



CountyDurham**Sport**

# **Good Practice Guide For Clubs**

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# Introduction

County Durham Sport recognises that many clubs within County Durham are extremely successful when it comes to innovative and exciting ways to develop their club. We are delighted to be able to share these ideas with other clubs, as well as rewarding clubs for their success.

This guide covers good practice ideas in areas such as winter coaching, volunteers, school-club links, club meetings, growing membership and working with juniors.

It also includes some useful guidance from some of our Ambassador Clubs, to let you know what they found challenging and helpful.

As well as this, there are hints and tips spread throughout the guide which we hope you will find helpful to put into practice.

We hope that you will find these ideas a good starting point for your own club, but of course you can get in touch with us, or with any of the clubs mentioned in this guide, to get advice or any other information.

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# Consett AFC Juniors



## What has worked for you?

### Volunteers

The club understands the vital role of volunteers in sport, and always tries to fund courses for volunteers. This includes young volunteers becoming referees and parents becoming coaches or team managers.

### Funding

Being an FA Charter Community Club, Consett AFC have had some success with grants but are now having to 'make money' within the club. Running over 30 teams in indoor training means that the total cost exceeds £10,000. Despite this cost, and the costs of the end of season presentations of £6,000, subscriptions have been kept down to £2 per week.

### Structure

The club has now put into place a management committee where problems and ideas are shared and not left to one person. This also means that volunteering tasks can be shared.

*“Communicating regularly with your volunteers ensures that they are happy with their role and are motivated to continue volunteering.”*

*“Communicating with your volunteers does not necessarily mean you need to sit down with them. Communication could involve regular texts or emails or setting up a volunteer page on your website that provides volunteers with new information.”*

## What would you like to put into practice?

David Pyke, Secretary of Consett AFC Juniors says: “We’d love to be able to use the area of Derwentside to improve and vary the football coaching sessions. It would be very exciting to have teams involved in pre-season training using coaches from other sports to improve fitness and introduce other sports to the youngsters.”

His ideas include sessions lead by coaches from other sports such as swimming, dance, athletics, rugby, netball or cricket. Alternatively, a festival could be set up so a football team, rugby team or swimming team could enter and take part in all sport events, with points awarded to determine league positions.

“A festival like this would be a great day of fun and variation and let kids try out a variety of sports.”

*“It is a good idea to nominate a volunteer co-ordinator within your club. This person will be the key contact for all volunteers.”*

*“Over 2 million people volunteer in sport every year. Without volunteers would your club survive? This is why it is so important to recognise and reward your volunteers. Rewards can range from public recognition in newsletters or free merchandise. A number of National Governing Bodies also have recognition schemes that you can access for your volunteers.”*

# Durham City Rowing Club



## What has worked for you?

The Allcomers Regatta is organised each year by Durham City Rowing Club to introduce new people to the sport of rowing. Four people per team are required and the club then provides each team of four people with a boat, a cox and four coaching sessions. The club gives them a crash course in rowing and teaches them how to row and race a four person rowing boat.

These four practice sessions can take place however the team want – this could be once a month for four months or once a night over the same week. Once all crews have completed their four training sessions the Allcomers Regatta is held in August. All novice crews race against each other over a 300m course with an experienced cox to keep them on course and to keep them going.

Every boat gets at least two races while winning crews keep racing right through to the final. Events are raced as men, women and mixed crews.

‘Pots’ (tankards) are presented to all winners, as in a regular regatta, and the event is finished off with the presentation and social BBQ. The event is a huge success every year as a fundraiser, a promotional event and as a recruitment drive for new senior members.

*“Identifying how your existing members found out about your club will help you focus your recruitment efforts.”*

***“Getting beginners involved in an event can provide them with the incentive to continue attending. Events are also a good way to attract new volunteers and showcase your club.”***

*“To retain your new members make sure your club is as welcoming as possible. Produce a welcome pack for all new members which provides information on training sessions, social activities and contacts of key personnel within the club.”*

# Cleveland Orienteering Club



## What has worked for you?

Cleveland Orienteering Club works with a number of partners to promote orienteering in County Durham.

