



Swindon Shock Wheelchair Basketball

Changing lives through wheelchair basketball

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'Swindon Shock Wheelchair Basketball'



www.swindonshock.com/wheelchair

General Information: Swindon Shock Wheelchair Basketball is a voluntary sector sports club affiliated to the Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association (Registered Charity Number: 298045).

The club has a voluntary elected committee:

Chairperson:	John Stow	Committee Member:	Alan Curtis
Secretary:	Ben Humphrey	Committee Member:	Lewis Bird
Treasurer:	Ben Humphrey		

The club has its own bank account and constitution and is also an affiliated member of the Swindon Sports Forum. Our independent referee is Simon Woodhouse (Senior Sports Consultant, Wiltshire and Swindon Sport Partnership)

Simon Woodhouse Email: simon@wiltssport.org Tel: 07717 666939

Shock Wheelchair was founded in 2011. The men behind Shock Wheelchair are Ben Humphrey and Lewis Bird. Lewis has over 8 years coaching experience and has been instrumental in the creation of a number of inclusive projects across the town. Ben was the disability officer for Swindon Borough Council for 4 years and now works in Public Health as a Physical Activity Manager

In 2016, Shock wheelchair won the British Wheelchair Basketball Div 2 League Championship Final in only their third season. The club also won 'Most Inclusive Club' at the Wilts and Swindon Sports Awards

This season 18/19 we are entering a National League Div 1 team and South West Development League team. Our Jnr players will take part in Jnr League with the South West Warriors.

We also have good school link with Commonweal School, New College and Swindon College.

Aim of project: *This project will increase the opportunity to play wheelchair basketball for disabled people living in Swindon. By joining the club, disabled people will develop crucial life skills and build the confidence needed to succeed in school / work and live independently. The project will establish a vital system of outreach to ensure that disabled people from low income families and disadvantaged communities can access this opportunity. It will also increase disability awareness in an engaging way by conducting wheelchair basketball sports sessions in local schools.*

Why this project is needed - using sport to change attitudes

In Swindon, and the surrounding counties, children with physical disabilities¹ are routinely excluded from sport and physical activity. Most physically disabled children attend mainstream schools where the staff struggle to include them in sports activities. During PE lessons, they sit and watch the other children play or are singled out for 'special' activities isolated from the rest of the class. Both in and outside of school, disabled children are three times less likely to participate in team sports as non-disabled children.² As a result, physically disabled children grow up feeling like an outsider—reminded every day of how different they are to their non-disabled classmates. Many have trouble developing friendships and grow up without the social skills needed to succeed in life. Because they never get the chance to play with a team or work towards a challenging goal, they lack the

¹ 'Children with physical disabilities' includes children with spina bifida, amputations, spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy and many other physical impairments

² 7. Finch N (2001) *Young People with a Disability & Sport*, Research report commissioned by Sport England.

confidence to persevere with their schoolwork or the encouragement needed from inspiring role models to go on to college or university. They see the low expectations that society has for them and that's what they live up to.



Children in Swindon try out wheelchair basketball for the first time.

Sport has the power to make a major impact on this problem and Swindon Shock wheelchair basketball team was set up to something about it. The club is managed by committed and energetic volunteers, but lacks the capacity needed to reach a large number of children. Getting the message out to new children about the clubs' activities requires meeting with hundreds of teachers, social workers, and therapists to ensure that an appropriate system is established so that children are referred to the club. It is run by unpaid volunteers who simply do not have the time to invest in this level of outreach. As a result, most disabled children in the region are not aware of the club or do not get support with challenges such as transportation which prevent them from joining. These problems are even greater for children from low-income or single parent families who often need more help to overcome these challenges. Children from low-income and black and minority ethnic (BME) communities are particularly excluded.

Swindon Shock have identified three major barriers that are currently preventing disabled children from accessing opportunities to join their local wheelchair basketball club:

- 1) Lack of beginner's level opportunities to attract those that are new to the game.
- 2) Lack of well-maintained equipment in the club
- 3) Lack of inclusive sessions for those that have more profound disabilities.
- 4) Lack of recreation competition for those where high-standard league completion is not appropriate.

How wheelchair basketball changes lives

It is well known that sport and physical activity are important for a child's healthy development, but it is less well known that the benefits can be even greater for disabled children. Wheelchair basketball, with its club atmosphere and challenging skills requirements, has a significant positive impact on disabled children's confidence, health, attitude and behaviour, and builds important skills such as teamwork, leadership, goal setting and perseverance.³ For many disabled children, playing the sport is the first time they feel part of something bigger than themselves—and the first time that they realise that their disability is not something to hide or be embarrassed about. When they meet inspiring role models who have overcome the challenges they face at school every day, the impact is literally life changing.

Wheelchair basketball is also unique in that it is one of the few sports in which children of all ability levels can play together in a fully inclusive environment which emphasises the skills and talents that each child brings. Those children who are interested in competition have access to more advanced coaching and opportunities to play in the national junior league—opportunities which are invaluable for building confidence and challenging children to excel.

What we will do

In 2018 / 2019 we want to achieve the following:

- Acquire more Sport Wheelchairs
- Service fleet of Sport Wheelchairs

³ Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008), *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments*, p.179.

- Support the Div 1 and South West League wheelchair teams team by providing hall time and a qualified GBWBA Level 2 Coach.
- Create 'FUNdamentals' recreational beginners session for beginners and those with more profound disabilities.
- Join friendly leagues
- Enter Jnr League with South West Warriors

What the impact will be

Through these activities, Shock intends to achieve the following:

- The participants involved will improve their health, confidence, and teamwork.
- Many more disabled people are able to play sports and develop their social (and support) networks and are encouraged to remain at school / find work.
- The project will have a long term impact by linking in with network of professionals that can refer children / young people to the club.
- An increase in disability and disability sports awareness in the communities and schools involved.



For more information please see our website and Facebook page:

'Swindon Shock Wheelchair Basketball'



www.swindonshock.com/wheelchair

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Swindon Shock Wheelchair Basketball Club

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