

SPORT

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The Squash Stars programme helps children become more active. Image: England Squash

Squash Stars to help children get active

FOLLOWING the launch of the government's new sport strategy, sporting facilities in London are committing to help children in the area get more active, through squash.

A target of increasing participation across the nation by getting a further 3.5 million people physically active by 2023 has been set and the strategy follows figures from Sport England's Active Lives survey which indicates 53 per cent of children and young people are not currently meeting the guidance of taking part in at least 60 minutes of activity per day.

To get over one million children more active and, in a bid to drive participation amongst young people, the national governing body for squash, England Squash, has committed to continuing its

primary programme for participation amongst young people, Squash Stars.

Entering its fourth intake since the programme began in 2022, Squash Stars has provided thousands of young people across the country with affordable and accessible means of physical activity, as part of a programme which is aimed at not only introducing children to the sport but getting them active in the process.

Six venues across London will be hosting Squash Stars sessions throughout the remainder of 2023, from September 16 onwards, including Cumberland LTC, Oakleigh Park LT & SC, Stormont

Lawn Tennis & Squash Rackets Club, Hillingdon Squash Club, Blackheath Squash Club and Walthamstow Cricket, Tennis & Squash Club.

Squash Stars is open to youngsters aged five to nine, teaching the fundamental skills needed to play squash, with expert coaches helping them improve hand-eye coordination and all-round physical literacy, as well as working on important life skills like resilience and teamwork.

Vitally, they will also be getting active, with squash widely considered the highest intensity participation sport played anywhere in the world.

The six-week local Squash Stars programme costs £42 – or just £7 for each session. And, mindful of the cost-of-living crisis and the financial pressure on

parents, every child who signs up will also be given a free racket, Squash Stars t-shirt, ball, goggles and kit bag.

Joanna Rowbottom, head of partnerships and programmes at England Squash, said: "Squash is a fantastic sport and a great way to help young people get active.

"The focus at the sessions is very much on having fun, getting active, and making new friends. We want all the children who take part to soar in every aspect of their life and that starts with a positive experience with sport.

"Squash Stars is suitable for everyone; it doesn't matter how much or how little sport children have done before. There are friendly, welcoming clubs and coaches ready to help your child get started and enjoy the benefits of this

Stones stuck with draw and defeat

WEALDSTONE FC



Sean Adarkwa tries his luck against Alty. Picture: JON TAFFEL

WEALDSTONE are still searching for consistency after a draw and a defeat in the last week.

They had halted a run of three straight defeats in the National League by beating Ebbsfleet United. They then followed that up with a 0-0 draw at home to Altrincham on Saturday in a match where they had chances but also lost striker Tahvon Campbell to injury.

He was missing as they then fell to a 3-1 loss away to Dorking Wanderers on a rainy Tuesday evening.

The home side started strongly and were in front on 12 minutes through James McShane.

It became 2-0 on 25 minutes with a clever header from Jason Prior that fizzed past Jed Ward in the Wealdstone goal.

And there was worse to come before the break as Josh Taylor made it 3-0.

Stones responded after the interval and an early second-half goal for Sam Bowen looked to be a good start for any comeback.

They should have scored before they did, Harrison Male's save to a Micah Obiero effort presenting Kyle Smith with an open net.

He fired high and wide though. Bowen's low, drilled effort on 58 minutes redeemed him somewhat and there were more big chances to come, Male this time saving from Corie Andrews.

Five minutes later, substitute Sean Adarkwa was the next player to test the Dorking resilience as he cut inside and hit a well-struck effort towards the top corner, the keeper once again denying the visitors.

And that proved to be that as Dorking held firm for the remainder of the game.