The club has worked with Partnership Development Managers, School Sport Co-ordinators and Competition Managers to organise taster sessions and inter-primary school festivals. The events attract between 300–400 children between the ages of 10 and 16. If the children are interested in continuing, they are encouraged to attend club sessions that occur in different venues across the county, including Shildon.

Making use of other school schemes such as Leadership and Volunteering, the club uses school volunteers to help run the festivals on the day.

*“Leadership and Volunteering is a programme for 14–19 year olds that runs in schools across the County. It encourages students to become involved in volunteering in community and club settings. If you are interested in taking a volunteer, please contact County Durham Sport for more information.”*

To ensure that orienteering activities continue after the festivals have taken place, the club has teamed up with the British Orienteering Federation to deliver training courses for teachers and others who are interested in becoming coaches.

The club also provides each school with a resource pack and a set of coloured maps to support teachers to deliver high quality orienteering sessions.

***“A number of National Governing Bodies provide training for school teachers so they can deliver your sport during school time. This can be of great benefit to your sport if you are only able to deliver a few taster sessions in the school yourself. For more information, contact your National Governing Body.”***

***“Identifying organisations that can support your club can open up opportunities you were previously unaware of. County Durham Sport can provide you with information on local and national partners.”***

# Durham City Hockey Club



## What has worked for you?

The hockey club shares facilities with Durham University, which has led them to develop close links with Durham University Hockey Club. The two clubs share umpires and Durham City Hockey club makes use of the University club coaches and student volunteers. This means that the club gets a lot of talented and enthusiastic coaches, and in return the coaches get lots of coaching experience.

Durham University has world class athletes across all sports. They are also committed to placing student coaches in community clubs. Any local sports club has nothing to lose by approaching them to investigate the possibilities of linking with a Durham University sports club.

*“Creating links with local youth clubs can be a good source of new recruits. Try inviting a youth club to one of your coaching sessions or deliver a taster session within their facility.”*

*“You do not have to have a link with a university or college to share facilities or resources. For example, Durham Indoor Bowling Club lies in close proximity to Newton Hall Bowling Club. The coaches move from one club to another and coach all year round. The members have also benefited from a joint membership for both clubs.”*

*“Sharing resources between clubs can reduce costs and increase the sustainability of the clubs involved.”*

# Seaham Park Cricket Club



## What has worked for you?

In order to develop existing players and introduce new players Seaham Park Cricket Club hold winter coaching sessions at Seaham School gym. Using qualified and trainee coaches, the U11 age group undertake 20 weeks of structured coaching.

The coaching has the following benefits:

- Introduction to cricket for new players
- Development of core batting, bowling and fielding skills through drills and games
- An opportunity for young people to socialise in a safe environment
- An opportunity for young people to improve fitness levels
- Participation for all generations
- An opportunity for young people to begin a lifelong association with the sport of cricket and belong to a sports club
- An opportunity for established coaches, trainee coaches and young cricket leaders to develop their skills

As a result, the club has achieved a regular throughput of players and members year on year.

***“Put your coaching plans in a file that everyone including players has access to. You will build a portfolio of drills that can be used year after year and continue to develop.”***

*“The off season is a great time to up-skill your coaches without the time constraints of coaching sessions and matches. For more information on sports specific and generic coaching courses, please visit the County Durham Sport website.”*

***“Providing sporting opportunities out of season keeps your players engaged in the sport reducing any drop off that can occur.”***

# Cocken Lodge Golf Club



## What has worked for you?

Cocken Lodge are extremely pro-active in encouraging juniors and beginners into the game of golf. They run a swap shop whereby people bring equipment, clothing, shoes etc that are no longer of use to them, and these are then sold on at a very reasonable rate with the proceeds going to the Durham County Girls training. Apart from raising funds, this also makes golf more affordable for those starting out.

