



Call to Hertfordshire business to help local young athletes reach the top

A county-wide scheme for Hertfordshire business to help talented athletes become the Olympians of tomorrow was officially launched last night at the Hertfordshire Service to Sport Awards (Monday).

Small and medium-sized business are being invited to donate money to help towards the training and competition costs of talented young athletes which for some can be as high as £5,000 a year.

The Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners SportsAid scheme was created out of the work done by "Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership" – a multi agency group of organisations from the public and private sectors.

The partnership was established to see how the county could contribute to, and benefit from, the Olympic and Paralympic Games after London was named as the host for 2012.

Under the SportsAid initiative for Hertfordshire, businesses can become involved by making one of a variety of donations: a platinum donation (£5,000); gold (£1,000); silver (£500) or bronze (£250).

Companies can alternatively offer corporate sponsorship or introduce payroll giving to their staff if they prefer.

A special thank you package, which includes advertising the company's logo in Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners SportsAid's promotional material and on its website as well as athlete appearances, is offered to business in return.

Every penny donated from Hertfordshire business will go to the charity SportsAid and will only be used to support young athletes from Hertfordshire.

The scheme is tax efficient and business donations could be increased by the gaming company Betfair as part of its agreement with SportsAid.

SportsAid is a national charity which provides funding for young sports men and women across the UK and has five-times Olympian champion rower Sir Steve Redgrave amongst its supporters.

Speaking about the value of SportsAid he said: “The work of SportsAid is so important to British sport. If you are young, ambitious and just beginning to experience success, SportsAid is where you go for help.”

Nick Brooking the director of sport at the University of Hertfordshire said: “The amount of funding and support available to young athletes in different sports varies tremendously even at the highest level.

“A scheme such as this can make a significant difference to young people who have the potential to reach the very top of their sport. Linking in with SportsAid is the most effective way to administer the scheme and Hertfordshire’s initiative could well form a blueprint for similar schemes across the country.”

Any Hertfordshire business interested in becoming involved in donating to Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners SportsAid should contact its administrator at the University of Hertfordshire on 01707 281183 or email donations@hertsisreadyforwinners.co.uk to find out more.

Notes:

“Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership” includes representatives from sport, education, health, business, tourism and environmental and economic development. Its aim is to maximise the opportunities for Hertfordshire on the back of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to London. The Partnership is chaired by John Wood, Director of Environment at Hertfordshire County Council.