



# INSIGHT INTO ACTION

THE LESSONS FROM THE  
DOORSTEP SPORT CLUB  
PROGRAMME 2013 - 17



# SECTION 2

**DELIVERING THE INSIGHT**

**THE 'FIVE RIGHTS' OF  
DOORSTEP SPORT**



**The issue:** How the lifestyle insights inform the sports offer.

**The answer:** Adopting an insight led and an asset based approach encourages young people to shape what goes on in their Doorstep Sport Club and makes good use of local facilities against a rubric of the Five Rights: right price, right time, right place, right people, right style.

Doorstep Sport Club hosts make a good job of stitching together local, and often limited opportunities into an offer that satisfies young people's priorities. In the 2015 **DSC Participant Survey**, 94% of attendees rated their DSC session as 'good' or 'very good'. Just what makes Doorstep Sport sessions 'good' is shown above in Graphic 1.

## The rubric of Doorstep Sport – the 'Five Rights'

We merged the ingredients of the lifestyle research with on-the-ground experience to develop the, 'Five Rights of Doorstep Sport' as a useful starting point for planning DSCs. These Five Rights are: right price, right time, right place, right people, right style. How the Five Rights are applied varies by locality and after negotiation between young people's preferences and local realities – but they stand as a useful planning framework which builds in the young people's lifestyles and opinions.

### 01 The Right Price

Lifestyle research told us that money is a constant issue amongst our target group. Making sure they were seen looking good in day to day life and on social media was very important and it can be expensive. Some young people said they spent a lot of their available money on take-away food. To make sense of this spending pattern we asked the **Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC)** at Sheffield Hallam University to explore **sport and leisure spending habits amongst low income households**.

By analysing data from the Expenditure and Food Survey, they found that low income families spend on average £133 per annum on active sport. This equates to just £2.55p a week for a whole family, so DSC provision needs to be free or nearly free. Charging even a 50p admission fee requires typically inactive young people in low income families to put sport very high on their priority list. It is a barrier many could do without.

Some DSC participants, especially the older girls, expect to pay. Hosts overheard girls deploying their savvy shopping skills to

weigh-up the value of their sporting offer. In their social groups, the girls discussed their itinerary for the week and calculated how attending a DSC session fitted into their budget. Hosts found that these girls often responded well to offers, such as '2-for-1' or 'bring a friend' sessions. We fear a price hike would tip the balance away from sport towards activities with less or no financial outlay. In all probability these girls do not attend their DSC for the sport: they could easily drift to a sedentary offer if that fitted in better with their priorities.

The use of incentives and loyalty cards to reward attendance and achievement can encourage regular participation and retention. Some DSCs issued participant loyalty cards which recorded attendance and rewarded participation with goodies (including earphones, water bottles and t-shirts), and included discounted gym passes, free exercise classes and swim sessions.

We also became aware that the participants with part time jobs were sensitive to how the cost of taking part compared to their

pay. If they earned £4 per hour (the national minimum wage for 17-year-olds) the price per session needed to be less.

We accept that charging, and the price asked, is a disputed issue amongst hosts. We understand that charging a small fee can enhance affiliation. Anecdotal evidence tells us many of those DSC hosts that charge actually operate an undeclared policy of letting in for free those youngsters who they know cannot afford even a token admission fee.

If a charge must be made, it's essential for it to be on a 'pay and play' basis, rather than an upfront membership fee.

It is also essential that young people are spared the humiliation of not having the right 'gear'. The dress code of DSC confirms their informality: the club is part of one's social life, not an opportunity solely for activity. Young people turn up ready to join in, usually in jeans and trainers. There is no expectation to get changed or to wear recognised sports kit. DSCs also never expect participants to bring their own equipment.



## 04 The Right Time

The ‘right time’ consists of three components.

The first ‘right time’ relates to clock and calendar. The right time for Doorstep Sport sessions differ according to local opportunities and it is influenced by young people’s life stages. Consultation with the young participants is essential to find out when they want their sessions to take place.

Younger members of DSC seem happy to drop in to sessions when school ends. Older teenagers, who do not want to mix with younger ones, probably prefer a later start on weekday nights. Unless it is holiday time, or unless the participants are NEET, then evening activity sessions are better than a daytime or weekend offer. There is little point in running morning sessions for the older youth during school and college holiday time; they need a lot of sleep.

