

runningsports

Sport England supporting clubs and volunteers

On the Right Track

Student sports volunteering



Why get into sports volunteering?

Organised sport relies on volunteers. From the weekly commitment of running a local community sports club to playing important roles in staging some of England's most prestigious sporting events, volunteers make a significant impact on the people who play sport and the likelihood of them continuing their sporting involvement in the future.

Student sport is exactly the same. Whether you are at college or university, there could be a host of volunteering opportunities available, whatever your skills or experience. You may have volunteered already and undertaken training at school and now want to take it further, or maybe this is the starting point for you. Volunteering in sport is an excellent way of developing a host of skills, competencies and experiences that many future employers would be looking for in a successful candidate, whether the job is sport-related or not.

What's in it for you?

With so many young people now attending college or university and gaining qualifications and degrees, it helps to ensure you stand out from the crowd in the job market. Getting a qualification or graduating with a good degree is not always enough to guarantee you a job. Volunteering in sport is just one way of enhancing your employability, helping you gain qualifications, develop personal skills, and show prospective employers you are a committed individual, all while having fun. Here are some of the benefits you may gain from volunteering:

- ❁ **Enhanced CV** – sports volunteering provides you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge you are gaining through your studies to everyday situations in an environment similar to a workplace. If you have applied for a job before, you may have been asked to demonstrate how you meet the essential and desirable skills and competencies in a person specification or job description. Volunteering offers an opportunity for you to demonstrate how you have put your knowledge and skills into practice. Examples include leadership (via leading sessions or small teams), communication (either face to face, written or via social media), effective delegation and motivation (either by working with other committee members, younger people or your peers), project management (via organising events), time management (being a committed volunteer while gaining a good degree), financial management (either through managing a club or league budget efficiently), experience in coaching and officiating, sport-specific skills and many more.
- ❁ **Qualifications** – opportunities to gain further qualifications, such as first aid, Sports Leaders UK Awards and governing body of sport coaching qualifications. This will not only enhance your CV but also better prepare you for future volunteering roles in sport and help you take on more responsibility.
- ❁ **Rewards** – these could include training bursaries, free kit, certificates and opportunities to volunteer at high profile sporting events. Ultimately, you will feel rewarded, in that volunteering gives you a real sense of satisfaction that you are giving something back. This could help increase your confidence and self-esteem levels.
- ❁ **Unique experiences** – volunteering could be your route to being involved in many exciting and unique projects. Helping out at large international events, meeting VIPs and travelling abroad could all be experiences gained while being a volunteer.
- ❁ **Contributing to how the community views young people** – volunteering in your local community can help build positive relationships with residents and community groups. There are some negative stories about young people in the media these days, but the work you do as a young volunteer helps challenge the preconceptions held by many people of young people.
- ❁ **Fun** – ultimately, volunteering is about having fun. It is sociable and a great way to meet new friends and build on existing friendships.

So where do you start in student sports volunteering?

There are many avenues for volunteering in sport:

- ❁ **Coaching** – leading or assisting the delivery of sessions for college or university clubs, intraleague teams, local community clubs or groups, schools, charity organisations or uniformed organisations. You may also be able to work alongside coaches to offer sport science support.
- ❁ **Officiating** – either in individual matches or by joining a referee/umpire association.
- ❁ **Club administration/governance** – becoming a member of the club committee or taking on responsibility for organising a particular project within your club.



- **Events** – either managing an event, festival or league, assisting paid staff to deliver an event, or being one of the essential volunteers to take on invaluable roles such as marshalling, team administrator/helper and welcoming reception.

If you have not volunteered before, don't worry. Even if you are not thinking about a career in sport, you can learn many transferable skills through volunteering in sport, and future employers will look favourably on it. Take time to think about yourself.

Where do your strengths lie? Where do you feel you might need help to develop? Don't be afraid to ask for a mentor or someone who can help you get started.

Use the Volunteer Checklist below to help you make a start – this is a useful tool even if you have volunteered before! If there is a particular sport you enjoy playing or watching, then tell a member of staff in the sports department or volunteer programme and explain that you would like to help out in some way.

