

Case studies

1. Joseph Stanton

Joseph Stanton of Low Fell never dreamed he would be Gateshead's top indoor rowing champion when he went along to try the sport for the first time.

The 16-year-old who attends Cardinal Hume Catholic School, has spent every lunchtime for the last 12 weeks practicing with his friend, Sam Dickinson in order to keep his place at the top of the Gateshead and Whickham Schools Partnership league.

Joseph said: "I didn't take part in any of the other school sports teams before rowing was offered and it has become a real passion of mine.

"I wanted to improve my fitness and rowing has done just that, I spend over half an hour each day practicing with my friends. It not only gives me something different to do at lunchtime but I feel more alert in my afternoon lessons."

Joseph has benefited from better concentration and an all round improved fitness level. His teachers have been so impressed by his commitment and drive and have seen his confidence grow.

The talented teenager hopes to take to the water later this year and put his indoor training to the ultimate test.

2. Hayley Turton

Before entering her teens, Hayley led an active life and took part in all types of sports – particularly football and basketball.

However, upon reaching year nine her interest waned and she stopped participating.

That was until rowing reignited her passion for keeping fit.

The 14-year-old pupil from The Thomas Hepburn Community School said: "I was always well into sport but when I got to year nine, it all went down-hill, I wasn't participating in anything. Then rowing came along and I love it. I'm back to being fit."

3. Sarah Walton

Sarah had been heavily involved in swimming, winning a number of races for her local club but after losing her coach her interest in the sport dwindled.

The 16-year-old pupil at The Thomas Hepburn Community School said: "I was doing the bare minimum after finishing swimming, nothing outside of PE lessons really – until rowing came along. It was something different to get involved in and I really enjoy it."

4. Harry Devine

An all-round sportsman, the Thomas Hepburn Community School pupil has been involved in rowing for two years.

"It's great for developing your whole body by working a lot of your muscles," he said.

"It's also great fun and is very different from the traditional sports which you usually get to take part in at school. I would certainly recommend it to anyone."

5. Elizabeth Vitali

The 15-year-old Thomas Hepburn Community School pupil has been using the sport to strengthen her lungs and help her manage her asthma.

"I've always been interested in sport and will have a go at anything," she said.

"Not only is rowing great fun, it has also improved my asthma by developing my lung capacity."

6. Adam Munroe

Adam Munroe of Gateshead ticked all the boxes academically but lacked confidence in social environments in and outside of school, his form teacher Mr Barker, spotted this and invited him to join Cardinal Hume School's rowing club.

The 15-year-old who is in Year 10 went along to the first Tuesday night session back in February and he has never missed a session since.

Although Adam spent time cycling most evenings he wanted to try something different and the school's rowing club offered him the opportunity to make new friends with pupils in different year groups whilst improving his fitness.

Adam said: "I'd never been involved in any of the school's extracurricular activities but I thought rowing offered a great chance to improve my health and make friends outside of school.

"As my fitness has improved so has my position in the school's rowing table. It's amazing what one hour a week has done for my health, fitness and confidence."

Adam continues to attend the school's rowing club and is reaping the social and physical benefits associated with the sport.

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