By way of example – see a DSC case study example from **Ravenhead Foyer**

Substance<sup>1</sup> analysed trends in participation, engagement and retention at Doorstep Sport sessions and found that 1-2 hour

sessions held in early evenings achieved the highest aggregate attendances. (For teenagers who are not old enough for pubs and clubs, Fridays proved most popular.)

We also found that DSCs need to be alert to the crunch times in young people’s calendars. May is close to exams, so session times might need to change to earlier in the evenings and centre more on stress-relief and relaxation. The darker and colder nights of winter might necessitate earlier starts to avoid the prospect of walking home alone. During the summer, projects run in parks and other open spaces often do well. For example, in the summer of 2016, 32 projects delivered the Coca Cola ParkLives programme in 37 parks, engaging 2,230 participants against a target of 1,480 participants.<sup>2</sup>

The second meaning of, ‘right time’ is to do with adolescence and childhood. Participants need support to move into adulthood with a sporting habit. As with most adolescents, DSC participants’ primary focus group is their peers; they want their activity to be peer-group friendly. They do not want to

be separated into other groups, perhaps selected by ability, or have their friendship group otherwise disturbed. Doorstep Sport has evolved to suit this stage of development.

The final meaning of the ‘right time’ is to do with a DSC as a timely intervention. For example, the case of homeless hostels hosting DSC for residents, Doorstep Sport represents something positive and regular which gives structure to a, typically, chaotic life.

It is a similar story for hosts that are funded to improve community safety. Strategically timed and geographically well targeted Doorstep Sport can reduce calls upon the police service for youth-related anti-social behaviour. This is discussed in Topic 3 – Growing the Potential of Sport for Good.

<sup>1</sup>‘Changing Sport, Changing Communities. Changing Lives: StreetGames National Evaluation’. Substance 2015.

<sup>2</sup>ParkLives with StreetGames - [www.parklives.com/councils/streetgames](http://www.parklives.com/councils/streetgames)

## 03 The Right Place

Postcode profiling of participants shows that weekly provision needs to be within easy reach of the disadvantaged young people: ideally, within a mile of their home. This negates the need for car travel and reduces the need to spend on bus fares. It seems those attendees who do live further away attend the DSC with those school friends who live in the neighbourhood of the club. This learning was once again evident in the ParkLives with StreetGames programme, which ran alongside the DSC programme. Hosts piloted family focused programmes in parks. This pilot proved extremely

popular when the park was within their neighbourhood.

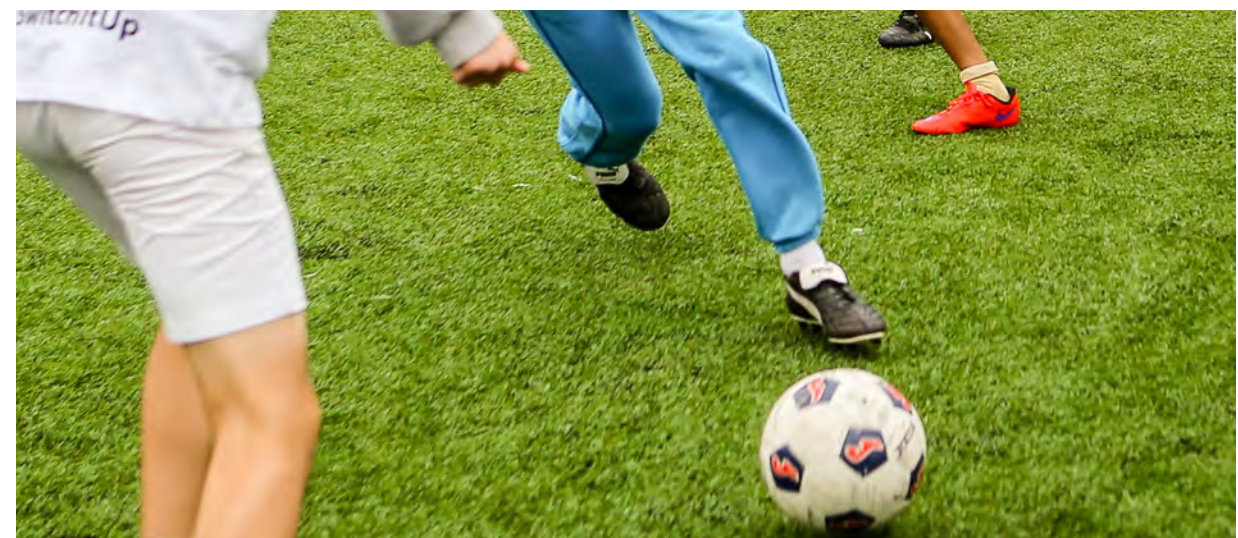
Just as important as distance is the need for the venue to be, ‘right for me’ – and so specialist sports facilities are not always necessary. The right place can be a multi-use community or youth centre; a park, a MUGA, a car park or amenity green spaces.

