

Case Study

Unleashed in the Pool

Key points;

- *Delivery of U Canoe Unleashed in the Huntingdonshire District Council pools*
- *Training of the pool lifeguards in the safe usage of inflatable kayaks*

Background information

Huntingdonshire District Council through their Sport England Community Sports Activation Grant, have been running their Delivering Activity and Sport in Huntingdonshire (DASH) project which is now in its second phase.

From a meeting at Living Sport came the idea to purchase and use inflatable kayaks in the leisure centres run by the council. Grafham Water Centre has supported the project and will be providing an exit route for the participants.



British Canoeing's Involvement

Once the kayaks were purchased and delivered to their first base at St Neots, following a conversation with Paul Ashbridge and the regional Canoeing Development Officer, it was decided the best programme to link this with would be U Canoe Unleashed, British Canoeing's programme aimed at the projects target age group of 14 to 25 year olds.

It would also pilot the using of the council employed qualified lifeguards to run the sessions, following equipment specific training, and risk assessing from the

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British Canoeing's Involvement continued

Canoeing Development Officer, the lifeguards also received training to become U Canoe Unleashed Activators.

Working in pairs, with one providing lifeguard cover and the other taking on the Activator role, everyone on the course took it in turn to experience both roles throughout the evening, with the remainder of the group acting as the participants of the activity.

With an already sound training from their RLSS course, the lifeguards quickly picked up how to run a safe, but fun activity in the pool using the robust inflatable kayaks, the delivery cards and the equipment from the activity bag.

"The canoeing sessions delivered in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council have proved a real success."

Mike Bond, Assistant Head Teacher

"This concept makes canoeing even more readily available, with the lifeguards being able to deliver the sessions in a safe setting"

Paul Ashbridge, Sports Development Officer

"Brilliant fun, I wish these were available when I was at school"

Tom Cody, Pool Lifeguard

The Results

The programme will travel around to all of the council's leisure centres with swimming pools throughout the year, providing a six week programme at each location linked in with the adjacent schools 6th Form.

There has already been recognition by some of the centres, for the need to purchase additional kayaks to cut down the waiting time before they can run sessions at their own swimming pool.

Lessons taken away;

- *The crossover skills and knowledge from the lifeguard training makes it practical and safe for them to run kayaking sessions in the pool.*
- *An inflatable kayak being used for Unleashed adds an excellent fun dimension to the activity being played.*