A professional golfer goes into schools weekly to teach and promote golf. Their innovative idea which was created by their professional, the School Sport Partnership and The Golf Foundation is to ensure that these lessons are progressive by insisting that each school involved purchases a set of tri-golf equipment before the coaching begins. This ensures that once the professional has finished the six sessions, the schools are fully equipped and trained to carry on the coaching.

A free group lesson is also offered at Cocken Lodge to any junior involved in the school coaching. The club also ensures that they work in a logical fashion with the professional visiting a secondary school, and then the cluster of junior and primary schools which feed that particular school. This is to try to maintain continuity amongst juniors.

## What would you like to put into practice?

Ideally, the club would like to create an area for juniors only. They have the land available and would use any funding available to make the area suitable for junior golf.

*“Don’t forget to take the names and contact details of people who attend taster sessions and open days. You can then contact them a couple of weeks after the event to see if they want to come and try your sport at a reduced rate - if they haven’t already been back!”*

***“Setting up an equipment loan scheme gives potential members the opportunity to ‘try before you buy’ especially if the sport is expensive.”***

*“Taster sessions and open days are also good ways to attract new members. You can even invite a specific group of people such as women and girls if you want to develop a girls’ team.”*

# Sedgefield Harriers



## What has worked for you?

As an athletics club, Sedgefield Harriers has about sixty children coming along to their main weekly training session, which is split between their three Level 2 coaches with their helpers according to age and ability.

As good practice, every week before training starts, all three groups are brought together and updated about:

- Upcoming events, competitions and races along with which age group can take part
- The recognition of the recent achievements of the children as individuals or teams, for race results, competitions, and also to show everyone their medals if any received
- To advise the children if any handouts need to be collected at the end for their parents

The benefits of this brief meeting are huge. It gives all the children the feeling of being part of the whole club identity. With the recognition of the achievements, this brings pride to the those who have achieved and identifies role models for the other children. The club actively encourages pride in everyone's success as an individual or a team, but also as a representative of the club.

***“Remember that communication is a two way process. You need to be able to listen to what your players, parents or volunteers are telling you if you are to improve and sustain membership.”***

*“Look at more innovative ways of communicating with members. There aren't many juniors, or seniors for that matter, who don't access a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter. Set up a specific group for your club and encourage all members to join. But remember to keep communicating with those without internet access on a regular basis.”*

***“Regular communication with club members and parents is an easy way to recruit volunteers. Clubs can play host to a variety of vocations that you can make use of including accountants, builders, journalists and website developers. Find out what skills you have available to you in your club.”***

# Durham Indoor Bowling Club



## What has worked for you?

A few years ago, the club developed a liaison with Trinity, a local special needs school. Once a week during term time about twelve pupils from the school together with a carer attended the bowling club and participated in fun games of bowls.

Because the pupils are of varying ability it was found necessary to improve the programme in order that further development would continue. The pupils are now instructed by qualified coaches.

The club believes that the project helps to develop the participating youngsters and allows them to participate in and enjoy community activities that would normally not be available to them. At the end of their attendance the youngsters are presented with a small reward as a record and in acknowledgement of their achievement.

*“Offer schools the opportunity to come and watch a high quality game at your club. Some juniors need to see the sport played before they’ll bite the bullet and give it a go.”*

## What would you like to put into practice?

As a club, Durham Indoor Bowling Club would like to see more junior participation in their sport, as the youth of today are the likely future of a club like this.

It would be a huge benefit if the facilities that are available were made known to 11–16 year olds via schools, youth clubs and other related organisations.

