

Sibley to head all-girl session in St Neots

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Team GB's Kelly Sibley

Olympic athlete Kelly Sibley is heading to St Neots in Cambridgeshire for an all-girls table tennis session as the legacy from London 2012 continues in the East of England.

Sibley, part of Team GB's table tennis squad, will take part in the special training day on Sunday 2nd December which will help young girls to get into table tennis and benefit from the experience and wisdom that Sibley has to offer.

The event, organised by the English Table Tennis Association's Eastern Regional Coach, Stephen Gertsen, will encourage more women to play table tennis by taking away the anxiety that young girls can experience when they first begin in sport.

Gertsen said: "The reason for setting up the girls training days was to encourage more females to play table tennis, less experienced girls can find it daunting training with boys and we felt a girls training day would help ease them into our regional structure more effectively.

"When I first took on this role it was apparent to me that there was a lack of girls within the regional squads in the East, especially of the younger age group. By engaging the girls at the girls training days we are now in a healthy position."

Gertsen, understandably was delighted to have a role model such as Sibley present so that his young hopefuls can aspire to her level of success.

He said: "We are delighted to have attracted Kelly Sibley to our girls training day in December and this will only be positive for the region. The girls are really looking forward to seeing and possibly training with a British Olympic athlete.

"On the back of the buzz around the region and the girls participation levels at present, we felt it was an ideal time to keep moving forward, we hope Kelly will inspire the girls to not only enjoy playing but to work hard to

achieve their full potential.”

Sibley, a three-times English National Champion, was grateful to help after realising how much table tennis had given to her.

She said: “Everyone loves table tennis, it can be played at all ages, it’s a great way to meet new people and make new friends. Table tennis is my life and I wouldn’t be where I am today without it. I wouldn’t have experienced the experiences I have and got to play in the Olympic Games without it.”

She added: “I think more girls should take part in the sport as it’s a great and fun sport and it’s easy to learn.”

While Sibley’s visit in December is special, the all-girls sessions are a regular feature of the development plan in the Eastern region and it’s something that Gertsen hopes will provide results, not just for his region, but for the country as a whole.

He said: “This is an ongoing process for us, the more girls we have playing and enjoying table tennis the more the sport as a whole can push on and hopefully bridge the gap from other more established female orientated sports.

“This can only be good for not only the region, but hopefully England in the long term.”

If you want to get involved with this session or similar all-girl sessions in the Eastern region you can contact:

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