

Successful Community Programs: *Weightlifting in Lathi*



Jack supervising the basic infant development movements during a session

Community initiatives and social responsibility is becoming a part of international organizational culture. Sport can play a role in creating sustainable long term impact on society. The impact of Pro Sport Development's community weightlifting program in the village of Lathi, Ganjam District, Odisha is one such example.

After our success in implementing the weightlifting program at Gram Vikas High School, Kankia, the model was rolled out to other parts of the region. The first stop was at the Government Upper Primary and High Schools in Lathi. What was started as a development project, showed almost immediate health benefits and proved to be a platform for the children to showcase their talent in competition.

Within a year, the programs commitment to establishing competent movers and technically sound weightlifters, has recently seen six boys and four girls participate in the schools district competition. Despite the daunting prospect of it being their debut competition, all athletes produced personal bests, gained valuable competition experience and moreover two qualified for the state level competition where they gained a silver and bronze medal.

Successes is not just measured by medals won, but by the impact the program will leave on the athletes and their community. Coach Jack Perham describes a few things he observed during the start of his assignment. These included inverted breathing patterns, bone structure imperfections and postural defects. He took up the challenge not just to teach them weightlifting, but

also to improve their lifestyle, future prospects and general health and wellbeing.

Jack spent the first 6 weeks imparting basic infant development movements, from crawling to squatting, deep breathing and aligning posture. These small activities brought about a bigger change. It was clearly identifiable that the children who were undergoing the program had an enhanced body awareness, allowing them to concentrate better in the classroom and also aiding and correcting their physical growth. The practice of the sport has also made their education enjoyable, leading to an increase in their attendance at school.

Even children who are not enrolled in the program, watch and learn the basics of body awareness, and have been truly inspired by the success of their fellow students.

Key Findings

Silver and Bronze medals at State competition.

8 participants in District level competition all setting new personal bests.

Weightlifting in the community has allowed participants to:

- An opportunity to play and compete
- Improve posture
- Pursue a healthy life style



Jack teaching the 'High Pull' to the students in Lathi