Hosts in Cornwall, SPARC Sports, ran sessions on a beach. However, not every venue that is within easy reach of the participants’ homes is acceptable. Some buildings are regarded as ‘not for me’ perhaps

because they are perceived to belong to a different social group. Young people value the provision taking place in a space they consider to be ‘safe’.

By way of example – see a DSC case study example from **Metropolitan Housing**

For most girls (but not all) the right place is often an indoor facility that’s screened off from potential on-lookers. A skilled coach or leader can often help the group to transition out of these ‘safe spaces’, and into the public domain, but such a move requires thought and planning.



## 04 The Right People

There are two meanings of 'right people'. The first is to do with friendship groups and the second is to do with leadership.

The 2015 Participant Survey showed that 73% of participants attend their DSC with friends; insight reports show that young people care deeply about fitting in with their friendship group. This is discussed further below in 'right style'.

The second meaning of, 'right people' is to do with leadership. Successful DSC sessions are fun, friendly and engaging. This atmosphere is largely determined by the right coaches. Participants tell us that having the right coach or leader is the most important factor in determining whether a sports session is 'good'. Participants also value leaders who are knowledgeable about sport and good at supporting young people to improve their skills. Young people respect leaders and coaches who show them a strong commitment.

A coach or a leader needs to style a friendly approach, but that is not the same as being a participant's friend who will let anything go. It is hard and skilled work to appear cheerfully laissez faire while supporting 30 teenagers to attain high standards of behaviour.

Some coaches with a traditional background – who perhaps learnt to coach in a school or traditional sports club – struggle to show the attributes that young people want of their coach and leader. Many wanted support from the StreetGames Training Academy to adapt their style. During the course of the DSC programme, the StreetGames Training Academy provided 1,364 courses and workshops to help paid and voluntary coaches and leaders to master the art of providing fun sessions. There were also courses and workshops designed to support the coaches and leaders to better understand the lives and needs of disadvantaged youth.

The most effective coaches and leaders can appear as attractively laissez faire or they can adopt an equally appealing 'pied-piper' approach through their sophisticated blend of interpersonal skills, youth work or play work skills and sport specific knowledge. Many of the best coaches and leaders themselves grew up in the neighbourhood where they work, or grew up nearby, or in a similar place.

These coaches and leaders are positive role models who demonstrate to young people that they, too, could move on

from participant to volunteer to leader or coach role. And where the young person does not want to follow that pathway, they still benefit from association with adults who demonstrate high quality reasoning and verbal skills, who demand high standards, who "get it", who reject gender stereotypes and who provide a supportive ear.

'Home-grown' volunteers, (those who step up from the ranks of participants to become volunteers) are also attractive, positive role models and contribute to the good mood of the sessions. Such youth leadership is important now and for the future. Learning to lead at a young age increases the chances of that young person volunteering in later life. Many go on to become excellent coaches.

By way of example – see a DSC case study example from ***Sporting Futures***



## 05 The Right Style: a Vibrant and Varied Sporting Offer - Viva!

In many neighbourhoods DSC is the only sport on offer. Therefore, it is important that the DSC is attractive to as many young people as possible. For the same reason, the DSC needs to impart the 'know-how' that brings the confidence and competence needed to be active in many situations and contexts, both now and in the future. Consequently, the style of the DSC and the sports that are played are very important components of a good offer.

There is a wide span of interest in sport amongst the participants in a DSC. Between 5% and 10% of participants say they either don't like sport or are 'not interested'. Some young people at the more 'sporty' end of the scale say they would welcome the chance to focus on a single sport.<sup>3</sup> All attitudes held by the participant base need to be satisfied, while bearing in mind that it is the social aspect that keeps the DSC together.

Research and practice shows that even such a mixed group of participants agree they want their sport to be informal, varied and vibrant. Most hosts provide a multi-sport offer to satisfy this need for variety and it is a good way of ensuring participants have 'know-how' across a number of sports. Almost always, there is more than one sport on offer per session. Sometimes several sports run simultaneously. Which sports are provided is determined by preferences of the participants and resources available. Young people welcome this opportunity to build their 'know-how' by trying new and different sports and they like to be able to choose which sports to join in.

