

## SOCCER SCHOOLBOYS SPECIAL

# Project FUTSAL proves big hit

## Children benefit from initiatives

PROJECT FUTSAL (Football Used Towards Social Advancement and Learning) is a joint initiative between the Football Association of Ireland and the Welsh Footballing Trust.

It is an adult learning course which combines a Sport & Recreation level 5 course with F.A.I. coaching workshops. This course runs at Ferrycarrig Park, home of the Wexford Youths F.C.

The Sport & Rec. Level 5 certificate is provided through the Wexford and Waterford Education and Training Board. Participants must complete seven modules to gain the award, namely: Communications and Work Experience, Sport and Recreation, Soccer Level 5 (all taught by former Wexford Youths player Tom Elmes), Exercise and Fitness, Nutrition (taught by Wexford fitness expert Robbie Sludds), I.T. (taught by Lisa Brennan) and Occupational First Aid (taught by Mary Barron). All F.A.I. coaching workshops are delivered by Wexford's F.A.I. Development Officer William Doyle and the E.T.B. co-ordinator is Liz Duffy.

There are 27 participants on the hub in Ferrycarrig Park and every Thursday they provide soccer coaching to primary schools around the county. To do this they are assisted and supervised by F.A.I. interns and regional coaches Andrew Carr (Wexford), Robbie Farrell (New Ross), James Troy (Enniscorthy) and Jim Barnes (Gorey) along with hub co-ordinators Brendan Corish and Laura Heffernan.

Other programmes currently being run through Project FUTSAL include the Project FUTSAL Under-8 league and the Project FUTSAL Kids Kickers in association with Leisuremax.

The Under-8 league began on Saturday, November 9, on the all-weather surface at Glynn-Barntown G.A.A. club. The league is the brainchild of F.A.I. Project FUTSAL hub co-ordinator Brendan Corish. The league is five-a-side, non-competitive, and on the opening weekend it had participating teams from Wexford Albion, Glynn Barntown, Oylegate United and Curracloe United. For the next weekend, November 23, Wexford Celtic have expressed an interest in participating.

Last season this league was ran as a nine-a-side non-competitive league where matches were played on a home and away basis through two age groups, Under-9 and Under-8. This season the Wexford and District Schoolboys League were strongly urged by clubs to allow more than one team from each club to participate in their non-competitive Under-10 and Under-9 leagues.

Therefore, this season it has been decided to go with smaller-sized teams. The reason for this is that when there are less players on the field it is better for the development of young players.

In small-sided games the young players have more touches on the ball which means more attacking opportunities (dribbling, passing, shooting) and more defending opportunities. In small-sided games it is easier for young players to have success, which means enjoyment and in turn the retention of these players in the sport.

'I firmly believe that this format provides a better learning environment for our young players than a seven v. seven, nine v. nine or eleven v. eleven game,' Brendan said. 'In the D.D.S.L. Under-9 non-competitive league, football is played as five-a-side and at the moment their club and E.T.P. squads are among the strongest in the country.'

The league will run on a fortnightly basis and the next round of fixtures will take place this Saturday (November 23). Any other club that wants to enter teams into the league can contact Brendan Corish on 086-7392306 or by e-mail at faiprojectfutsalwexford@gmail.com.

The Kids Kickers programme is run by F.A.I. interns Laura Heffernan and Brendan Corish every Monday afternoon in Leisuremax between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. This programme is for children between the ages of four and seven and aims to teach children football skills

in a fun and friendly environment. Both Laura and Brendan are F.A.I. qualified coaches and are Garda vetted and have completed the F.A.I.'s child welfare workshop.

'Laura approached Aileen Whelan with the idea of running the Kids Kickers at Leisuremax. Aileen thought it was a great idea as there is very little soccer coaching available for children in those age groups and has been very supportive of the programme,' Brendan said.

The Kids Kickers has previously run in three other venues: St. Joseph's Community Centre, Wexford Albion and Enniscorthy United.

There are still places available on this spell of the Kids Kickers and if you are interested in booking a place for your child you can do so by contacting Laura Heffernan on 087-2267100 or Brendan Corish on 086-7392306.

Moving to the teenage age groups, secondary schools from around the county descended on the Astro Active Centre in Enniscorthy on Thursday last as the F.A.I. held its annual futsal competition. Futsal is the official indoor game of both U.E.F.A. and F.I.F.A.

Teams from Coláiste an Atha (Kilmuckridge), C.B.S. New Ross, St. Mary's C.B.S. Enniscorthy, Coláiste Abbain (Adamstown), Wexford V.C., Enniscorthy V.C., Gorey C.S. and Meanscoil Gharman entered into the boys' and girls' competitions.

The standard of futsal played was very high and indeed very competitive too. The boys' final was contested between the winners of group one, Gorey C.S., and the winners of group two, Coláiste an Atha. It was a close game and in the end the boys from Kilmuckridge advanced to the provincial finals in Gormanston on Wednesday next.

There was a dramatic finish to the girls' competition as a goal in the final minute of the final group game saw C.B.S. New Ross claim top spot in the round robin on goal difference over Wexford V.C. to join the Coláiste an Atha boys in the Leinster finals.



■ The Oylegate United Under-8 league squad.



■ Glynn Barntown, who were on home ground for day one of the Under-8 league.



■ The Wexford Albion Yellow squad at the Under-8 league in Killurin.



■ One of the Curracloe United Under-8 squads.