

Football star joins Sporting Equals

Top British Pakistani footballer Kashif Siddiqi has joined forces with Sporting Equals (the experts on engaging more black and minority communities in sport) to inspire more young Asian boys to follow in his footsteps and carve out a career in his beloved sport.

International footballer and Northampton Town Football Club player Kashif, has teamed up with Sporting Equals – a charitable organisation designed to actively promote greater sport and physical activity involvement from ethnic minorities – to raise awareness of the underrepresentation of black and minority communities in sport and to ensure sporting opportunities reach the most disadvantaged.

The 27-year-old English-born Pakistani footballer, who has played at both professional and international levels, was recently appointed as a Sporting Equals Ambassador to encourage young people from ethnic minority communities to get involved in football. He was also involved in the 'The Asian Star' initiative run by Chelsea Football Club, and supported by Sporting Equals. The event was designed to give a much-needed boost to under-representation of Asian participation at all levels of the game of football.

According to Kick it Out, football's equality and inclusion campaign, there are currently only seven British Asian players in professional football. In addition, a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) survey into professional football in 2004 revealed that in total there were only 10 Asian players at Premier League club academies. This figure has largely remained the same since then.

The Asian Star initiative, held on May 6, attracted hundreds of young players to Chelsea's world famous Cobham training ground to compete for a season-long placement at the club's Football Development Centre.

Aged between eight and 12, the youngsters were given the opportunity to develop their skills and get first hand advice from coaches on how to boost performance.

Workshops provided from the footballer's project - The Kashif Siddiqi Foundation - along with others, were also held for youngsters' parents to help inspire and inform them.

Kashif said it was an honour to represent Sporting Equals during The Asian Star event. He is now looking forward to working with the organisation to help increase ethnic diversity across sport and physical activity.

He said he hopes underrepresentation of black and ethnic minorities in the game of football, and other sports, will be addressed through Sporting Equals' work.

He said:

"Sporting Equals is working tirelessly to promote greater sporting opportunities for ethnic minorities. Learning from my journey and experiences, I feel there are a lot of factors involved and two of the key focuses are highlighting to parents the benefits of education through sport and raising awareness of health.

As an ambassador for Sporting Equals I want to educate children and families alike that there is potential for them to flourish in football and other sports. There are lots of role models out there for them to look up to at various levels, I will be working hard as an ambassador to highlight these people and find ways we can progress as a community."

Arun Kang, Chief Executive Officer at Sporting Equals, said he was delighted to have Kashif as an ambassador for the organisation.

He said:

"It is fantastic to have Kashif on board as an ambassador for Sporting Equals.

At the recent Asian Star initiative it was clear to see the impact Kashif's presence had on the youngsters who were participating on the day. Kashif is a real role model and an inspiration to many young boys who were able to get first hand advice from him."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Sporting Equals

Sporting Equals is the only national organisation working to increase ethnic diversity across sport and physical activity.

The not-for profit organisation targets black and minority ethnic communities across England reaching some of the most disadvantaged communities.

Sporting Equals has a strong national network of delivery partners on the ground, reaching the heart of black and minority ethnic communities.

Sporting Equals has partnership agreements and affiliations with leading sports governing bodies and are tasked with bringing the two networks together to:

- Increase participation
- Open up a vast new pool of talent for sport in the UK

- Offer opportunities for talented sportsmen and women
- Change out-dated attitudes and assumptions
- Enable BME communities to access sports and fitness facilities
- Share the social, personal and health benefits of an active life more widely

For further information about Sporting Equals, please visit the website: www.sportingequals.org.uk

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