

Stockton Juniors

Training continued throughout the season on Mondays for primary school aged children between 6 and 7pm and older children on Tuesdays between 6 and 8pm. Attendance at both sessions continues to be good- we still draw a lot of players from Egglescliffe and Yarm School due to the links of Jono Leck and Gary Ferguson- having said that, there are a significant number of players from other schools such as Teesside High, Conyers and Redhouse.

We moved the Monday session from Egglescliffe to Yarm School mid-season for a couple of reasons- It was proving tough for GF to get across to Egglescliffe for 6pm on Mondays (then to Ian Ramsay for indoors) and numbers had dwindled. The pitch at Yarm is not costing the club because we are treating it as an outreach and we are regularly getting in excess of 30 players with new juniors turning up on a weekly basis. What is nice is we have managed to retain the youngsters that were already coming. We now need to ensure fixtures are available next season for this age group.

Tuesdays continue to be a success as enough juniors continue to attend to be split across 3 different groups. Many of these players have made their senior debuts in either the Yarm 1 team in the CDL or the 4th team. It was great to see Finn Davie, Billy Merifield, James McGee and Will Ferguson step up to this level as 13 year olds in the 2nd half of the season- it was also great to see how well they were managed by the seniors in the group! 29 of our juniors are part of the Durham County set up and 7 players train with the regional performance centre- a further 6 were on trial before the season ended early so it is hoped they will be selected next season.

Thanks to all of the coaches who have given their time to keep everything going including Jono Leck, Matthew Butters, Ken OConnor, Phil Sykes, Tim Parker and John Stout- also a huge thanks to Dave Yule for collecting finances and managing the coaches.

The major challenges moving forward are:

- * Ensuring there are enough quality coaches- (please contact me if you would like to get involved next season)
- * Arranging Junior Matches- (Steve Kitching does a great job with the family games he organises but we could really do with some junior team managers to get some regular Sunday games going for the youngsters)- again, contact me if you are interested.
- * Ensuring all youngsters are moving through the teams- the Yarm 1 and hopefully Yarm 2 teams will allow us to offer more youngsters a game- it is important we push as many youngsters as possible on to ensure the long term future of the club.

Gary Ferguson