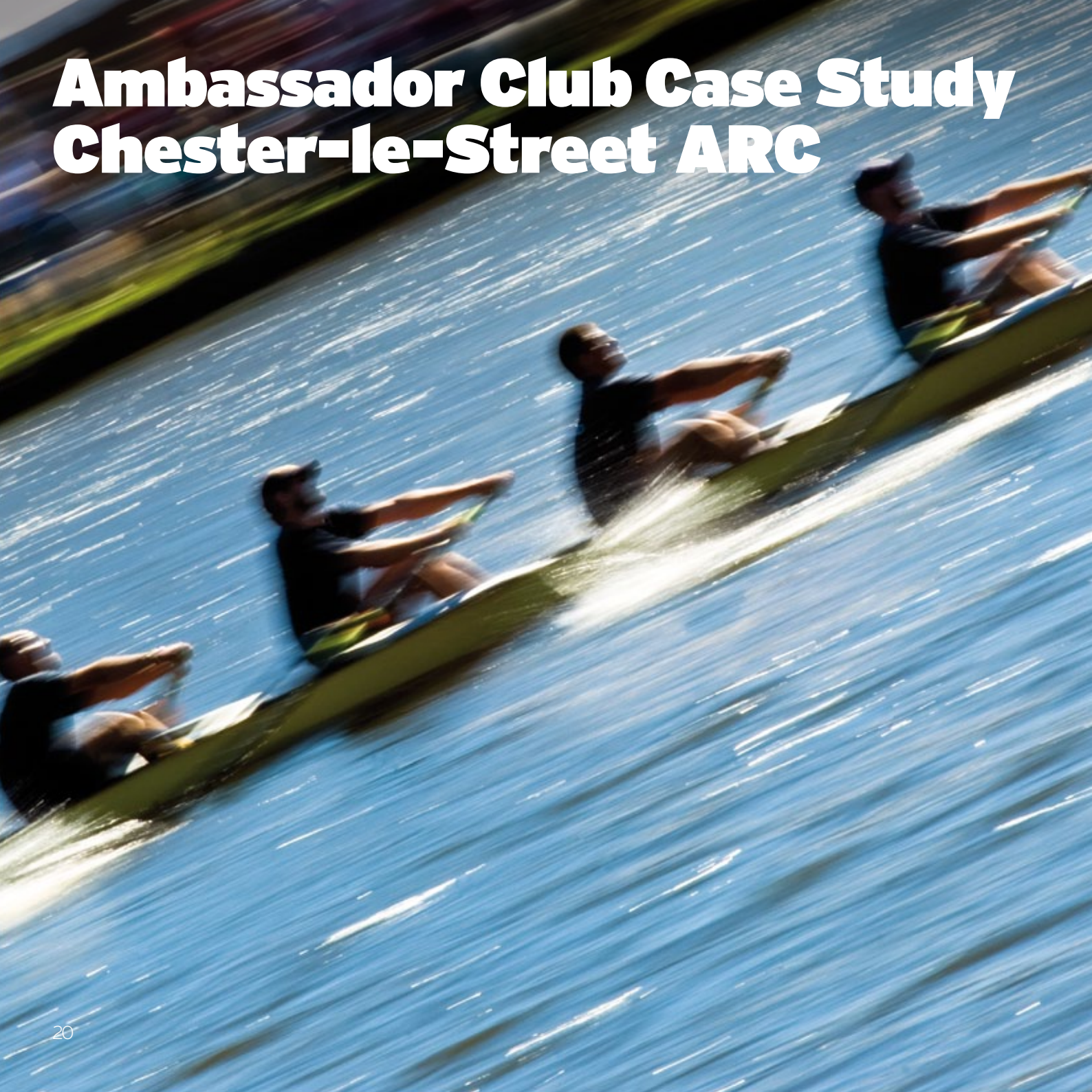
The club has experience of school pupils attending and participating in bowling but have never managed to sustain their participation. This is often to due exams and other curricular activities.

The club would be quite willing to organise bowling activities with qualified coaches at times and on days that are appropriate to their needs.

***“To discover more about the schools in your area and how you can get involved, your first step is to contact your local School Sports Partnership. Local contacts can be found on the County Durham Sport website.”***

***“Creating links with local schools is an ideal way to increase your junior membership base and ensure the future of your club.”***

# Ambassador Club Case Study Chester-le-Street ARC



The rowing club in Chester-le-Street has existed since the 1870s, although around a century later due to dwindling support it was mothballed before re-opening in the late 1980s. Membership remained around 10–15 for about a decade before seeing a steady growth to the present level of 70 split evenly between juniors and adults. Adult membership took off in 2005 with the formation of an adult section and the introduction of a family membership.

