

PROJECT 51 CASE STUDY: FALMOUTH ABC



What was the issue?

Falmouth & Penryn Boxing Club, Cornwall is a traditional, community boxing club who offer members the opportunity to compete locally or just train for fun and fitness through a variety of sessions and cater to a range of age groups.

They were aware that women and girls were not making a regular appearance at their boxing sessions which they wanted to see change;

“We wanted to gain some insight as to why girls were not coming to our boxing sessions. It was very obvious to us that girls didn’t seem to be keen and we wanted to know why.”

The club signed up to be a part of ‘Project 51’, a joint programme between Sported and Women in Sport to tackle gender stereotyping within sport at the grassroots level. The programme helps community groups in socially deprived areas of the UK, to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to engage girls and young women, aged 11-18, in sport and physical activity.

What were the initial outcomes?

The club gained useful insight following a combination of mentoring and workshops;



“Going to the sessions that Project 51 offered, we found that some [girls] talked about how they had been teased at school for being sporty. The club got a good debate going and it allowed a good opportunity to talk through how the use of language can reinforce these views, like hearing coaches say to boys “you are doing press ups like a girl.” We learned that it was really up to us to take the initiative to push boxing more [to girls] and to offer a female only night to see if it was a case of girls feeling self-conscious about coming to boxing because of boys and men being there.”

The club committed to creating a ladies’ only session for girls and women aged 13+ and arranged for one of their committed members, Morgan (17), to complete her Level One coaching qualification so she could assist with delivery of the sessions.



What did success look like?

They have grown their number of female coaches at the club including Morgan (17) who they supported to gain her Level One boxing qualification.



“We have had anything from 12 to 20 [girls] each week... but we seem to have 10 which have been each week for the past six weeks! Four of which are 14-year olds and they love it!”

One of the girls also suffers from anxiety and we’ve already seen a really massive change in her which is awesome. I actually invited our Level Two coach over and he said that he couldn’t believe how well some of the girls have come along and has spotted two girls which he would be happy to get them carded if they wanted to box; they’re both thinking about it!”

What was the coach’s approach?

New coach Morgan said;

“I have always wanted to help more women to get involved in sport. I have the passion and drive within my chosen sport of boxing and I hope to encourage girls to take part, furthering their knowledge and their understanding within my sport.”

“Sue allows all the girls to see that they can do any sport, even boxing if they want to, and most importantly, enjoy it! Most girls just need a friend, confidence and a local sporting club which will allow them to discover more.”

And finally, what do the girls think?

“I love it and it just gets my heart pumping”

“I feel so much more confident and less conscious of looking a fool”

“I’m losing weight! I love it”

“I feel that I can punch a bag fine but boy when I get in the ring it’s a different matter! It’s so much harder than I thought but I’m so enjoying it”

“I love coming to the girls’ sessions as I feel the boys sessions are just too rough”

“it helps with my anger issues”

