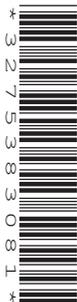


Tuesday 4 November 2014 – Morning**GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (NI)****A633/02/RBI Information and Ideas (Higher Tier)****READING BOOKLET INSERT****Duration: 2 hours****INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- The materials in this READING BOOKLET INSERT are for use with the questions in **Section A** of the Question Paper.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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KICK START!

How the Homeless World Cup is getting troubled youngsters off the bench for good.

The glitz of Premiership football left the Cliff training ground in Salford years ago. The sports cars, designer fashion and celebrity glamour moved out to a state-of-the-art sports science complex 16 miles away. Yet it is at this training ground that a chapter in one of the most remarkable stories in football has been quietly unfolding.



Six months ago, trials began to select a group of young players to represent England. What makes these youngsters unlikely champions is that each of them is homeless. With past issues ranging from gang culture to drugs and alcohol misuse, they have now been coached into a unit of disciplined team players who will represent their country in the Homeless World Cup: a global event first launched in 2003, which now sees teams of men



and women from 68 nations compete in an annual, week-long soccer tournament.

“It was a simple link to make really,” say the organisers. “Football is an international language and homelessness is an international problem. And you can set up a game anywhere. You just need a ball.”

This is a unique way to throw a spotlight on a most unglamorous problem. And when these teams take to the field for matches (which are always well attended) a more subtle change takes place in the minds of the spectators. Suddenly, these largely overlooked members of our society are centre stage, with aspirations for national glory.

Unlikely heroes

The Team England coach, Louis Garvey, leaves his team in no doubt about what is expected. “I won’t tolerate attitude. I won’t tolerate ego!” he barks. It’s an overcast day and six of the team huddle around the coach, listening intently as he stresses fair play and mutual respect. There is a strict ban on swearing.

“Some of the players start a bit like Jack-the-lad. They use a bit of language or have an attitude but we make them realise that there are standards. The thought of the national shirt is enough to focus them.”

Striker Troy, who lived on the streets for two years, is in no doubt about the worth of the project. “When I was on the streets, I didn’t think I was going anywhere. I thought that what I had was the only life I could have. You live day to day – just surviving. Training gave me the determination to take control and find a new direction.”

While only one team can win the top prize, the real success story is in how the whole event transforms these otherwise bleak lives. Up to 77% of players move on into work and home ownership, after discovering a renewed sense of self-worth and motivation – results that actually make this scheme more effective than other, better funded initiatives.

Saved by the Ball

Links to other related charities and services give players the opportunity to access the help that is out there. Supportive local businesses offer training grants. A route from the streets to a hostel then to a proper home starts to become clearer. Troy has trained as an electrician and team mate Salim is back in education. The emphasis on physical fitness motivates those battling with drug dependency and gets everyone in shape and ready for work.

Continuity of support for players is a central goal. When the tournament ends, the benefits continue; related projects include a ball-making business in South Africa which provides employment opportunities and a community sports centre in Brazil.

In contrast to the huge sums poured into the professional game, this tournament is staged on a very small budget with few sponsors, costing less than the bill

for just one Champions League match. In all, more than 700 homeless people will be brought together from countries as diverse as Argentina, Cambodia, Namibia, Haiti and Kenya. Most of these competitors will never have travelled on an aeroplane before and many have never known the luxury of electricity and running water.

There is no doubting the serious commitment of the players training at the Cliff today. Each one views the chance to play for their country as a huge honour. Goalkeeper Gavin explains, “Homelessness is degrading and it is not something you want to talk about. People assume it must be your fault. But being the England goalkeeper – that would be amazing. Something to shout about!”

The realisation that homelessness does not have to mean hopelessness runs all through this team. They may not return with the actual trophy but they have already won something far more valuable – the knowledge that they are not losers.



Sleeping Rough

John Healy spent 15 years of his life as a homeless alcoholic. He spent much of his time skippering (sleeping rough). 'Skipper' is a slang term for a place where homeless people might sleep. He is now a successful writer and the following extract is taken from his autobiography The Grass Arena.

Skippering is illegal; also rough. Some skippers are alright, most are bad. Fights break out in the night; the police come in, nick you or throw you out. Any nutcase can walk in, burn the place down while you're in a drunken stupor. One feature is common to all skippers – they are all infested with lice. It is hard to describe to a clean and healthy person just how uncomfortable and degrading it is to share your clothes day and night with a load of parasites: apart from the terrible irritation there is a nasty feeling of self-contempt. You try to sleep in the attic with the birds but end up in the basement with the rats.

One day Long John told me about a rough skipper he used now and then – a coal cellar under the road, no house above. You got to it over one wall and then through a hole in another wall. It was approximately seven foot long, six foot wide and four foot high. There was an old mattress, wet and soggy. It was continually damp – water running down the sides. The butchers used to throw chicken heads and other remains over the wall, landing in a pile at the entrance. This attracted some animal life – but not the sort you see in pet shops. There were long, hungry-looking rats, mean crazy cats, sly-eyed mongrel dogs and loads and loads of pigeons and gulls. They worked in shifts too: rats and cats at night; birds and dogs in the day. I started to sleep there. No one else would ever come near it.

* * *

So the days merge together more and more, each one like the other. You wake, rise, look for drink, fall asleep again, staring into darkness, seeing nothing, feeling, hearing nothing. Time passes nonetheless.

* * *

It was getting dark as I made my way over to the park with a bottle. Sat down on the bench opposite the bushes where what seemed like a bundle of rags had been dumped. As I pulled the bottle from inside my coat, it clinked, touching a button. The bundle of rags moved; unfolding slowly, they took the shape of a man. I recognised Tommy's withered face as it popped out from layers of filthy cloth. He could have passed for sixty; really he was thirty-five. He peered over. He could hear wine bottles tinkle where others heard only the wind.

'That you, Johnny?' he said as he struggled to his feet. He looked like the Hunchback of Notre Dame with a hangover, lurching across for a drink. I gave him the bottle.

'Thanks, nothing like a good bottle of wine.'

'Yes, and this is nothing like a good bottle of wine. Ha, ha, ha.'

I looked at Tommy. He had three overcoats on, one on top of the other. It was a pantomime every time he got nicked. The desk sergeant would nearly have a fit as the contents of his pockets started to pile up on the charge room table. An old mouth organ, half-eaten toffees with bits of tobacco stuck to them, elastic bands, broken combs (not that he ever combed his hair) and many other things that he had forgotten that he had kept or why he had kept them. The desk sergeant having to write it all down in his property book starts fuming when he realises there are two more layers to go! Finally he's had enough of Tommy and his insignificant possessions and shouts, 'Lock him up, lock him up!'

'NO!' screams Tommy, 'No, no, wait! It's all I've got! I want a proper account kept, I want it all put down in the book!'

And the weary policeman, relenting, puts it all in the book – puts all our bits and pieces in the book, but will that keep our lives from splintering? Perhaps it would in less ravaging circumstances. So I sleep – a lot, for ages. In a black hole, a hole in a wall at the back of Euston station.

John Healy *The Grass Arena* 1988

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