Making sure the young people have a strong say in which sports are available is very important to the mood of the club. The varied offer also reduces the risk of losing interest in a session. The multi-sport environment also keeps the atmosphere casual while preventing better players of a particular sport from dominating. It is the coaches' job to provide this protection because participants say that fear of judgement and humiliation is a major deterrent to taking part.

Fortunately, some participants found that, when compared with PE lessons, their DSC is a fun, informal, laid back and 'safe' space where they get a range of activities to choose from. (Choice is something that many young people say they don't get in school sport.)

### Trips

Just as sessions need to offer variety, the programme of sessions also needs to be varied. Wherever possible the DSC programme connected to sporting events, including the Commonwealth Games and the national championships of many sports. Coaches and leaders say that going on trips or to play sport in other venues is helpful to group morale: trips create more opportunities to spend enjoyable time with friends and record the experience on social media. Because disadvantaged young lives are often spent very close to home, these trips widen experiences. Trips are important too, because many Doorstep Sport participants will be amongst the 3.4m English people who cannot afford a day trip or the 7m who cannot afford a week's holiday each year.<sup>4</sup>

### Style

The delivery style of good DSC sessions includes the characteristics that appeal to the participants' sense of what is right for them. The session should also increase their stock of 'know-how'. These characteristics were common in DSCs.

- Time for friends to be together and the whole experience is understood to be part of a young person's social life
- Plenty of music, food and social time, so the activity session feels social rather than 'sporty'
- Little or no chance of having to endure the humiliation of not having the right kit or skills
- A variety of different activities and include a multi-sport approach
- Sessions are informal and accommodating
- Hidden coaching – not skills and drills training
- Time to talk and plan future activities – be they in session activities or trips
- Opportunities for individuals to add content to their active profile and so enhance 'brand me'.

**Participants do not want skills and drills sessions: they want fun, fitness and friendship.**

<sup>3</sup>The 2016 Network Survey showed that almost all DSC hosts would like to provide a single sport session for sportier young people. The most mentioned sports for this group are lads' football, dance, basketball, boxing, tennis and girls' football.

<sup>4</sup>"Today in Britain seven million people cannot find the money for an annual holiday and still more miss out because the challenges of daily life are too great" - Office for National Statistics: in [www.holidaysmatter.org.uk/](http://www.holidaysmatter.org.uk/)





Over 40 sports are played in DSCs



Providing opportunities for young people to access a variety of different sports and activities is key - by way of example – see a DSC case study example from [St. Helen's Council](#)

### Girls and the right style

For many girls the standard DSC offer is perfectly fine. If a host does not make specific efforts to engage girls, then the ratio of female attendees is unlikely to exceed about 30% and can be lower. However, hosts confirm that many more girls currently prefer to exercise in single sex groups. DSC section 7 looks at the needs of girls in more detail.

## ‘Light Bulb’

### Practice

- A vibrant and varied offer is needed to maintain interest and to impart activity know-how.
- Young people themselves should have a say in which sports are played and they should be given the chance to take on leadership roles.
- Participants do not want skills and drills sessions: they want fun, fitness and friendship.
- Time should be set aside for participants to talk to each other and to keep abreast of social media.
- Trips widen the experiences of participants and the young people should organise them.
- The coach and leaders are not the participants’ friends. They are friendly and many adopt a laissez faire style but they maintain discipline and standards.
- Coaches must protect participants from humiliation, failure, bullying and instead build their confidence and capacity.

### Policy

- Provision needs to be subsidised. Investment is needed in sport in disadvantaged areas and in venues that young people like.
- Investment is needed in multi-sport that is designed with the 5 rights in mind.
- Youth leadership and an informal approach improve the quality of the offer.
- DSC meets the adolescent need to be with friends.
- Many coaches need support to adopt the style that young people like best.
- About £6k investment is needed to run the DSC standard model for a year.
- Funding should be available for extra-curricula activities like group trips
- Many girls prefer to exercise in a single gender group.

## Training Workshops

StreetGames also provides [training workshops](#) across a range of different topic areas. If you are interested in learning more about doorstep sport and the ‘Five Rights’ you may be interested in the following workshops:

- Doorstep sport induction
- Level 2 doorstep sport coaching programme



-  StreetGamesSportsCharity
-  @StreetGames
-  StreetGamesVideos
-  StreetGamesUK
-  [www.streetgames.org](http://www.streetgames.org)