Volunteer checklist

Specific Tasks	Tick
I would like to help organise and plan fund-raising events.	
I would like to help with the design and layout of websites/social media.	
I would like to help write copy and articles for the press.	
I would like to help come up with fresh, exciting ideas.	
I would like to lead a team of people.	
I would prefer to work alone with support.	
I would prefer to work as part of a team.	
I like to present to people.	
I would like to learn more about coaching/officiating a sport.	
I would like to help with planning and organising competitions and events.	
I would like to help out at events.	
I would like to chair meetings.	
I would like to offer admin support to a group or project.	

Skills/Attributes/Experience	Tick
I am good at motivating others.	
I have good attention to detail.	
I like organising myself.	
I like to see something through to the end.	
I am good at handling and/or managing money.	
I am familiar with using email and the Internet.	
I am familiar with PowerPoint.	
I am familiar with Excel.	
I am familiar with Word.	
I like talking on the phone.	
I like talking to others in person.	
I like to present to people.	
I like to support other people.	

Time Commitment	Tick
I can offer 2–3 hours per month on a regular basis.	
I can offer up to two hours per week on a regular basis.	
I can offer up to four hours per week on a regular basis.	
I can offer 3–4 hours up to four times a year.	

Thinking ahead – from education into the community

While you are at college or university, you may already be involved in volunteering. As your studies come to an end, it's time to start thinking about the opportunities available to you for your future volunteering. Once you've filled in the Volunteer Checklist, speak to a member of staff at your college or university and find out what opportunities are available.

- If you are already involved in a community sports club or organisation, why not see if you can help out in some way – perhaps in leading, coaching or helping with events?
- If you are not already involved in community sport, a good place to start may be talking to a member of staff who may know of opportunities that your college or university has links to. He or she may be able to assist you in identifying a suitable volunteering placement, in a local sports club, school or youth club.
- Alternatively, you could try the website of your local county sports partnership (CSP) to see what opportunities they have on offer. To find your local CSP, visit:
www.cspnetwork.org/en/your_csp/
- Volunteer Centres are also a good place to start looking for volunteering opportunities in your local area. They can find out what you're interested in doing, and try to match you with a suitable volunteering role with a local charity or voluntary organisation. Find your local Volunteer Centre here:
www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Local+and+Regional/VolunteerCentreFinderGoogle.htm

Thinking ahead – from college to university

Students who have been volunteering at their college don't always continue volunteering when they get to university. Many universities do offer the opportunity to continue in sports volunteering, which can expand your volunteering avenues and help develop your skills and experiences further. For example, at college, you may have helped out with children's sport activities, whereas, at university, you may have the opportunity to lead or volunteer with your fellow students or lead children's activities on a holiday scheme or even a project based abroad.

Planning ahead – on the right track!

The end of summer term can be a busy time with exams and coursework, and it can be a somewhat daunting experience with so many options and choices to make, whether you are staying on to take further qualifications, going from college to university or leaving education to go into full- or part-time employment.

So let's make it easier for you – towards the end of the spring term, start to think about how you might like to continue your volunteering in the future, or take on a new volunteering challenge. Follow a route on the running track on the poster in this resource to help you make some key decisions.





Case studies

Interview with a volunteer

Name: Helen Killingley

Age: 24

How have you helped out in sport?

Leading, events administration, volunteer management, fund-raising, competitions, instructing and officiating.

Where have you volunteered?

- At school – I used to be an assistant coach to the younger hockey teams.
- At university – I used to volunteer in my sports club, within the athletics union and in my school.
- In my internship – I volunteered with Pro-Active London in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust.
- I now regularly continue to officiate for university sports competitions.

What motivates you to volunteer?

At school and university, I volunteered to enhance my CV and give something back. However, at the end of the day, I really enjoyed the experience, responsibility and opportunity to get involved. I didn't recognise it as volunteering. Having been a full-time volunteer, managing other young people to volunteer, I am now more aware of what 'volunteering' actually is. That opportunity was to get me experience in the sporting environment and develop my CV and work experience. Now, with limited time, I still volunteer – it's an opportunity to see friends, get involved and help out with the university competition leagues.

What would you say to other young people about volunteering?

Volunteering is hugely beneficial – it teaches you life skills, gives you new opportunities and experience. Whether it's in the area where you want to be or not, it can still be a positive experience. However, the one factor I would always raise with everyone – you cannot be forced to volunteer – you have to put the time in to get the results you want. Volunteering (for progression, experience and especially making friends) is about making a commitment.

Name: Prathiv Kholia

Age: 21

How have you helped out in sport?

