



*"I didn't do my A levels at school so the AASE has enabled me to train for swimming and continue with my education at the same time."*

Rebecca Adlington, AASE apprentice AND Double Olympic Gold Medallist.

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

## Developing the Nation's Sports Stars of the Future

### DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than 2500 talented young sportsmen and women aged between 16 and 19, in over 12 sports in England that are currently training to become world class.

What is special about these aspiring athletes is that they are enrolled on a programme that allows them to both train in their chosen sport and prepare for life after sport by gaining qualifications that will set them up for the workplace – or allow them to progress to university.

What is special about this programme is that it can be recognised by employers and universities alike. It is based around a combination of on the job learning, reflective practise and learner-centred development; and more than 2500 employers in the sector are currently offering similar programmes. *Estimations from the National Employers Skills Survey 2007.*

What is special about it? It is an apprenticeship. It is the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence – AASE.

### THE IDEA

As the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure, SkillsActive, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council, develops apprenticeship frameworks across the sector. Much like traditional apprenticeships, AASE gives young people the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed to perform at the highest level, alongside opportunities to broaden their expertise into other work-related areas within the sector.

This includes work within the related fields of coaching, sport development, health and fitness, operational management of sports facilities, sports leadership and the outdoors. The biggest difference is that for them the highest level is gaining a professional contract, competing at a world championship or winning an Olympic or Paralympic medal.

"It is an exciting time for sport due to the 2012 Games and the government's targets to increase the health of the nation.

Apprenticeships are a good entry point into the sector, providing motivated and talented young people with the best possible opportunity to be ready for work." *Stephen Studd, chief executive, SkillsActive.*

### THE PHENOMENON

Never before has there been a programme for this age group that can bridge the divide between being an elite athlete and having the qualifications needed to consider an alternative career.

AASE is the perfect programme for aspiring athletes. AASE gives athletes more quality coaching hours with top quality coaches; better access to modern well equipped facilities; and the use of new technologies, with access to sports science professionals, technicians and top quality medical professionals.

AASE is the perfect programme for national governing bodies of sport. Amongst other things, AASE gives NGBs more quality coaching hours with their



"AASE has surpassed expectations."  
Stuart Lancaster, RFU

athletes. Likewise, AASE is the perfect programme for parents. AASE leaves parents safe in the knowledge that their son or daughter is pursuing their dream, whilst getting a relevant qualification and work experience. Embedded within this structured programme is the competence-based element which is measured through a level 3 national vocational qualification in achieving excellence in sports performance. At the same time the apprentices study for their wider secondary or supplementary careers by achieving academic or vocational qualifications linked to the industry.

And the outcomes so far have been numerous; professional contracts within football, rugby, cricket and golf, plus five Olympic and Paralympic medals – two of them gold!

Up until three years ago, sports governing bodies, apart from football, struggled to keep potential medallists and professional sportsmen and women beyond the age of 16. There was nothing in place to allow talented young athletes to combine training with their studies. That is until the AASE programme was introduced.

### COMPLETING THE TALENT PATHWAY

Up until now, there has not been a programme that provides robust funding to educate young potential athletes by putting them on a structured route, that encompasses training, coaching and competing in their chosen sport.

AASE is a welcome addition to the talent pathway. It brings together the Youth Sport

Trust's Gifted and Talented programme, working with 14 to 16 year olds in schools ensuring the environment is conducive to supporting young talented people. When school finishes the AASE programme takes over. This leaves the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS), the DCMS-funded programme that represents a unique partnership between sport and universities. Alongside this, there is sports coach UK ensuring that talented coaches are matched with talented athletes, in line with the UK Coaching Framework. The real jewel in this pathway 'crown' is that it is underpinned by the UK Sport's World Class Performance Programme. With all this firmly in place, at every step of the way, there is now a clear progression route for the nation's young talent. And by embedding the AASE programme into this talent pathway, funding can be leveraged from

departments that have not traditionally supported the elite sporting system. Through DIUS' commitment to AASE, the programme can potentially access in excess of £10m over the next three years leading up to the 2012 Games.

### THE VISION

By 2010 SkillsActive aims to have engaged all Olympic and Paralympic sports with the AASE programme.

"This summer saw us produce five medals from the Beijing Games. This was outstanding as the current sports working with AASE were aiming for success in 2012. However it's not about peaking too soon, it's about showing the world what dedicated training can do. AASE increases the talent pool by attracting competitors who might have been deterred by the absence of an alternative career if they failed to make the grade. Beijing has proved that AASE has given sport a massive opportunity."

*Stephen Mitchell, strategic partnership manager, SkillsActive.*

## AASE – Bringing it home

### FOOTBALL

Premier League Learning and League Football Education have been managing and delivering the AASE framework across the 92 football league clubs since 2004.

Through Premier League Learning, the majority of Premiership clubs deliver AASE within their academy settings and with around 180 new starts each year, the completion rate for the apprenticeship – currently at 78 per cent – continues to go from strength-to-strength.

Under the guidance of League Football Education, 700 academy footballers start



PHOTO: LEAGUE FOOTBALL EDUCATION

on AASE each year. With all 68 clubs delivering the programme, completion rates are extremely high at 76 per cent. As part of the apprenticeship, all players are receiving the new UKCC level 2 in coaching football. "This apprenticeship is my passport to a better career. Being a great footballer is not just about the practical side of playing the sport. A professional sports person should also understand such issues as fitness and nutrition and have the opportunity to develop specialist skills in coaching or officiating. Not being able to gain a permanent contract, I still wanted to work in another area of sport, so the skills I learnt were equally invaluable."

*Matt Goodwin was on AASE at Leicester City FC, unfortunately an injury forced him to retire from football.*

## RUGBY UNION

The Rugby Football Union has been involved with AASE since 2006 and was one of the first sports outside of football to pilot the programme.

