

Futsal event is proving a sure-fire winner as numbers increase

FOOTBALL

THE 11th annual Futsal Respect Festival, promoting Rainbow Laces and the Kick It Out campaign, has enjoyed a successful start to the year at Shrewsbury Sports Village.

Promoted by the Shropshire Junior Football League (SJFL), the event kicked off last month and aims to raise awareness to the benefits of equality and eradicate racism from football.

This year, 95 teams (from under-7s to under-14s) and over 900 players will enjoy the format of football over nine weeks, ending this month, and the SJFL chairman Mike Hames is proud of this momentous achievement.

"It is absolutely tremendous and it's amazing we have this many teams taking part," he said.

"This year we have under-14s playing for the first time so we have the younger ones playing during the day and the older ones playing at night.

"Futsal is growing and we're



Youngsters pose for a photo-shoot during the Futsal Respect Festival which took place at Shrewsbury School

Picture: Kidz in Focus

trying to capture that growth and allow young people to start playing, and they can take these skills to the grass pitches when they get older.

"It's really pleasing to see and I hope it continues for many years to come.

The SJFL are passionate about creating an inclusive football league for young footballers that tackles all forms of discrimination and works for positive change, with Hames sharing this viewpoint.

"We just try and provide a plat-

form for people to play football," he said.

"We provide opportunities for young people to play, no matter their skill, in a safe environment.

"Learning about this (Kick It Out) will be key to their aspects of life as they get older.

"This year we've done the Rainbow Laces as well, and that's the first time that's been done in Shropshire."

The event first started back in 2009 and was implemented by the league as part of its development programme for mini-soc-

cer, and the chairman is pleased with how far it has come since then.

"Each year more and more people enter and get involved and futsal is now a key part of the league's development," he stated.

"It takes a lot of organising but it's been very, very successful and long may it continue."

The festival is part of a Community Football Partnership, with its promoters (SJFL) impressively providing over 53 per cent of football played in Shropshire.

DARTS

Duncan are crowned champions

THE champagne corks are popping again in Baschurch after the Admiral Duncan A secured the point required to retain their CRF Shrewsbury Premier League title.

A spirited Crown performance ensured the Duncan had to work hard to earn a share of the spoils.

Scott Dockerty and Terry Nash put the Duncan 2-0 up, but the hosts fought back to lead 3-2 following wins from Darren Lane, John Roberts and Gordon Booth.

Jamie Kynaston edged a key final singles match to level only for the Crown to take the first doubles.

But Dockerty and Mike Coyne responded to take the final game to clinch the title.

At the other end of the table, the Woodman were also celebrating after claiming their first win of the season.

They beat Inn On The Green 6-2 to close the gap on their opponents to one point.

The Brooklands were the only other side to enjoy home success this week courtesy of a fine 5-3 against Heathgates.

Steve O'Callaghan impressed for Brooklands as he fired a maximum as well as a 14-dart leg

Masonic tasted success on the road as they triumphed 5-3 at Myton.

The match was level at 3-3 after the singles, with Masonic then claiming both doubles games.

Wheatsheaf remain third following a comfortable 6-2 win at Admiral Duncan B.

Jamie Chaplin and Shaun Pryce, who hit a 14-dart leg, put the visitors two up before Nigel Neale halved the deficit.

Dave Lewis hit a 110 finish as he regained the initiative for the Wheatsheaf, who confirmed victory with further wins for Mike Lewis and Ash Hilditch, who hit a 180.

The Dickin's poor form continued as they slipped to a third successive defeat, this time 6-2 at home to the Compasses.

Rock & Fountain won 5-3 at the Beeches.

All Blacks urged to make history

RUGBY by Matt Maher

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BOSS Bryan Smallman has called on Bridgnorth to make history when they face Dudley Kingswinford in tonight's North Midlands Cup final.

The All Blacks take on DK at Stourton Park aiming to win the trophy for the first time.

Smallman said: "My message to the players will be a simple one - go and make history."

"We've got a few things prepared to inspire the team before kick-off. We want to put them in a place where they can handle the weight of expectation but are ready to seize the moment."

Smallman is confident his players will not be overawed by the occasion and believes their familiarity with a venue they regularly use as a training base can only help the cause.

To that end, the boss has tried to keep the build-up as normal as possible, with the All Blacks holding a full training session as scheduled on Tuesday, before a light workout last night.

Victory would put the icing on a fine campaign which looks certain to end in a top-five finish in the Midlands Premier.

Neither is there any shortage of confidence among the Bridgnorth ranks, thanks to last week's derby win over Newport, a result which saw them complete the season double over their county rivals.

Yet Smallman knows DK, who play one level below in Midlands One West, will prove stern opposition and enter the final on a seven-game winning streak which has boosted their promotion hopes.

He admits Bridgnorth must cope with the pressure of being favourites.

Smallman said: "I don't think there is any getting away from the fact that on paper, we are favourites."

"But cup games like these are a real leveler. You always have to beware the underdog."

