

Introduction



APSA (Atherton Primary Sports Association) was formed in June 2011 when some of the PE leaders in Atherton could foresee that there would be a 'gap' in sporting provision for Primary schools in Atherton for 2011/12. We felt that this 'gap' needed to be filled, especially as this was in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics! We wanted to continue and build upon the fantastic work that Mr Kirk Jameson had commenced in his role as SSCO at Hesketh Fletcher High School. In our first year we organised 9 events which catered for the needs of 7 primary schools. With the support of local councilors, our first year culminated in a large Olympic parade through the streets of Atherton!

As the 'consortium' model took shape across Wigan schools in September 2012, APSA extended its coverage, to fall in line with the Atherton and Tyldesley Consortium and became known as ATSA (Atherton and Tyldesley Sports Association). This meant that 16 primary schools across Atherton and Tyldesley were being catered for! Because of this large number, a decision was made that some events would be split into an Atherton and Tyldesley section, namely football and netball leagues. In total, we had 15 events take place in 2012/13 including our first theory based session (Sports Psychology session) being held at St. Michael's School. 2013 also saw us make links with the local community as Pennington FC offered to host the KS1 Football Competition.



As we moved into 2013/14, the success of ATSA was formally recognised by winning 'The Martin Lynn Contribution to School Sports Award' at the Wigan Sports Awards. From this it was necessary to formally constitute and set up a group of voluntary 'board' members. New developments included: a logo and 'strapline' designed by local children, a Facebook page was set up, a schools swimming gala being held at the Pelican Centre in Tyldesley (I was informed that this was the first schools gala in over 25 years!), a dodegball Competition supported by DodgeballUK and a football referees course run by Lancashire FA. More links were made with community clubs such as Astley and Tyldesley Cricket Club, Astley VIP Boxing club, Astley Golf Range, Eccles Archery club and Leigh Centurions who all supported ATSA events. Sports leaders from both our local high schools also supported events as part of their PE qualification. We started to cater for the adults in our area as we held the first of our staff/parent football matches. We also held the first ATSA/Safe-Elec-UK Residential Sports Weekend in the Lake District which was a huge success.



It was in June 2014 that ATSA again was formally recognised by winning 'Outstanding Contribution to Local Education' from the local National Union of Teachers. 2014/15 saw many 'firsts' for ATSA as we produced our first ATSA Directory, held our first CPD event for staff (Inclusive Sports), took part in the Atherton Carnival and organised many events in different sports for the first time, namely VX, Smite!, Futsal, Dance for KS1 & KS2, Sportshall athletics for KS1 & KS2, Tennis, Crown Green Bowling and Cycle Speedway. We also worked with the Challenge4Change Centre and the Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation to have two events focusing on some of our disadvantaged children.



June 2015 saw two significant events take place in the life of ATSA – first we launched our Sports Council, involving two children from each of the 16 schools formally representing their school and contributing to the ongoing successful leadership of ATSA – who better to ask for ideas than the very people who are at the heart of all we do? Secondly, it was during June 2015 that ATSA celebrated holding its 100th event since forming in 2011.

During 2016-17, ATSA strengthened its links with Leigh Harriers as the second 'Graham Jackett Cross Country Challenge' and the first ever ATSA Track and Field Athletics event both took place. ATSA also started to celebrate some of the local sporting talent within the area through developing its 'Recognition of Local Talent' display. The Sports Council also put together the ATSA logo mosaic, which is on display at The Pelican Centre.



In 2017/18, our 7th year, opportunities for ATSA to work with 'professional' sporting personnel and organisations started to develop. Former England goalkeeper, Chris Kirkland, coached a group of children during the 6 week Goalkeeping Academy. Our Sports Council spent a day at Wigan Athletic Football Club as they launched the 'Healthy Hearts' project across the borough. Select Group referee, Darren Bond, did further work in our school in conjunction with Premier Game Match Officials (PGMOL). Former Olympic Athlete, Jenny Meadows, started to work in our schools, leading inspirational assemblies as well as coaching athletics. ATSA also made a link with Manchester



United Football Club as eight schools took part in the Y2 and Y3 football tournament at The Cliff training ground. It was also during this year that ATSA was asked to promote and host the FA Primary Teachers Award, bringing together 21 professionals supporting their development with the teaching of Physical Education.



