



PRESS RELEASE

Contact Details:

For more information, contact Mike Williams, CEO on 07748620235 or newsdesk@ukbjja.org

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For immediate release

Welsh BJJ club secures funding via Sports Council Grant

Valley Academy BJJ, based in Swansea have become the first UKBJJA member club to successfully apply for Sports Council funding since the UKBJJA's recognition as the official National Governing Body for Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in the UK.

Valley Academy BJJ owners Ash Davies (Brown Belt) and Doug Steele (Purple Belt), had been looking at various grants to replace and extend their matting and provide essential equipment, such as judo crash mats. However, most grants had been out of reach, despite the club working with a number of local groups and schools to encourage people from underprivileged backgrounds and ethnic minorities into the sport. A previous application for a Sport Wales grant was refused, predominantly on the ground that BJJ was at the time not recognised by the Sports Council.

Mr Steele continues the story: "I sought help from the UKBJJA and our grant application manager to revise our application. Shortly after resubmitting the application, the UKBJJA acquired recognition for BJJ from the various Sports Councils and this time our application was successful, making us the first Brazilian Jiu Jitsu club in the UK to be awarded a grant via the Sports Council!

We have been in contact with our local Council Youth Services team and a number of local schools and charities to see if we could offer training to these groups who would be in direct contact with the target children from underprivileged backgrounds that otherwise we would not be able to access. The process with Sports Wales was reasonably straight forward and I received plenty of support and assistance from them when applying.

Now we have been offered a grant and accepted it we will be ordering 40mm Tatami mats and replacing and extending our training area to accommodate more students and will look at matting the walls too. We will also be procuring 3 x Judo crash mats so we can practice safe throws with all levels and up our game!

We noticed during the summer holidays that a large number of children were hanging around the community centre and skate park, so we offered them all free training during the school holidays, with parental consent of course. The uptake was brilliant, but once the summer



The Beacon Business Centre • Westgate Road • Newcastle Upon Tyne • NE4 9PQ
Company No. 8887006

tel: +44 (0)774 862 0235 • email: info@ukbjja.org • website: ukbjja.org



holidays and free training ended, the children did not return. Via our Powys Council Youth Services Officer and a local charity group run from the community centre we established that the main reason for this was cost, the parents simply could not afford to pay for their children to train. We now have introduced a free training voucher scheme which is in place with the local Powys Youth Services officer, a local community orientated charity and a number of the local schools. This voucher enables the staff to distribute to the relevant children who can then attend training for free. With the grant now approved we aim to extend the mat space and allow more kids to train with us.”

It's too much of a cliché in Martial Arts to say, “it's not about the money”, but Ashley and Doug at Valley Academy really did want to try and be different and offer something for everyone and that includes trying to accommodate people on the mats that would otherwise miss out due to their financial situation.

The UKBJJA is committed to helping all member clubs to access similar funding and expand their programmes to bring as many people into this great sport as possible. Over the coming months we will be publishing guides on how to identify and access funding, write bids and structure their organisations to derive the maximum benefit from Sports Council recognition.

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About the UKBJJA:

The UKBJJA (www.ukbjja.org) is a not-for profit organisation which aims to provide a governance structure for the martial art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, that promotes and develops the sport while allowing individual clubs and practitioners the space and freedom to practice the martial art in the way they enjoy. The UKBJJA is currently under assessment to be recognised by Sport England as the governing body for Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in the UK.

The UKBJJA was formed in 2013, and the association's goal is to foster the development of BJJ at elite, community and grassroots levels, raising the profile of the sport but also providing pathways for development and involvement across communities in the UK. Visit UKBJJA at www.ukbjja.org or follow us on Twitter @ukbjja.

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Doug Steele from Valle Academy BJJ (centre) and Ash Davies (right)



Kids from Valley Academy BJJ, Swansea