

## READING AND WEST BERKS YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

### Futsal News Our Journey



### **Only 2 weeks into the New Year youth football fixtures have been decimated by the wind, rain and snow!**

As this has been the picture in January and February for several years this season the Reading and West Berks Youth League (RWBL) took the innovative decision to pay Futsal as well as games on grass in January and February. (more on Futsal below)

Teams were given the option of one or the other. 65 teams in the U7 to U11 age groups opted to play Futsal and they are now enjoying a cracking new type of football (new to them) indoors and with guaranteed games every week through to 12<sup>th</sup> February.



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The feedback from the teams has been overwhelmingly positive with comments like:

*"The organisation for the whole thing has been amazing. Referees were very good. All the kids loved it, which means the whole thing will be a success".*

*"I wasn't too sure about futsal at first as I have never played it myself, but the kids and I loved it! The kids will gain so much more in confined spaces around the pitch and will help their skills as well as their space awareness".*

*"Great first experience of futsal this morning. The ref especially was great, he explained everything to the boys and helped them along as the game progressed".*

*"Congratulations, speaking to parents and other managers Futsal was an absolute success Can we not start a midweek league? I for one think boys would benefit more from this than they would training Looking forward to the next 5 weeks".*

*"Futsal has been great, I have players who barely kicked the ball out on the grass now playing and passing properly, after just two week. Brilliant innovation. Well done RWBL".*

**Quote from League Chairman Harry Prestidge after the first week:**

"I would like to send my congratulation and heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the inaugural Futsal event that we (RWBL) ran today. It was always ambitious to organise 65 teams over 6 venues in a program that was unknown territory from everyone involved, Clubs, Managers, Players, Referees and RWBL officials. That it ran flawlessly is a testament to everyone involved.

I visited all six venues and every single one had the same enthusiasm, from the young players from U7 to U11.

I am in no doubt that the next five week will develop the skills of all the players involved. The success of this event will lay the ground work for a much bigger event next season when I expect well over 100 teams will be involved.

The committee of the RWBL is already setting the groundwork on how we can improve the experience for all involved and expand the network of venues that will allow for this growth.

Well done all".

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## **The basics are:**

1. B & B FA were contacted by RWBL to help set up winter Futsal
2. B&B arranged induction training for Managers and coaches and training for Referees.
3. B& B also supplied a quantity of balls to be used at the venues.
4. RWBL organised Futsal every Sunday morning from 8<sup>th</sup> January to 12<sup>th</sup> February – half term
5. 65 teams in the U7 to U11 age groups entered so roughly 600 children get the chance to play and exciting different form of football which will undoubtedly improve their playing ability.
6. 6 venues in reading and Newbury were set up with games and with a qualified Referee.

## **Venues being used:**

JMA, 125 Hartland Rd, Reading RG2 8AF  
Reading Academy Sport, Northumberland Ave, Reading RG2 8DF  
Bluecoat School, Holme Park, Sonning Ln, Sonning, Reading RG4 6SU  
Kennet School, Stoney Ln, Thatcham RG19 4LL  
Northcroft, Northcroft Ln, Newbury RG14 1RS  
Park House School, Andover Rd, Newbury RG14 6NQ

## **About Futsal (from the FA).**

Futsal is an exciting, fast-paced small sided football game that is widely played across the world and is officially recognised by both UEFA and FIFA.

The nature of the game places a large emphasis on technical skill and ability in situations of high pressure, and is subsequently an excellent breeding ground for football competencies that can be translated into the 11-a-side format of the game.

Many of the top world class footballers played Futsal in their youth and credit it with supporting their footballing development; players of the calibre of Pele, Zico, Ronaldinho, Kaka, Lionel Messi to name but a few of the South American legends all played and enjoyed Futsal.

Futsal is a five-a-side game, normally played on a flat indoor pitch with hockey sized goals and a size four ball with a reduced bounce. It is played to touchlines and all players are free to enter the penalty area and play the ball over head-height. Games are 20 minutes per half, played to a stopping clock (similar to basketball) with time-outs permitted.

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There are several differences to our traditional version of small sided football, but the dominant elements are the absence of rebound boards and amendments in the laws that encourage and foster skilful, creative play above the physical contact that tends to be a feature of English five-a-side.

The surface, ball and rules create an emphasis on improvisation, creativity and technique as well as ball control and passing in small spaces.

**For Further information contact:**

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