

## **Colchester Gladiators achieve Club Mark**

The Colchester Gladiators American football club is now officially recognised as a leading club in Essex and the UK.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2008 history was made when the Colchester Gladiators successfully became the first American football club ever to be awarded the Sport England Clubmark accreditation.

“Clubs who are awarded this prestigious accreditation have demonstrated an exciting activity programme, developed child protection and inclusive standards, and practice excellent club management”, explains Karen Barden, Sports Development Co-ordinator of awarding body, Sportessex, who supported the club throughout the accreditation process and emphasised the Gladiator’s commitment to achieving the award. Sportessex encourages the people of Essex to take advantage of the exciting opportunities the Gladiators provide

The Colchester Gladiators spent the last 12 months preparing and evidence gathering to enable the club to forward its completed portfolio onto the assessment panel. Many hours of form designing and chasing were carried out by the Gladiators secretary Tom Burridge who lead the project. Tom said “Because no American football club in the country had ever achieved this award there were areas that had to be completely written from scratch. We worked very closely with Simon Newnham (British American Football League performance director) and the British American Football Coaches Association to ensure the playing programme we developed was acceptable and achieved the aims of both the team and the league. The bench mark has now been set and will mean any American football team wishing to follow in our footsteps will have guidelines already prepared for them.”

On hearing of the successful application Gladiators club chairman Dave Hogarth stated “I’m extremely proud to be a part of a club that continually raises the bar for others to follow. It was a natural progression for the Gladiators to be the first American football Club in the country to reach this benchmark. The award will stand the club in good stead on many fronts. Parents with little knowledge of the sport will now be more confident and trusting of the Colchester club as we are not only the first but currently the only ones with this seal of approval in the whole country. Our sponsors old and new will have a renewed confidence and local governing bodies will realise we are deadly serious in everything we do.”



Karen Barden, sportessex, presents Colchester Gladiators with their Club Mark award.

<http://www.colchestergladiators.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.sportessex.com>