

SQUASH HAS A GREAT YEAR FOR THE UNDER 11'S

The under 11 Talent ID programme was set in motion 2 years ago with a North Wales squad based in Saints Health and Fitness Club Prestatyn and a South Wales squad based in the Welsh Institute of Sport Cardiff. The 50 children aged 7 – 10 who took part received 4 days of 4 hour coaching sessions throughout the season, culminating in a Fun Series where the young players tested their match play against Guernsey in 2008 and Gloucester in 2009.



The players then progressed into the under 13 North and South Excellence Squads and were replaced by new under 11 recruits.

The programme was a fantastic success but needed expanding into a regional system, so that more children would be given the opportunity to realise their full potential within a squad environment.

More under 11's in every region of Wales. A fabulous prospect but as with every "little gem" comes the problem of

funding. The Sports Council of Wales has a plethora of grant aid which may be sourced to fund eligible schemes. Squash Wales accessed the Sports Match Scheme by using its sponsorship monies from the Welsh Junior Open to be matched pound for pound by Sports Council grant aid, which contributed to reducing the fees for the programme.

The application was approved and this season Squash Wales launched its regional programme in North, West, South Wales and the Valleys. West Wales RDO Hugh Griffiths started an under 11's in Strings and has now expanded into Swansea Lawn Tennis and Squash Club with 26 juniors participating.

Paul Lee and Tracy Gibbs (winners of the Squash Wales partners in crime award 2 years in succession) set up a squad in Merthyr Leisure Centre with the assistance of Gareth Hughes Jones Abergavenny and "King of the Cones" Shaun Sullivan.

Jo Watkins (winner of Squash Wales Female Junior Section Coach) and Chris Horton (winner of Squash Wales Junior Coach) led the squad in the Welsh Institute of Sport.

The North Wales u-11 programme has started off massively successful providing coaching and squads for 40 players.

There are two regional u-11 squads , one in North East Wales and one in North West Wales both averaging 12 players – Mark Davies and Margaret Meadowcroft head the north east squads which take place at Deeside and Mike Khan and Arwel Jones head the north west squads which take place at Bangor and these are overseen by North Wales Performance Officer Andrew Evans.

Then above the regional squads sit the u-11 talent id squad which has 16 players in it and as well as developing their games and having loads of fun they are preparing for the u-11 fun series in June in Cardiff – this squad is headed by Andrew and Margaret – the players come from all across the North of Wales

The players were spotted at junior sections and development events and invited to the regional squads, but any Squash Wales coach may refer under 11 players to try out.

The emphasis is fun and enjoyment. All equipment provided. Each session only £3

Remember “Fun to Fulfilment” begins with the under 11’s.

