

Getting parents involved – An STA guide for clubs

Parents are an untapped resource within clubs. There are lots of little jobs within a club that they can be asked to do, and want to get involved with. By asking parents to volunteer you involve them in their children's activity and free up the time of other volunteers to perform roles within the club which will maximise the experience of their child. The more volunteers involved in the club, the better for the club, all their members including the children and the activities you organise.

Most parents will be willing to be involved when you ask. They will however want to know what they are being asked to do (what role they will play) and how long it will take so they can manage how this fits into their week and other family and work commitments. Most parents, if asked to be involved for an hour every 8 weeks will be able to commit and see a clear role they can play within the club, supporting their child and feeling a part of the club/activity without it being a drain on their busy lives.

If you have 20 juniors and half of their parents are willing to help, then it will make coaches and regular volunteers' jobs easier each week, but also give a great sense of community to your junior section.

So, what can parents do within your club?

The first job is to identify the jobs required for the club. Developing a Junior Section is a big commitment, but with good planning and recruitment of volunteers it will be much less daunting.



Parent Volunteer Activities:

- **Coaching**

Some parents will be willing to be fully involved in the club and want to participate in coaching courses and be involved on an active and regular basis. They can of course get involved in playing from here too once they know the rules. Early identification of these parents will fit in with your Club Action planning and Junior Section Season Plan in conjunction with Regional planning. You could ask your RA to subsidise this activity in return for your affiliation fee or look to fundraise to pay for this activity. Coach kit can be included in volunteer benefits and in junior section fundraising. Also gives a development pathway to the parent if they want to take coaching to a higher level.

- **Refereeing**

Same as above. Identify parents early and communicate with Regional Association for annual planning of refereeing course delivery and subsidy support. This should become an annual/bi-annual occurrence in the club and regional calendar, so once started will require less work. Work with National Refereeing Development Director regarding kit and benefits although this could be an RA supported activity too. This will stabilise leagues and National STS activities, open up opportunities for running school tournaments and festivals and having regional and national junior academies and development programmes. Referees are at the heart of running touch and our Scottish refs are already over-stretched. Also gives a development pathway to the parent if they want to take refereeing to a higher level.

- **Driving kids to club sessions and tournaments**

Start a driving rota amongst parents so that you guarantee having good attendance at coaching sessions, festivals, tournaments etc. This will also save parents worrying about how they're going to fit everything in during their week, especially if they are working parents. This can be key to running a successful and happy junior programme. The parents get to really know each other here too, but of course we'll need to make sure our CP procedures are rigorous and in place before we let any children leave with another parent.

- **First Aider/other medical**

The club can pay for a parent to attend a First Aid course and offer this support at training sessions and tournaments. Parents are however also a resource and you will find all sorts of expertise amongst them which can help the club and Junior section to grow and perform well. You may well have First Aiders already amongst your parents, as well as Dr's, teachers etc which will enhance and enable the smooth running of your junior section.



- **Fundraiser**

- **Committee Role**

The club is always looking for people willing to join the committee in a variety of roles. You'd be amazed at how many parents will be keen to do this. It gives them the opportunity to be involved in sport now that their own sporting involvement has come to an end.

- **Money collection and taking register/completing new registration forms at start of each club session. Keeping records a database**

This is a vital role for the club. It enables the club to have a database of all their players and relates to good CP policy and practice. It gives the club an income and helps pay for other development activities. You may have administrator and accounting parents who will happily fulfil this role.

- **Washing Kit**

- **Organising Social events**

Some of these jobs could be each week, but some of them are occasional jobs, perhaps just once a month if even that.

It will correlate with your Season Plan so planning ahead will make identifying all this easy once the Season Plan is done for your Junior Section and a rota will be straight forward.



So, how do you get them involved?

Plain and simple – ASK!

- Your Youth Development Officer can do it when parents drop their children off
- You can ask informally when children join in
- You can make it a condition of membership/registration that parents volunteer once a week
- You can do it via a club newsletter or e-mail/social media
- You can hold a parents welcome evening at the start of the season and ask them to volunteer with the list of jobs needing done within the club
- You could distribute a parents rota and ask them to fill it in – again this could be via e-mail or Facebook
- Draw up a rota yourself and make it a responsibility of the parents to swap if they can't make it

Once they're involved:

- Support them, and make sure they know what's required/how to go about their role – this is key to keeping them involved
- Give them kit or benefits which will make them feel a special part of the club
- Pay any expenses agreed promptly so they are not out of pocket
- Thank them every time for their time and efforts – a quick word, phone call will make a huge difference. We won't be able to achieve this development work without them
- Keep at it! Ask new parents when their children join and ask others again.

Work to develop the culture of parents getting involved in volunteering. Ask the Volunteer Development Director for help and support. It might take a while until it is what parents expect, but it is worth it in the long run. You can also share tasks with clubs across the region and support each other's sections with refereeing, coaching and driving to each others clubs for games etc.



SAMPLE PARENTS ROTA

(CLUB NAME) Parents Rota Sept 2012 – Dec 2012

MONTH	DAY/DATE	ACTIVITY	PARENTS REQUIRED	PARENTS
September	Wed 5 th	Registration Training	2 to register players and collect money	
	Wed 12 th	Training	1 to collect money	
	Sun 16 th	Open Day	1 to register new people 2 to cook BBQ	
	Wed 19 th	Training	1 to collect money	
	Wed 26 th	Training	1 to collect money	
	Sun 30 th	Games/Mini tournament	2 to drive 1 to wash kit 1 First Aider 1 to prepare snacks	
October	Wed 3 rd	Training	1 to collect money/register	
	Wed 10 th	Training	1 to collect money/register	
	Sat 13 th	Inter club games	1 to prepare snacks 2 drivers 1 to wash kit	
	Wed 17 th	Training	1 to collect money/register	
	Sat 20 th	Social – bowling	3 to organise and supervise	
	Wed 24 th	Training	1 to collect money	
	Wed 31 st	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
November	Wed 7 th	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
	Sun 11 th	Game away	3 to drive	



			1 to wash kit	
	Wed 14 th	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
	Wed 21 st	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
	Sun 25 th	Game home	1 First Aider 1 to wash kit 2 for snacks/food 1 referee (train on)	
	Wed 28 th	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
December	Wed 5 th	Training	1 to collect money/forms	
	Sun 9 th	Away game	2 drivers 1 to wash kit 1 for snacks	
	Wed 12 th	Training	1 to collect money	
	Sat 15 th	Christmas social	3 to organise and supervise	
	Wed 19 th	Training	1 to collect money	