Being ENTREPRENEURIAL

CASE STUDY: ONE TEAM'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE PREMIER LEAGUE ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE

OUR GOAL IS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

We have been working closely with the Premier League, supporting its Enterprise Academy programme. Since we started working together in 2003, the programme has expanded and grown in popularity. More recently, we have worked to gain formal accreditation for the work we've been doing together and now have the Being Entrepreneurial qualification, which focuses on the planning, preparation and pitching of an idea – the centre of all that the Premier League Enterprise Academy is all about. Over the past few years, we've supported the Premier League Enterprise Challenge Final. Follow the journey of one of the teams who took part in this exciting scheme, representing West Ham in 2014.

WHAT IS THE ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE?

This is run by the Premier League Enterprise Academy Scheme, which engages youngsters in enterprise and business activities through the knowledge of Premier League football clubs, and is supported by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The scheme targets the young and often disengaged, or young people who would not have been offered an opportunity of this kind. The West Ham United Community Sports Trust (WHUCST) is a proud part of this important initiative and successfully delivered this education project in partnership with the West Ham United Learning Zone.

The Enterprise Challenge places groups of young people in the business mind-set of a Marketing Director of a Premier League Club and encourages them to explore and create innovative ideas and business presentations. To target 14 to 19-year-olds to take part in the event, the WHUCST used an engaging range of projects with seven schools they had already been working with, as well as their other social inclusion projects, such as Kicks and education at the Learning Academy.

STAGE ONE: THE FIERCE HEAT COMPETITION

After a process to identify suitable ideas for the teams to pitch at the first Heat competition from the many suggested, three were chosen. The teams then prepared by conducting market research and articulating their ideas onto PowerPoint. Over 80 young people from the local community assembled at the West Ham Heat Challenge, held at West Ham United's Press Lounge on February 7, to identify one stand-out group to represent the club at the West Bromwich semi-finals on March 11. The team that won was Kicks Tower Hamlets. A mixture of young people from Stepney Green and Noor Ul Islam, who had formed friendships through their local mosque whilst participating in the Kicks tournament. One member of the group, Naim, unfortunately could not physically be a part of the project as he had studied Business Studies; however, this did not prevent him from becoming a mentor to his peers and a valuable asset to the group. The team also included Yaseen, Ashrabul, Ismaeel, Nahid and Hassan.

THE NEXT STAGE WAS TO REPRESENT WEST HAM IN THE SEMI-FINALS...

The West Ham staff, the Inspired Learning staff and the group ensured the team perfected their presentation skills for the semi-finals. The students excelled in developing their imaginative ideas for this project including using social media avenues to contact key celebrities such as tweeting Katy Perry and Russell Brand, a massive WHUFC fan. They wrote emails to WHUFC sponsor Lycamobile and wrote up project forecast plans to showcase their ideas. Most notably, the group's globally conscious idea to work with Water Aid in promoting the excellent community ethos of supporting people in deprived areas of Africa was both admirable and highly inventive.

On the day of the semi-finals, the group met at 6.30am in the morning, a veritable feat in itself! The stage was set at West Bromwich Albion, with an audience of over 70 people including all the participants from the other clubs.

The team gave a fantastic presentation, and were then treated to a tour of the West Bromwich Albion stadium whilst the judges decided who would progress to finals. West Bromwich first team players Youssouf Mulumbu and Thievy Bifouma took to the stage in a special surprise to personally distribute certificates to the youngsters. After the judges gave their brief feedback to the team, it was announced that the winners were Arsenal, Crystal Palace and, of course, West Ham!

GETTING READY FOR THE FINALS

Next step for the group was to prepare a detailed business plan ready for the finals in Westminster at the end of April. Their preparation included having the opportunity to meet with Tower Hamlets and Shadow Minister of Education, Rushanara Ali, in a Premier League and West Ham Football Club Community Sports Trust organised event. Hosted by Premier League Official, Tim Vyne, this culminated in a special presentation to Vyne and Ali, where the young entrepreneurs were given essential and expert advice on how to better their presentation and public speaking skills. The panel praised the team's extensive collation of research, and were in turn inspired by their community and globally conscious idea of synergising football revenue with charity projects through their novel business idea.

FINALS DAY DAWNED…

The team stayed in a hotel close to Westminster, and bright and early the next day, headed to the finals near Westminster. From the outset, they demonstrated with their sharp presentation, West Ham ties and visual aids that they had extensively researched, practised and prepared.

Their showman skills were exemplary, with a musical-themed entrance to West Ham's official theme song 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles', adding flair and panache to their presentation. Faced with an early technical glitch from the house computers, Yaseen stepped up to the plate and launched a fantastic opening in a loud, clear and coherent voice while the technical issue was quickly resolved. Nahid added humour to the slide show and Ishmaeel and Ashrabul displayed great evidence of research in their effective and professional demonstration of the business pitch. Hassan stole the show with his quick-witted trademark humour that was instrumental in creating a bond between the panel and presenters.

After the presentations from all six teams, there was a nervous wait until presenter Kim Inglis finally announced, "This year's Premier League Enterprise 2014 winners are...West Ham!" They were all rewarded with not only a life-changing experience in both their personal and professional lives, but also iPad Minis! Commenting on their win Nahid said "This was one of the best feelings in the world!" and Yaseen said, "I actually felt like a celebrity and this has to be one of the best days of my life."

Whilst reflecting on the power of the Premier League Enterprise Scheme, Giovanni Giordano, PE Teacher at Stepney Green College commented, "At the beginning they couldn't even present before three people and now they have ended up presenting in front of 100 people." He also said, "You can't place a value on what they have achieved through this. You can't teach it in the classroom. The biggest thing the team have learnt is that you can follow your dreams."

Mr Giordano mentioned that from an academic standpoint, he believes the Premier League Enterprise Scheme "enabled the group to be more focused and to use these writing and presentation skills as part of their English GCSE." One of the team who was not in education will now return as a direct consequence of taking part in this programme.

At OCR, our support for this scheme is a reflection of our commitment to supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills and mind-sets and we would like to congratulate all those who took part – along with the worthy winners.

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