

Step into Sport interview:

Callum O'Donnell

Q 1. Could you give us some background information about yourself before you started on the Step into Sport programme?

I was already involved with a club before I started the SIS programme. They suggested I enrolled on the SIS programme and begin to log my coaching hours. Birmingham County FA also suggested I join the programme and it was them who got me started on the SIS ladder. I was also doing some school based volunteering which involved after school clubs and helping the PE department.

Q2. How did you go about joining the Step into Sport programme?

Coundon Court Football Club pointed me in the right direction but it was actually Birmingham FA who enrolled me on the course through a Young Leaders day. 15 young volunteers from the region were invited and the SIS programme was something that really caught my eye. Once I booked onto the programme the club were superb in supporting me through the programme and helping me get my Double Gold Dame Kelly Holmes award.

Q3. What qualifications/experiences have you got since you have joined the Step into Sport programme?

I have just completed my 503rd hour of volunteering through the programme and I have been rewarded with a silver award and Double Gold Dame Kelly Holmes award. Since I started the programme I have achieved the following qualifications:

- Birmingham County FA Young Leader of the year award
- FA Level 1 in Football Coaching Certificate
- Final assessment for FA Level 2 Football Coaching Certificate
- FA Level 1 Goalkeeping Coaching certificate
- Level 1 Sports Leaders Award
- Level 1 Junior Sports Leader Award
- Attended a FA Junior Football Organisers course
- Attended Child Protection, Equity & Disability workshops
- Attended FA Futsal course



Along with all my qualifications I have achieved through the SIS programme I have also gained valuable experience in a sporting environment. I started by coaching football to nursery – year 2 boys and girls at Coundon Court Football Club. I then progressed through the age groups and currently work with the under 16's as the coach. Through the years I have learnt how to adapt my coaching styles and sessions to meet the needs of the group. I also work with the goalkeepers at the club from the ages of 8-13 years and again this has different coaching scenarios and something I really enjoy.

I have delivered numerous sports festivals with Coundon Court Secondary school which have included football, Athletics and Netball. I helped out on the administration side, officiated in games and managed teams.

Q4. Were you supported enough through your programme by your mentor and volunteer co-ordinator?

Yes, my mentor at my community club Richard Seedhouse was fantastic. He supported me within the club environment but he also gave me opportunities to expand my experiences with other clubs. He also gave me advice and feedback on coaching sessions which was invaluable for my coaching experiences. Without Richard and the clubs support I would not have managed to gain all the qualifications and wonderful experiences I have achieved to date.

Q5. Could you explain what you are doing to date and how the Step into Sport programme has supported you in your personal development?

I am about to take my FA Level 2 Coaching Certificate and I have just finished working with Coventry City Ladies Centre of Excellence as a Goalkeeping Coach. I have been invited down to the FA head quarters in Soho Square for the FA National Young Leaders camp and I am also involved in discussions on what should be included in the camp this year.

My long term career path is to be an Airline Pilot and I have just had my interview and they were very impressed with my volunteering CV. If I am successful in getting a place on the course I feel the volunteering I have done has contributed in my success. Before I start my career I am going to go on a gap year coaching in Africa and USA. I firmly believe this would not have been possible without the Step into Sport programme.

