

17<sup>th</sup> March 2008

### **LORD COE TO VISIT RUGBY FESTIVAL AND TOUR YORK COLLEGE**

Sebastian Coe, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) will meet young players from across the region at the North Yorkshire Tagability Rugby Festival at York Rugby Club on Tuesday (18 March). He will also visit York College, recently selected by LOCOG to be included in the 2012 Pre-Games Training Camps Guide, for a tour of its new facilities.

At the rugby festival, teams from ten special schools across North Yorkshire (including York) will be taking part in the Tagability Rugby Festival, which is part of a community sports coaching programme supported by North Yorkshire Sport and delivered by the RFU and local partners that aims to develop and increase participation in rugby union and feed players into the club system.

The festival takes place between 10am - 2pm and is giving children the opportunity to play matches following a series of in-school coaching sessions in February and March. It will also give schools the chance to go on to participate in the North Yorkshire Youth Games on Sunday 1 June at Ampleforth College.

David Watson, executive director of North Yorkshire Sport said: "The project aims to get more young people from special schools in the area involved in the game of rugby and into clubs. The festival gives the children their first chance to play tag rugby in a fun, competitive environment and will hopefully encourage them to carry on playing.

"The programme is proving to be popular within the schools and is one of many inclusive initiatives being developed in partnership with Sport England Yorkshire aimed at encouraging more youngsters to participate in sport and aspire to achieve their full potential. Led by National Governing Bodies, the SportsSpecial School Sports Partnership, North Yorkshire Sport and Active York there is a real drive to improve both participation and attainment levels in our region ahead of the 2012 Paralympic Games. It will be an incredible boost to have Lord Coe visit the Tagability Rugby Festival, meet children involved and see the beginnings of the 2012 legacy."

The afternoon's agenda comprises a guided tour of York College. Lord Coe will visit the world class sporting facilities that helped the College be selected to appear in the LOCOG 2012 Pre-Games Training Camps Guide.

He will go on to visit the basketball, fencing and indoor volleyball areas (the disciplines included in the Guide), as well as the sports science lab, fitness suite and all-weather pitch. Lord Coe will also have the chance to talk with student volunteers as well as sports learners and those involved with the coaching of disabled athletes.



David Gamble, Curriculum Leader for Sport & Leisure at York College said: "We are delighted that Lord Coe and representatives from Sport England and Yorkshire Culture have been able to visit our new college to see for themselves the first-class sporting facilities and meet with our sports students. The fact that York College is listed amongst the training camp facilities for the 2012 Games presents a very exciting opportunity for us."

David Gent, Regional Director of Sport England Yorkshire said: "As 2012 gets nearer, there are more and more opportunities for people to get involved in sport through the region's colleges and universities. Whether you're a local resident wanting to play sport or do a coaching qualification, a would-be volunteer, or of course, a student, you'll find that York College, as well as York University and York St John's can help you. Together they are doing a fantastic job of supporting sport in York. I'm so pleased to be able to welcome Lord Coe back to his home region of Yorkshire for the day, to show him the excellent work going on to boost sport ahead of 2012."

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