

Coaches with a Passion for Sport

IT'S THE HOME of such sporting greats as Mick O'Dwyer, Pat Spillane and Mick Galwey, so it should come as no surprise that County Kerry plays host to a ground-breaking new training programme designed to enable people with disabilities to build careers as future coaches, leaders and managers in the sports and leisure industry.

Launched by National Learning Network Tralee, the "Sporting Chance" programme is not designed to develop extraordinary athletes, but instead to develop athletes with an extraordinary gift for encouraging others to participate in sports.

The full-time course includes modules on the Physiology of Sport, Principles of Training, How to Coach Teams, How to Do Fitness Tests and First Aid. There is



Pictured above: A learner on National Learning Network Tralee's "Sporting Chance" programme practising First Aid



a strong practical element, with some learning completed outside the classroom in an adventure centre and soccer grounds. Work experience in clubs and leisure facilities is also arranged.

According to Co-ordinator Kevin Smith, there has been a good response to the course with 13 students having started their studies last September. They will shortly get their first set of qualifications in First Aid, followed by the FAI soccer coaching badge and a professional Certificate in Outdoor Pursuits. Students range in age from 19 to 55 years and come from as far afield as Meath, Kildare, Limerick, Cork and Clare, as well as from Kerry itself.

The course is fully-accredited by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and run in conjunction with the Institute of Technology Tralee, one of Ireland's leading providers of education in the health and leisure field. No course fees apply as it is fully-funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the "Enhancing Disability

Services Programme", managed by Pobal. A training allowance is paid to successful candidates and an equipment budget is available for course requirements.

Pat O'Neill, Area Manager, National Learning Network Tralee, says, "Sporting Chance trains participants unable to avail of existing training opportunities, and supports them in becoming future coaches, leaders and managers in the sports and leisure industry. Ideal candidates will possess an aptitude in one or a number of sports, enabling them to instruct at a coaching level. Motivation, dynamism and a passion for sport are prerequisites." ■

Who to contact

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