



High quality competition environments

Creating High Quality Competition Environments for All

Sarah Price

WHICH AREA OF THE SGO TASK LIST DOES THIS IMPACT?

1	Increasing engagement in School Games
2	Developing competitive opportunities
3	Increasing and sustaining participation
4	Workforce – Broadening the range of participation opportunities

ABOUT SARAH

Sedgefield SGO Sarah Price covers the SGO role three days per week and also has a wider offer to schools for the other two days. Sarah covers 43 schools in the rural area of Durham. Deprivation levels are varied.

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WHY

- Following the School Games review, the SGO decided an area of focus was to avoid any negative or bad experiences for children at competitions.
- The SGO carried out some consultation with the primary schools to discuss what these negative or bad experiences might have been and discussed any possible solutions to this.
- Most negative experiences stemmed from children not having the competence and confidence at competitions, which resulted in them feeling negative about their ability levels following a competition and confidence levels decreased even more.
- The SGO worked with the schools to develop their aims, mission and ethos. They all believed that all partners had to take some sort of ownership over a new system, that all partners understood the new system and that they also believed it was the best system for their children, for it all to work.
- The SGO and schools developed a new model of events that included tiers and categories. The definition of the tiers and categories are explained below:
 - » Tier 1 – Most competitive tier: Games will be officiated and rules more strictly adhered to. Winners tend to progress to the next pathway competition. This tier is suitable for most school 'A' teams.
 - » Tier 2 – Less competitive: Games will be 'coached' and advice given to improve skill level. Games will be scored and winners will be announced. No pathway to a next level of competition. This tier is suitable for small schools, weaker year groups in school or even 'B' teams.
 - » Competition – Generally matches/games or races against other schools.
 - » Participation – Generally children rotate around a carousel of exercises or stations.
 - » Mixed Ability – Suitable for a whole class or a range of pupils.
 - » Higher Ability – Aimed at your higher ability children. Not a full class.
 - » Lower ability – Aimed at your lower ability children. Not a full class.
- School staff self-select which tier or category of competition or events they enter their children into. Sometimes this means bringing an 'A' team one evening to a competition and then a 'B' team the following evening. Some schools could enter the 'A' team and their 'B' team into Tier 1 if they thought the children were confident and competent.
- It took a while for the schools to fully understand all the categories, but the SGO encouraged all staff to ring and ask for guidance. They were encouraged to describe the competence and confidence levels of their children when checking.
- The SGO also challenged some schools when she believed they had selected the incorrect tier. Overall this helped to get everyone to fully understand the aims of the new system.



ACTION

- The SGO worked alongside primary schools to develop competitions that created an environment that was suitable for ALL children. All wanted to enter competitions/events that promoted success and allowed the children to achieve something.

SCHOOL GAMES



IMPACT

- Games and races at competitions became more exciting because the ability levels were more closely matched.
- Children reported to school staff that they enjoyed the competitions/events more.
- Schools reported that they no longer had children not wanting to go to competitions or festivals and their confidence levels had risen.
- Wider levels of children were achieving success (scoring goals, winning races, winning medals, improving skill levels).
- Competitions became more fun and enjoyable experiences for all (staff and children).



NEXT

- Carry out further consultation with primary schools to find out if the system needs tweaking, if they need further clarification on tiers or categories or if anything needs adding in.
- Continue to ensure ALL staff understand the high-quality competition principles and WHY the new system is vital for ALL children to achieve and grow their competence and confidence levels. The SGO wants the system to be embedded into schools.
- Start looking at the vocabulary used at competitions and festivals to shift the competition focus away from 'winning'.
- Continue to teach one School Games value at every competition.



TIPS

- Consult with schools before developing your system. It has to suit your schools and their children. When promoting it with the schools always start with the 'WHY?' Why is it needed and why is it important for the children's development?
- Encourage your schools to complete the High-Quality Competition Principles Tool on the School Games website.
- Ensure that you have a consistent message, that all school staff understand the system and which children are suitable for which event.
- Have a key or explanation of tiers and categories on your website and/or competition flyers.
- Keep bringing the competition principle messages to the forefront of discussions with schools and staff.
- Don't be afraid to challenge staff if you think they have brought the wrong children to an event. If you don't then the whole system will start to collapse.

