

Read the full stories and much more Pulse Group news online at www.thepulsegroup.co.uk



THE BEAUTIFUL GAME FOR ALL



Adults leagues



Adult casual play



Women football



Partner clubs



50+ Users



Disability



Kids football



Kids coaching



Education



Parties



Fitness



Events

Read the full stories and much more Pulse Group news online at www.thepulsegroup.co.uk



Maintaining a sustainable environment

As the Strategic Leisure Operational Partner Pulse has been responsible for advising on day-to-day maintenance of both the hubs and the football pitches. Pulse has employed a bespoke computerised maintenance and service management system (CMMS) to fully detail expectations and liabilities for each hub.

The system provides a transparent and simple log of current, past and future planned jobs with access being available to Leisure United, Pulse's head office team, and the Football Trust, so that they have the ability to monitor performance.



Fantastic results at St George Parks'



3,134 Children u19s
Registered to play in the first four months.



864 Children u19s
Registered to play in the first two months.



22,019 Visitors
Registered to play in the first four months.



7,333 Visitors
Registered to play in the first two months.



2,920 Females
Registered to play in the first four months.



1,325 Females
Registered to play in the first two months.



9,888 Males
Registered to play in the first four months.



7,333 Males
Registered to play in the first two months.

"The enthusiasm for the new soccer hubs from the local community has been fantastic and we are delighted to see so many people coming in to use the facilities at both sites," says Warren Ormerod, Director of Soccer at Pulse. "With the support of our partners we have created a varied and inclusive programme to encourage more people to play football at a grassroots level. Our women only soccercise sessions have had a fantastic uptake already, along with our walking football programme. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the FA and Sheffield City Council over the next 10 years as we develop and provide more opportunities with the third hub, Westfield opening later this year."

Warren Ormerod,
Director of Soccer
at The Pulse Group

Don't take our word for it

"We are delighted to be working with Pulse on this exciting new scheme. Throughout this entire process we have been thoroughly impressed by the level of knowledge and expertise of The Pulse Group, to successfully implement and deliver sustainable, high class soccer facilities. Delivering financially sustainable public sector football facilities is a key driver for The FA and this collaboration in Sheffield with Pulse and Sheffield City Council is a great example of what can be achieved with true partnership working."

Mark Coulson,
Parklife Programme Manager
for The FA



FA PARKLIFE PROJECT

CASE STUDY

Driving participation in the beautiful game



Pulse Soccer achieves over 30,000 registered players and spectators that attend St. George's Park Graves and St. George's Park Thorncliffe since the opening six months ago.



The Background

In November 2015, Pulse Soccer - the dedicated arm to the Pulse Group which was consciously created in 2007 to improve standards and affordability for users of community football facilities - was appointed by The FA, The Sheffield Football Trust and Sheffield City Council as their Strategic Leisure Operational partner for an ambitious new grassroots project known as 'The Parklife Project'.

The Parklife Project is a new scheme from the FA aimed to get more people involved in football at a grassroots level underpinned by high quality financially sustainable facilities.

As part of project, the two new facilities, St. George's Park Graves and St. George's Park Thorncliffe have already opened. A third facility, St. George's Park Westfield, is due to open in September 2017. All day-to-day operations are run by Leisure United, a charitable trust appointed by the

principal contractor Pulse, which delivers first class leisure and football facilities that are accessible and affordable for the whole community - enabling revenue surplus to be reinvested into the facility. Pulse Soccer provides all sales and marketing, strategic lead and planning and operational standards audits for the facilities.

Since officially opening the first two sites, Pulse now has 30,000 registered players with thousands of players participating each week.



What could we do for you? Let's start the conversation today.
Pulse Group, Radnor Park, Greenfield Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4TW
T: +44 (0)1260 294600 E: info@thepulsegroup.co.uk www.thepulsegroup.co.uk

A flexible sustainable partnership

Our operations team delivers 5 star facility

Inclusive and accessible programming

Creative, informative and engaging marketing

The Brief

The FA were looking for a partner with the experience and expertise to not only help drive participation, but that also had a good understanding of operating facilities.

During the tender process for the new soccer hubs, The FA welcomed a wide variety of approaches for how best to operate the sites. Using their knowledge and expertise, Pulse submitted a tender that could not only improve participation but that could also generate funds for reinvestment to maintain standards for long term sustainability.

The Challenge

As the Parklife Project is a new nationwide project from The FA, Pulse had to liaise with many different key stakeholders including The FA, The Sheffield Football Trust, Sheffield City Council and Sport England plus other various contractors that were handling the construction of the new facilities.

All with their own views and ideas, Pulse has had to ensure each voice was heard in equal measures whilst still ensuring the work was completed to expected standards.

The Approach

As the Strategic Leisure Operational Partner Pulse has advised and supported on all aspects of the project from activity programming and pricing right through to all IT infrastructure, grounds maintenance and staffing.

Pulse Soccer has also been responsible for all online and offline sales and marketing across all Sheffield sites. They will also be leading on all marketing and sales for St. George's Park Westfield.



Pricing and Opening Hours

With the objective of creating sustainable, affordable, accessible and inclusive high quality football environments, the Pulse team advised The FA, Leisure United and respected partners on implementing a pricing policy that follows the Football Trust's maximum pricing structure and also encourages people to play.

The structure that has been implemented by Pulse allows for casual teams to be able to book games on an ad-hoc basis and ensures

that Leisure United aren't able to simply block book all of the pitches to the same people each and every week. This approach encourages the introduction of new teams and players and the ability to offer attractive playing times.

