



Havering Sixth Form College and West Ham United team up to launch Ladies Academy

Teenage girls with a passion for football are being given a unique opportunity to join West Ham United Ladies Academy (WHLA) with an exciting new partnership between Havering Sixth Form College, West Ham United Football Club and the Community Sports Trust.

Girls in Year 11 who will be transferring to sixth form education this year attended an information evening with their parents to find out more about the WHLA and the opportunities on offer.

The evening was held at the College on Monday, February 22. College staff and West Ham United representatives were on hand to answer questions.

The Academy, for girls aged 16 to 19, will start in September 2010. It will be based at the College and will enable talented footballers to have an unrivalled educational package as well as access to professional football instruction by West Ham coaches – with the chance to play in the prestigious National Colleges Football League against teams like Arsenal and Chelsea.

The WHLA students will be able to choose from a comprehensive range of vocational qualifications and more than 26 A Levels run at Havering Sixth Form College, while being coached at the highest level for four days a week – all worked into a special timetable for them.

College Team Leader for Sport, Leisure and Tourism, Ian Budge, said: "Our mission is to create a successful and developmental Academy. We want to improve participation rates in women's football, develop those already involved and to ultimately provide a sustainable development pathway.

"Along with all the benefits of such a wide-ranging educational package, the students will also be able to gain additional qualifications in coaching, refereeing and gym instruction. To be able to play in the National Colleges Football League, which is the highest level of inter-college football in the UK, would obviously also be a huge benefit for the Academy students."

The WHLA is being supported by Havering Council, Essex County FA and a variety of local businesses. It will provide the borough and the Thames Gateway with its first Ladies FA Football Development College.

Kate Holmes, Women's and Girls Development Officer at West Ham United Community Sports Trust said: "Havering Sixth Form College and West Ham United can deliver an unrivalled educational package combined with elite football coaching. The development of players, coaches and officials is paramount to our academy vision, ultimately with graduates feeding back into the system, thus leading to a sustainable future for the women's game."

It is hoped the WHLA will provide places for around 20 girls. Trials will take place in the spring.

For more information, contact Havering Sixth Form College on 01708 514400 or email mainoffice@haverling-sfc.ac.uk