"Having been involved in the initial setting up of AASE I was very aware of the potential of the programme. However it has surpassed those expectations already and I can only see it going from strength to strength. The overall impact that AASE has started to make and will continue to make will have a massive effect on the development of English players and ultimately help us towards, what I believe, should be the long term vision of creating the best elite development programme in the world." *Stuart Lancaster, head of elite player development, RFU.*

"It gives them firsthand experience of what they're aspiring to. They can understand



PHOTO: LEAGUE FOOTBALL EDUCATION

and can get indoctrinated into the work ethic of what's going on at the club. And more often, it just gives them time to dedicate to the skills that are required to become a world class rugby player." *Lawrence Dallaglio MBE, former professional rugby player.*

## GOLF

Golf has been involved with AASE since 2005 and has seen a number of success stories. Earlier this year, two former AASE apprentices from Solihull College secured places on the prestigious Europro Tour.

"The apprenticeship enabled me to develop a much more structure approach to my golf and I think that this has had a major impact on the improvement to my game." *Adam Norman, AASE graduate.*

"I was probably playing the worst golf of my career when I joined the AASE programme. Fortunately at Solihull they had a dedicated team of experts in various fields who helped me plan a strategy for my

development. I was able to approach my training with the confidence that what I was doing was right."

*Sam Hufton, AASE graduate.*

"Studying on a course like this is a brilliant opportunity for young people interested in golf. There was nothing like this for me when I was younger and it can only bode well for the future of the sport."

*Paul Broadhurst, professional golfer and former Ryder Cup star.*

## AQUATICS

The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) launched AASE in October 2006. The ASA believed the programme presented a unique opportunity to help nurture its young sporting stars, and also meet its corporate objectives.

"We have a high drop out rate within the 16 to 18 age groups and thought AASE would be a great way to counteract that. AASE is great because it embraces both sport and education and reinforces to athletes that you can gain a lot of different skills from doing both. We know our athletes aren't going to compete forever, so AASE can ensure they have direction and the skills needed to go straight into higher education or employment and forge successful careers."

*Michelle Kiff, AASE programme manager, ASA.*

"One of the issues for us is when some of our athletes get to 16 or 17 they start to face other tensions. They're often at a stage where they would like to carry on swimming, but feel they should get a qualification. Some of them start thinking they're not quite as good as they want to be, and are considering other options.

"Rebecca Adlington is a prime example of



**Golf was one of the first sports to deliver AASE.**



AASE is great because it embraces both sport and education." Michelle Kiff, ASA



***"AASE is a tremendous benefit to our high performance centres, giving clear pathways forward for our players."***  
*Roger Draper, CEO, LTA*

this. Rebecca didn't make the 2006 Commonwealth Games team to go to Melbourne and suddenly she's off the radar for World Class but is keen to continue swimming. Her parents want her to get an education and prepare for life after sport, so she enrolls on the AASE programme. It wasn't a case of them saying, oh well, it'll work itself out when you get your two Olympic gold medals, because that wasn't part of their game plan."  
*David Sparkes, chief executive, ASA.*

**CRICKET**

A keen supporter of AASE, the England and Wales Cricket Board has been delivering AASE in its academies since 2006.

"AASE enables the players to think about all aspects of their performance as opposed to coming down to the training session and just working on their technique or their strength. It enables the players to bring it all together and it gives them a real sense of responsibility. It also gives them a sense of control and that's really important for motivation as they get something out of it, not just cricket, but a qualification as well."  
*Rebecca Symes, sports psychology support and NVQ assessor, ECB.*

"Introducing AASE to the academy has taken us on leaps and bounds. I'm approaching 18, an age when a professional contract is the next step for me. And from

there I have an ambition to play for England and that's my ultimate goal."

*Tom Jewell, AASE apprentice.*

"When I was their age there was nothing like this. We played Surrey age groups and we didn't have the opportunity to find out about nutrition, psychology and everything else that's involved."

*Ali Brown, professional cricketer England and Surrey County Cricket Club.*

**TENNIS**

The Lawn Tennis Association launched AASE in November 2006.

"The programme has been fantastic for the LTA and British Tennis. We wanted to invest more in the high performance centres, and to allow 16-plus players to have a real shot at being an apprenticed professional. We're preparing for our future coaching workforce too. We launched AASE primarily to create a performance atmosphere while creating pathways into coaching.

"It covers all aspects of tennis from the technique, tactic, physical and mental but also helps them deal with the lifestyles and the media and prepares them for a future career in tennis."

*Alistair Higham, AASE programme field manager, LTA.*

"The AASE programme enables me to further my tennis. I find it really useful for personal development as well as tennis, it

helps highlight the strengths and weaknesses of my game and work towards specific goals."

*Niall Angus, AASE apprentice.*

"Doing three A levels plus training 12 hours a week is hard, but getting funding to do that has made it easier for me. It's helped me a lot getting university applications in."

*Jodie Bratchell, AASE apprentice.*

"AASE is a tremendous benefit to our high performance centres, giving clear pathways forward for our players from 16, developing young professional role models within the centres and creating a future workforce for British Tennis."

*Roger Draper, CEO, LTA.*

**AASE – THE FUTURE**

"Our vision is that every NGB of sport engages with the AASE programme in the next 24 months.

"Sport has a massive opportunity leading up to the 2012 Games. The country is focusing on sport and that is an extremely powerful brokerage tool.

"The government's focus, and most significantly the funding streams, are focused on the Games. Post 2012 this funding will not be guaranteed.

"I would urge all NGBs to act now, and help us make AASE the apprenticeship of sporting success."

*Stephen Studd, CEO, SkillsActive.*



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[www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)