

## Out of School Sports Activities

### The difference these activities have made to Tom Gulliver

Tom is a sociable, outgoing young man of 16, with severe learning disabilities, resulting in a cognitive developmental ability within Key Stage One. He is active and eager to mix with other young people. Sometimes this can be a problem because of Tom's vulnerability.

Before the sporting sessions became available for Tom, his out of school activities were limited. He enjoys 'soft play', but by 12 was too big to use these facilities. He enjoys football, but need a considerable amount of help as he finds understanding rules of games difficult. He loves balls games, but needs plenty of input to help him get the most out of each activity. Tom has an enormous amount of energy, and is rarely still. He loves to be active, and to participate in group activities. The sporting activities are very well staffed, and I am confident that Tom is safe and well supervised at all times. With vulnerable young adults like Tom, this has always been a concern when looking for activities for him to participate in.

Prior to the start of special needs and inclusive sporting activity groups, Tom had little contact with his schoolmates outside Fiveways School. Since the activities began, he has been able to mix with his friends, and meet new children from other schools of varying abilities, who enjoy sports. He has grown in confidence, both in interacting, and in trying to do new things. He has been able to access new venues like Millfield School, and Yeovil College, which he has so enjoyed.

Tom's balance and co-ordination have greatly improved since he started these activities. His concentration span was short; this has improved, enabling him to finish tasks and to persevere in acquiring new skills. He is generally fitter and more constructively active.

Finally I think what we have noticed particularly is the development of Tom's self esteem. Every child should experience that 'I can do it' feeling. Tom knows that he has really improved in his abilities, and is proud of himself. It shows in his enormous smile!

**Margaret Gulliver (Tom's Mum)**