

Kicking Out Racism through football

Rio Ferdinand, Sol Campbell, Steven Gerrard, Kolo Toure, Cristiano Ronaldo...some of the biggest names in football support Kick It Out – UK football's anti-racism campaign and now the campaign is all set to make an impact in Nottingham – thanks to two events being held at Djanogly City Academy on Gregory Boulevard – organised by Roger Henry, Manager of Real United Football Club and Holly Searson, Director of the Football Coaching Company based in Nottingham in association with Adidas.

Both events aim to bring the Kick It Out anti-racism message to young people living in the area and are being held to coincide with Kick It Out's Weeks of Action 2009 – a UK-wide initiative running from 15th – 27th October aimed at using football to tackle racism whilst celebrating equality and diversity in our communities.

The first Kick It Out event is on Friday 16th October from 12 noon to 2pm for pupils at Djanogly and is part of the community mentoring programme being run at the school by Roger and Holly – combining weekly behaviour management and football coaching sessions.

The event will raise awareness of the Kick It Out anti-racism message and include a workshop for pupils on the importance of equality and diversity.

Roger explains:

“We use football as a way of encouraging positive behaviour in pupils whilst boosting their self-confidence, minimising the risk of pupils becoming involved with crime or drugs for example. Similarly, we're using the Kick It Out campaign to celebrate equality and diversity in the area and to get the anti-racism message across.”

Young people identify with, and even hero-worship footballers, so the campaign is a great way to get young people talking about racism.”

The second Kick It Out event is on Saturday 17th October from 10am to 12 noon for local primary school aged children and is part of Roger and Holly's Saturday Soccer School – currently running at Djanogly every Saturday from 10am to 12 noon.

Local children and their parents are very welcome to come along.

The event will give children a chance to find out more about the Kick It Out anti-racism message and why it's important to them and where they live – whilst learning new football skills.

Holly says:

“The Kick It Out campaign is an integral movement within UK and international football now. There are so many players, both young and old, male and female playing at all levels of the game that it's of the utmost importance for us to get the Kick It Out message across to the young people we're working with. So they can develop a greater understanding of racism and how it affects people – and what support there is out there”

if they encounter racism themselves. Kick It Out is a fantastic campaign and we're really looking forward to supporting it."

The events have also been planned to coincide with Black History Month, an annual event held at every October in the UK to celebrate the achievements of men and women of African or Caribbean descent.

As well as being supported by Kick It Out, the events are being supported by Hyson Green based charity, the Partnership Council, Nottingham's Crime and Drugs Partnership, Kemet FM, Talk to Frank and Drug Aware. In addition, the events are being funded by the Football Foundation, European Social Fund, Enable and the Learning and Skills Council.

Roger says:

"Kick It Out uses the phrase 'one game, one community' and that's exactly what we're trying to promote through our events."

Matthew Danquah from the Partnership Council agrees:

"Community cohesion is very important in areas like Hyson Green and Radford which are very multi-cultural. We're very happy to be supporting Roger and Holly because the work they do helps bring communities together – through a shared passion for football."

Roger and Holly hope to extend their community mentoring programme and Saturday Soccer School to other schools in the area very soon.

To find out more about the new project or Real United please contact Roger Henry on 077908 69324 or Holly Searson on 0845 839 9077.

Ends

Notes for editors:

Real United Football Club gives men aged over 18 the chance to turn their lives around through football. The Club is in Nottingham's Notts Amateur Alliance Division One this season, after winning Division Three last season. Players are given mentoring and support by the club's support workers, councillors and substance misuse practitioners. Real United is supported by Talk to Frank and Hyson Green based charity the Partnership Council. Many Real United players have gone from a life of drug addiction and crime to a life of total abstinence as a result of being involved with the club.

To find out more about the Partnership Council:

<http://www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk>

To find out more about the Football Coaching Company:

<http://www.footballcoachingco.co.uk>

To find out more about Nottingham's Crime and Drugs Partnership:

<http://www.nottinghamcdp.com/>

To find out more about Kemet FM:

<http://www.975kemetfm.co.uk/>

To find out more about the DrugAware Award:

<http://www.nottinghamdrugaware.org.uk>

To find out more about Kick It Out:

<http://www.kickitout.org/>

To find out more about Talk to Frank:

<http://www.talktofrank.com/>