualified as instructors as well as recruiting more people to do the course.

RETENTION

The Sport Unlimited session is half way through the 10 week block and so far there are 15 young people attending and at least 13 have been in attendance each week. It is envisaged that Street Cheer will feature in a lot more Sport Unlimited plans for the next phase of the programme (March 09 onwards).

If you would like any further information, please contact Gemma Hollywood at gemma.hollywood@streetgames.org.