

# BSRA Awarded Clubmark Accreditation



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➤ Selly Oak Special, Lordswood Boys', Kings Norton Girls and Dame Elizabeth Cadbury's Schools' pupils exercise at the BSRA launch



➤ Greg Ward and Neil Mackintosh celebrate with schoolchildren who took part in a land and water display

**R**owing and health promotion in Birmingham has taken a huge step forward with the development of the Birmingham Schools Rowing Association (BSRA).

ARA community sports coaches and Henley Stewards Charitable Trust coaches have been working with the BSRA to provide indoor and water-based activities for thousands of young people and a growing number of adults in Birmingham.

To recognise these achievements, Sport England and the ARA have awarded the BSRA accreditation under the National Clubmark Programme. This is the 80th rowing project to receive this status and the 14th in the West Midlands.

An award ceremony was supported by former Olympic rower and ARA deputy chairman Annamarie Phelps and special guest Greg Ward, investment manager for Sport England West Midlands.

An initial physical activity scheme was started by the Steve Redgrave Charitable Trust in 2005. Significant grant aid has since been forthcoming from the Sport England West Midlands Regional Sports Board, the Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust and the Henley Stewards Charitable Trust. This investment has allowed the expansion of the Indoor Rowing for Schools initiative including the purchase of rowing machines and training from Concept2 UK and the employment and deployment of three ARA community sports coaches in a number of the schools involved.

The club, using the facilities of Birmingham RC in Edgbaston, has also purchased a range of equipment through the DCMS and Sport England-sponsored Community Club Development Programme. The equipment package is part of the ARA club and school links scheme Project Oarsome Xtra. The club has also received funding and support from Awards for All, Prince's Trust and other local sources.

Business in the Community has also helped with the development of the scheme.

Neil Mackintosh, partnership development manager of the Lordswood School Sport Partnership and chairman of the BSRA is delighted with its progress. "The schools and our local authority have worked very hard to develop indoor and water based activity in Birmingham," he said. "We would like to thank all of our partners for their support, we now have a great opportunity to develop and grow lifelong rowing activity in city."

Step into Sport students from Selly Oak School received their Junior Rowing Leaders Award for indoor rowing from Jo Atkinson, ARA regional development officer. Pupils also received ARA Wet Skills Awards to mark their

progress and juniors from Bewdley RC completed and received their Junior Officials Awards after helping to organise the events that took part on the land and water.

Annamarie Phelps paid tribute to the work of Neil Mackintosh. "It is great to see so much new activity in Birmingham and the wide range of public, commercial and voluntary sector partners involved," she said. "The work Neil has put into this scheme is tremendous, it is now up to Birmingham RC to take advantage of all the hard work by the agencies in the city. We would also like to thank Lordswood Boys' School for support they are giving Neil to help develop this rowing project."

Sport England regional director Steve Town was also positive about the project. "I'm really pleased with the progress that rowing is making as a sport, particularly in increasing participation and that programmes include people from priority groups," he commented. "Rowing is fun and sociable and also really good for fitness and health."

The Birmingham Schools Indoor Rowing Championships took place on the 11 and 12 July 2007. Future developments will include the introduction of an ARA coach to work with disabled rowers, further ARA recreational and racing boats and longer term plans for the redevelopment of the present watersports facilities. ■



➤ Bewdley RC junior officials (in brown) help their peers onto the water