"It's important we stamp our authority on the game from the first whistle and play the kind of rugby we want to play."

"I know the DK coach, Neil Shillingford, very well. They are everything you would expect in one of his teams. We are going to have to match their desire."

CARSONS POCKET DOUBLES TITLE



Andy and Nick Carson have plenty to smile about after their doubles triumph

SNOOKER

IT PROVED to be a family affair in the final of the Bridgnorth League Ray Halford Doubles Cup.

Cousins Nick and Andy Carson, who represent Broseley, lifted the silverware after beating St John's duo Rob Powell and Tim Steele in a match that took over two hours to complete the two frames.

There was some excellent safety play, but the majority of slim opportunities fell to the Carsons.

They secured the first frame 41-8, but the second was much closer.

In the end, Andy secured the trophy when he took the final yellow, green, brown and blue.

Nick is chasing more glory having reached the final of the Graham Cooper Doubles Cup with Mick Brezwyn.

They will face James Allington and Marti Lippitt in another Broseley versus St. John's showdown involving four of the league's top players.

Count all set for their first net session

CRICKET

COUNT CC step up their preparations for the new cricket campaign with pre-season nets starting this weekend.

The session takes place at Shrewsbury School tomorrow (6-7pm), and any players looking to join the club are welcome to attend.

the Sunday Division One.

The club will also be entering a side in the Shrewsbury & District Evening League.

Anyone who would like to find out more about Count CC or would like to join as a player can contact Kenny Hamer on 07737 968865.

FOOTBALL

Williams still has Haughmond down as title underdogs

HAUGHMOND boss Dan Williams has played down his side's title chances, insisting Tividale are still favourites for West Midlands League glory, writes Nick Elwell.

Tividale's shock 5-1 reverse at Wellington last weekend opened the door for Williams' men, who are now seven points behind their rivals with three games in hand.

But Williams still believes his side are the outsiders due to having the more difficult run-in that includes clashes with Malvern, Hereford Lads and Wellington, the latter two away from home.

"I did think that was possibly the one game where they might drop points because Wellington is a tough place to go," said Williams.

"But I was surprised by the score because Tividale don't concede many.

"Tividale have five games left and I am 90 per cent certain they will win them all.

"That would mean us having to win all of our remaining games and we have some tough ones left.

"I think it's unrealistic to say we are going to win the title. Tividale are still definitely favourites."

Stunning

A Malvern side boasting a stunning away record are the visitors to Haughmond tomorrow.

The Worcestershire outfit are unbeaten on the road in the league with 11 wins from 13 games and have conceded just six goals.

"We have Malvern tomorrow so there is no point looking too far ahead when you have a tough game like that around the corner," added Williams, whose side face an away clash at Bilston Town on Wednesday night.

"We will just do what we have done all season and go game by game.

"Malvern have the best away record in the league. It's as tough as they come."

But Williams' selection hand will be boosted for the game thanks to two new arrivals and the possible welcome return of top scorer Steve Hole.

Williams has swooped to sign teenage centre-

STANDINGS

	Premier Division						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	
Tividale.....	33	25	3	5	112	31	78
Haughmond.....	30	23	2	5	107	27	71
W'ton Casuals.....	33	21	7	5	100	41	70
Wednesfield.....	30	19	5	6	71	45	62
Malvern Town.....	30	19	4	7	74	30	61
BC Rangers.....	29	18	4	7	79	50	58
Bewdley Town.....	33	17	7	9	70	47	58
Hereford LC.....	29	16	4	9	64	37	52
Wellington.....	30	12	6	12	61	57	42
Cradley Town.....	32	12	4	16	58	72	40
AFC Bridgnorth.....	31	10	8	13	51	55	38
Dudley Town.....	30	10	8	12	51	56	38
Bilston Town.....	31	10	5	16	51	71	35
Smethwick.....	32	10	4	18	28	83	34
Shifnal Town.....	30	8	4	18	51	61	28
Dudley Sports.....	29	6	15	35	79	26	26
Shawbury.....	32	7	5	20	55	101	26
Pershore Town.....	31	7	4	20	41	95	25
Wem Town.....	30	7	2	21	31	80	23
Pegasus.....	33	4	2	27	26	92	14

half Brett Taylor from Bridgnorth and former Wem Town man Mikey Owen.

"We only have a small squad and we will playing Saturday and midweek for the rest of the season, so injuries could be an issue," said the Mond boss.

"These are two good signings for us.

"Mickey was at Wem at the start of season but hadn't been able to play due to work commitments. He can play anywhere across the back.

"Brett Taylor is only 18 and he is a talented young player.

"And Steve is confident he will be fit after missing the last four games with a hamstring injury."

Wem Town's battle for safety takes them to Black Country Rangers tomorrow.

Wem dropped into the bottom two last week after going down 4-0 to Pershore.

Shifnal face a tough task as they head to face a Tividale side still hurting from last Saturday's setback.

AFC Bridgnorth entertain a Wednesfield outfit who are gunning for a possible top-three finish.