Sunday 1st July 2018 saw ATSA expand its provision further as sponsorship was secured from 'Octagon Education' to take 61 children and adults from seven local schools to The British Athletics Championships in Birmingham!



October 2018 saw ATSA join with Fur Clemt to launch its first 'All Sports Holiday Provision'. Children were able to access a day of high quality sports holiday provision from the likes of Jenny Meadows, Wigan Athletic, Leigh Centurions and Fun Swim at The Pelican Centre, with lunch provided by Fur Clemt, for **£3 per day!** 'All Sports Holiday Provision' has progressed each half term to include dance and boxing. As children are able to select as many (or as few) days as they like, they can access activities they prefer or wish to develop further in an affordable way each half term.





For our older children (9 years to 12 years), June 2019 saw us start to plan our first ATSA 'Fit Hit' sessions. These are due to take place during 2019-2020 and will involve children from various ATSA schools joining together at St. George's Central School to take part in a fun, circuits style session led by Leigh Centurions RL captain, Micky Higham. The plan is to include these sessions as part of a weekly offer to schools. This will give children the opportunity to access affordable training sessions, led by professional sportspeople, in their local community and will hopefully plant the seeds for a healthy lifestyle.



For our youngest children, we forged a link with local company, Kickstarterz who provided us with a gross motor skills session for our Reception children. We have booked Kickstarterz to lead several sessions for both Nursery and Reception children throughout 2019-2020. June 2019 also saw us appeal to our local community to start to donate any unwanted sports equipment/clothing to ATSA with our ATSA 'Extra Time' scheme. Donated items will be collected by ATSA and then re-distributed within our community to people who may be able to provide 'Extra Time' for the items, continuing to make use of it. Several schools and local community venues volunteered to act as 'drop off' points for this so that items could be collected together and stalls set up at future ATSA events throughout 2019-2020.



2018/19 WHOLE YEAR STATISTICS:

83 events in 39 different sports/areas with 34 community club links

38 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 1 university

4146 children (1999 new/different children) 64 adults (61 new/different adults)

WHOLE YEAR TOTAL PARTICIPANTS:

4210 children/adults (2060 new/different adults and children)

Follow the link below or search for 'ATSA 2018-2019' on Vimeo to see a short film celebrating the events of 2018/19:

<https://vimeo.com/348417317>

So what's planned for this year?

Over 70 events are planned for local children/school staff and adults! Many events are planned, which will broaden the opportunities that our children have and for me this is what ATSA is about – providing **OPPORTUNITIES**. As we move into our 9th year I think about the many **opportunities** we are providing through sports, and its many benefits, and I reflect on some of my reading:

"We like to think that sport is a meritocracy – where achievement is driven by ability and hard work – but it is nothing of the sort. Think of the potential table tennis champions not fortunate enough to live in Silverdale Road, with its peculiar set of advantages. Think of the thousands of potential Wimbledon champions who have never been fortunate enough to own a tennis racket or receive specialised coaching. Think of millions of potential Major-winning golfers who have never had access to a golf club.

*Practically every man or woman who triumphs against the odds is, on closer inspection, a beneficiary of unusual circumstances. The delusion lies in focusing on the individuality of their triumph without perceiving – or bothering to look for – the powerful **opportunities** stacked in their favour."*

Pages 8 – 9 from 'Bounce – How Champions are Made' by Matthew Syed

When people ask me why did we create ATSA? What's its aim? I respond by saying that we are providing children with a sporting **opportunity**, one that they may not have had before. I would not want any child to leave an Atherton or Tyldesley primary school saying, 'we never had a chance to do that!' Through attending some of our events we are primarily aiming to instill a life-long love of sports and keeping active in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. However, through providing these **opportunities**, we are also looking to unearth those potential Wimbledon champions or world champion boxers!

As a final comment, I will reinforce the message given each year about our strapline of 'Friendship Through Sport' – this is ideal for our young people as no matter what colour school uniform the children wear, no matter what team they represent, they are all members of the Atherton and Tyldesley community and, for me, our events should form the basis of lifelong friendships. This is the same for the staff, many of who have become 'friends through sports'.

"Friendships born on the field of athletic strife are the real gold of Competition. Awards become corroded, friends gather no dust".
Jesse Owens

Have a good year and I hope to see you at one of our events.



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Friendship through sport