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Community



26 March 2007, 3:48 pm
Saints join forces with the Army for summer camps



Mattie Stewart with a happy recipient of training

Northampton Saints' community department have brought in reinforcements from the British Army for this summer's Premiership Rugby Academies, run in association with O2.



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Travis Perkins



The tie-up follows a highly successful pilot scheme in February at Old Leamingtonians RFC in Leamington Spa that received high praise from all involved. The army coaches – all RFU Level 2 qualified – will work in conjunction with Saints' community coaches in training participants in all aspects of the sport.

The army will also be running their five-day course at Bassingbourn Barracks that proved popular last summer. Saints Academy coaches Rob Hunter, Grant Seely and Ali Hepher will also be coaching on this course alongside the British Army making it an ideal opportunity for young and ambitious players to get themselves noticed.

"It's a wonderful resource available to us," said Saints' head of community Sian Haynes. "As well as the wonderful coaches we also have had the army enhance the match-day village experience. We have even had a tank here this season!"

The connection between the Saints and the army is long-lived. Present first team squad member Chris Budgen is a serving soldier as were Heineken Cup winners Mattie Stewart and Tim Rodber.



Mattie Stewart points the way to rugby success

Stewart, already a key member of the Saints community team, is also still in the army and will be passing on his playing expertise and leadership skills gained within the sport and in his service at numerous schools as well as the courses.

"I got a lot from the game at club and international level," he said. "And this is a brilliant way to be putting something back into rugby and the army."

"There is a lot of good talent that goes to Saints' summer camps and I'm looking forward to helping these kids become better players. You never know, one of them might even be a Saintsman before too long!"

Author: Chris Wearmouth

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