My biggest passion was playing and volunteering in sport, and this was the educational route that I took, taking A/S Level PE and BTEC Sport Science. As part of the course, we were always offered coaching and volunteering courses throughout my two years at Bosworth College. I completed my Junior Football Organisers Award, Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership and Level 2 Award in Community Sport Leadership, which were linked to the Step into Sport programme. This brought about opportunities to lead lessons with peers, lead and assist in lessons in primary schools, and help out at events such as the Youth Games.

What training have you done in relation to your volunteering?

I took many coaching courses at college, ranging from High Five netball to ECB Cricket Level 1. My passion, however, was always football, and I was delighted when I was able to take my Football Coaching Level 1 course. From taking this course, my experience in leadership and volunteering changed as I was selected to attend The FA Young Leaders Camp.

Did you continue to volunteer at university?

While at university, volunteering opportunities didn't stop. In my first year, I slowly became more involved with the football team, which resulted in being selected as captain for the second team for my second year at university and then, in my third year, being president of the club. As part of the role, I organised games, transport, officials, training and venues, and gained sponsorship. All this required skills I had gained from being part of The FA Leadership and Volunteering programme because I always learnt and experienced something new. All these skills have also helped me to become an ambassador for The FA and BUCS.

How has your volunteering helped you with your employability?

Just recently, I have finished my degree and been offered a job working as a basketball development officer. For me to have secured this job is a great achievement and something I've been working towards for a few years – to secure a job in sports

development. I have gained a sound knowledge of development through football and university, but all the skills and experience I've been through are transferable, and that has been the beauty of being on a young leaders programme. As I mentioned earlier, we were always taught to think of the bigger picture, and when I went for this interview, I was able to show a range of skills, like communication, problem solving, organisation, innovativeness, which I would be able to bring to the post, and was able to show this through the experiences that I had.

Name: Joe Staniford

Age: 19

How have you helped out in sport?

Player, coach, referee, organiser; founder member of the RFU's National Youth Council, providing a voice for all those involved in rugby under the age of 24 (which is actually 74% of the entire game). RFU Level 7 referee with Leicestershire Society of Rugby Union Referees. Referee adviser to Loughborough Students RFC (National League 2 North). Organised and ran a TopLink festival at secondary school for the benefit of primary school children. Volunteered at the Loughborough International Athletics festival and much more.

Where have you volunteered?

At primary schools, secondary schools, college, rugby clubs, universities, international rugby stadiums! In fact, I would say my volunteering increased during college and university.

Who has helped, supported, mentored or inspired you in your volunteering?

So many people have had a positive impact on my volunteering. I suppose the first people who introduced me to the idea of volunteering in sport were my PE teachers at secondary school. Perhaps the biggest influence on my sports volunteering was my Director of Sport at college. He opened doors for me and really taught me what sport was all about. He continues to be a massive inspiration to me. I have also been given some really high profile opportunities to make a difference. My parents and brother continue to support and inspire me in whatever I do. They ensure I never think a challenge is impossible. However, my main inspiration comes from the people I work with and for. They give me the 'job satisfaction' on a regular basis that encourages me to continue volunteering.

What would you say to other young people about volunteering?

Taking the first step into volunteering is by far the hardest. Once you have overcome that, you can begin to enjoy the self-satisfaction you get from helping others and allowing them to achieve their potential and their goals.





Further sports volunteering opportunities and information

British Colleges Sport

www.britishcollegesport.org

British Universities & Colleges Sport

www.bucs.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit

www.thecpsu.org.uk

County Sports Partnership Network

www.cspnetwork.org/en/your_csp/

Do-it

<http://do-it.org>

NUS Student Ambassadors

www.nus.org.uk/london2012

runningsports

www.runningsports.org

SkillsActive

www.skillsactive.com

Sport England

www.sportengland.org

Sport England Sport Makers

www.sportengland.org/about_us/places_people_play/sport_makers.aspx

Sport England Sportivate

www.sportengland.org/about_us/places_people_play/sportivate.aspx

sports coach UK

www.sportscoachuk.org

Sports Leaders UK

<http://sportsleaders.org>

StreetGames

www.streetgames.org/www/volunteering

Youth Sport Trust

www.youthsporttrust.org

v

<http://vinspired.com>

Volunteer Centres

www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Local+and+Regional/VolunteerCentreFinderGoogle.htm

Volunteering England

www.volunteering.org.uk

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