Football has always been seen as a weekly activity and by keeping the pricing at under £4 per player (peak adult commercial rate) Pulse has been able to support the recovery of a declining market by encouraging

people to play more often all at an affordable price.

Having been involved in the management of soccer centres for the past 30 years, Pulse proposed and advised to open the facilities at 10am on each weekday so that each site could actively build local community links, cleanse and prepare the facilities and deliver pitch maintenance when required.

Activity and Educational Programming



Walking football



Soccercise sessions

As part of the FA's vision for the facilities and aims of the Parklife project, they were looking to develop more opportunities for men, women and children of all ages to get involved in the sport.

In light of this and using their previous experience of running soccer centres, Pulse worked closely with all the partners involved and the Leisure United team to develop an activity programme across both sites which will encourage greater participation levels.

Across both sites the facilities offer:

- 11 a-side leagues
- 9 a-side leagues
- Five a-side leagues
- Corporate leagues and tournaments
- Pay as you play sessions for children aged 4 to 12.

With the advice and council from Pulse, to encourage the older generations to play the sport, Leisure United has introduced Walking Football, a slow-paced version of the traditional game which is aimed at people with reduced mobility.

Pulse has supported Leisure United to introduce a number of activity programmes and initiatives to get more women and girls playing the sport, with a regular women's leagues and girl's training sessions. The team has also introduced women's only Soccercise sessions, an instructor led aerobic exercise or circuit classes that combine a variety of fitness exercises with a football. The exercises contain progressions and moderations to allow participation for a mix of abilities and fitness levels.



Women and girls casual and leagues



Junior coaching and soccer camps

Both facilities have partnered with a several local children's football clubs and professional clubs. St. George's Park Graves is home to Abbey Lane and Sheffield United Junior Blades FC. Both clubs are part of the Sheffield and District Junior Sunday Football League, which holds over 11,000 players. The partnership between the clubs and Leisure United hope to further develop talent and coaching for young people in Sheffield, something which the FA, the Sheffield Football Trust and Sheffield City Council were keen to implement.

For Sheffield United Junior Blades FC, the partnership with St George's Park Graves now means that the club is saving £6,000 a year on fees, and the players can train every week at a state-of-the-art facility, safe in the knowledge that a game will never be called off due to bad weather.

For children, Pulse has directed Leisure United to implement regular leagues and tournaments, football holiday camps, kids' parties and pay as you-play sessions. With a previous understanding of developing programmes for children which had an emphasis on having fun, Pulse also advised Leisure United on implementing the pay-as-you-play sessions to allow children to develop their skills without needing to be part of a regular team.

Keen to develop future talent within the sport, The FA felt it was vital to offer an educational programme which Pulse has been in charge of implementing with the support of Leisure United. Both hubs run regular FA accredited coaching, referring and development programmes which are all delivered by FA accredited tutors at on-site state-of-the-art teaching facilities.

Creating a community and destination venue

Pulse were keen to engage all members of the local community with the sites through more than just football.

Pulse wanted to create a café with a contemporary look and feel. Having reviewed the original plans for the on-site café they advised that it wasn't necessary for the hubs to install a full bar with associated storage and cellars. Secondary spend opportunities within these type of commercial centres have reduced drastically and do not justify the inclusion.

Instead Pulse advised a bottle service and a focus on serving well prepared quality hot drinks, sandwiches, light bites and breakfast at affordable prices. Pulse also suggested implementing wifi to give customers another incentive to visit. Through the use of dedicated software, Pulse has given the Leisure United staff the ability to send messages via the internet to those people passing or inside the café that are using the wifi. For example, they can send messages with special offers during quieter times, such as 2 for 1 coffees or a meal deal.

Most recently, to attract young families to St. George's Park Graves, the site now operates a weekly regular crèche session.



Installation of full bar



Message sending with special offers

Marketing

Leisure United called upon Pulse's dedicated in-house marketing team to develop all branding and marketing materials for the hubs. This was carried out in consultation with all stake-holders involved.

As part of the wider marketing plan Pulse Soccer were fully responsible for creating and implementing:

- A partnership strategy
- A communications and CRM strategy
- A social media strategy
- Sporting events promotion strategy
- Promotional strategy
- Direct marketing strategy
- Media placement
- Branding strategy

The team has developed a wide range of both digital and print materials to help promote specific campaigns running across the sites as well as creating websites for each hub. Pulse Soccer deliver marketing activity which reaches far wider than the typical marketing plan and they are playing a pivotal role across many areas such as uniform, signage, inspirational artwork and stationery.



IT Infrastructure

The soccer hubs are the first facilities within the UK to require members to pre-register their details before entering the site to play.

All partners had different requirement for the database; Sport England required information for participation analysis, the FA wanted information for their central marketing database and Pulse had a commercial requirement.

Pulse therefore had to ensure they adhered to data protection laws while meeting all stakeholder needs.

Through their partner, First Sports, Pulse were able to come up with the infrastructure and booking systems to allow just that.

The IT platform comes with six unique elements to allow for the day-to-day operations of each site.



QR code access control system



Player and visitor registration website solution

- Pitch Booking: single sheet booking system.
- Facility Profile: including key roles, facilities, pitches, affiliations, teams, fixtures.
- Facility Finance: a multi-functional portal with an online payments capability.
- Membership Management (MM): create and manage membership schemes and communicate with members.
- Registration Management: registration management (RM) manage the registration of players, coaches, officials.
- Competition Management: (CM) manage all aspects of a competition including officials grading, appointments, allocations, availability, discipline management, match card and match stats.