This growth has enabled the resurrection of the club regatta in 2006 (last held in 1992), an extension to the landing stage and structured involvement with local schools initially through the Amateur Rowing Association Project Oarsome Scheme, which helped to provide equipment, and then through the appointment of a Community Sports Coach. 2005 saw the first international rower ever to come out of the club and a number of national championship medals have since been won. The club also won County Durham Sport Junior Sports Club of the Year in 2008.

For those wanting to progress their club, Secretary Andrew Bryant had the following to say: “Make sure that you give the highest priority to getting the administration of your organisation right. If you lose a race or perform poorly that is a matter for the coach and the crew. Yes it may impact on the club’s sporting reputation but you soon move on to the next challenge. Not dealing with the paper work takes you in to dealing with external organisations and your reputation can be sullied very quickly with knock on effects such as loss of confidence, unable to get funding, loss of membership etc. After that communication is the key, giving people an opportunity to give their view so that they have buy-in to what you are looking to achieve.”

## Benefits

- 700% membership increase over 5 years
- Doubled boat fleet
- ARA Project Oarsome Club
- Sport England Clubmark
- County Durham Sport Focus Club
- Club Regatta restarted in 2006
- Brought in more adults/volunteers
- Recognised as part of the community
- Progress in moving rowing away from being viewed as an elitist sport
- Appointment of Community Sports Coach

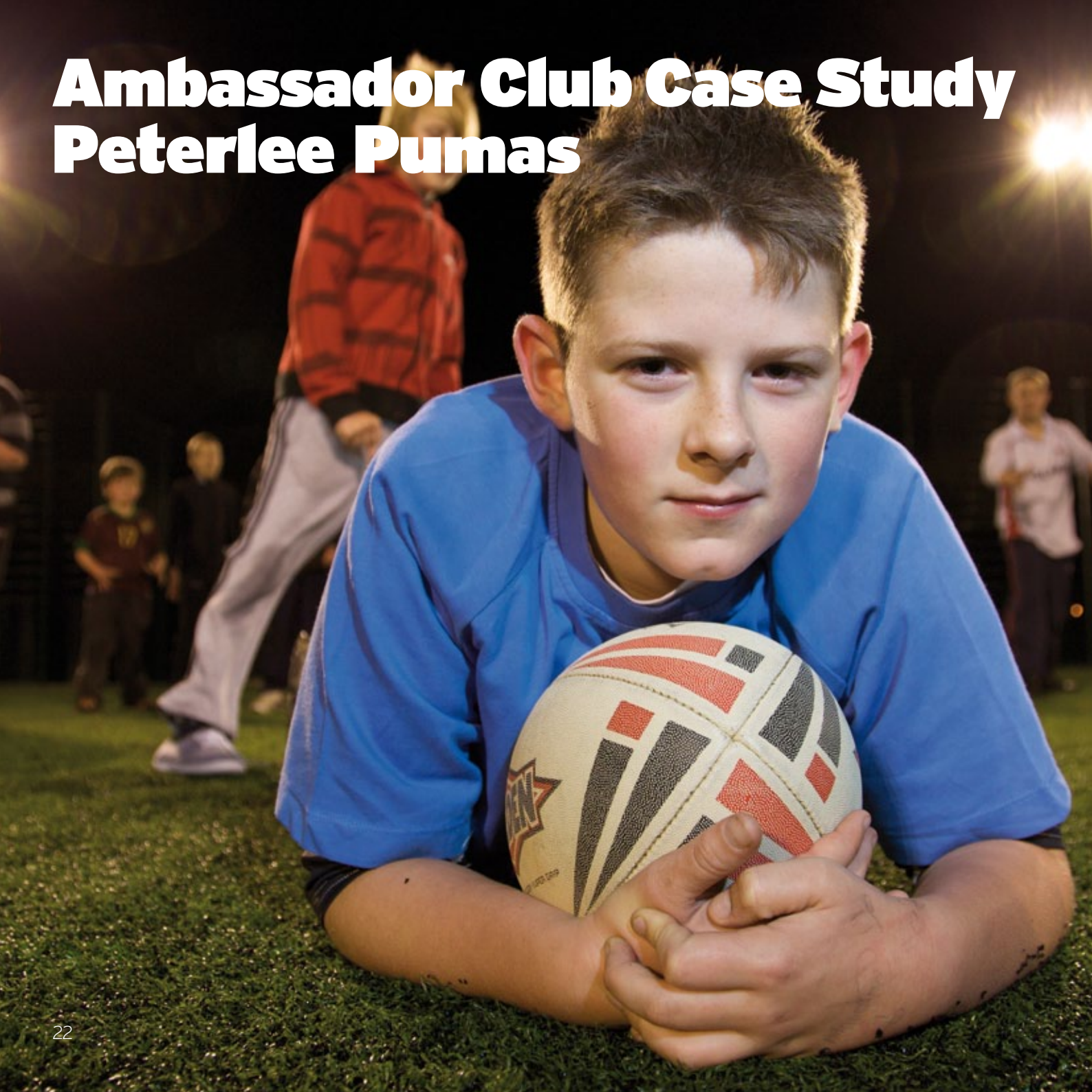
## Challenges faced

- Need to increase membership numbers
- Make better use of the boathouse – space and number of sessions
- Grow the number of coaches
- Increase the number of boats and equipment
- Set up documentation – linked to Sport England Clubmark
- Formalise links with schools
- Draw in parents to help as volunteers
- Lack of a committee structure

***“Regular committee meetings allow you to keep up to date with club administration. Try to structure your meetings to incorporate all important aspects of club life and have your meetings away from the training area so you can’t be interrupted.”***

# Ambassador Club Case Study

## Peterlee Pumas



Peterlee Pumas was formed in May 2002, starting with U11s and quickly expanding to U13s in the same year. The club now runs U16, U14 and U12 teams and is starting U10s and U8s. A women's team runs in the summer league, with a men's team in the Rugby League Conference (Summer) and another in Yorkshire Division 4.

At the beginning, the club found that getting funding was a problem. They undertook as much funding activity as possible, including raffles, selling merchandise, sourcing grants and chasing up sponsors to enable the club to grow and develop

They also work as closely as possible with the LEA and try to engage as many parents as possible and build up relationships with them. This means that several parents have now undertaken coaching courses to get more involved with rugby league, rather than just standing on the sidelines.

Another key factor is communication. Keeping funders, members, etc informed makes sure that everybody is pulling in same direction for the good of the club. Spreading the word also helps the club to grow. Schools that were interested in rugby league festivals from the beginning have passed on news of their good experiences to other schools, leading to an increase in the number of school festivals being run.

*"If applying for a grant, you need to ensure that your reason for applying matches the aims and objectives of the grant making body. You may need to search for the best funding body before making any application."*

Rob Laverick of Peterlee Pumas encourages clubs to keep faith in their club and sport: "I just kept believing in the product. Other sports will have more money, more people and more support so we just tried to be as good as we could be and as self sufficient as possible."

*"When considering how to raise funding for you club, think about the method that suits your club best. You may need to raise a large amount of money, in which case a bag pack would not be the best option."*

### Challenges faced

- Funding, mainly due to the large distances we have to travel to get games and also the amount we have to find fund coaching program in schools
- Getting schools (not all) to work with us and allow us in to coach.
- Parental support, the problem of not getting a lot of parents interested in watching and helping out with the club.

***"Fundraising opportunities for clubs can range from bag packing and sponsorship to applying for grants and loans."***

**In partnership with**

County Durham PCT, Durham County Council, Durham LEA, Durham University,  
Sport England and Youth Sport Trust,

