



Walking football

Jeff Sheelagh, what is walking football?

Sheelagh Well, walking football is a form of five- or six-a-side football. The main difference is that you are not allowed to run – hence 'walking football'. There's other possible differences, depending on who's playing, but the no running rule is the main one.

Jeff And who is it meant for?

Sheelagh Well walking football's for everyone - men, women, boys, girls of all ages and abilities. Um, the no running rule creates a level, level playing field. We currently play in completely mixed teams, and are often joined by youngsters, too, who've come along to watch, so it's great fun and terrific exercise. It's become very popular in the UK, but for some reason in France it hasn't taken off yet.

Jeff So what are you trying to do about that?

Sheelagh Well, initially I put out some feelers by Facebook, to see whether anybody was interested, or whether there was any walking football happening in Brittany, um, and discovered there wasn't really, so as a result of that we, um, a group of us, um, who were interested, um, got together and we now play regularly in Josselin and Pontivy, because that's local to where most of us live. But we've now decided to form a sports association to take it forward formally, um, and to allow others to become members and to help them form teams in their local area.

Jeff If people are interested in finding out more, what should they do?

Sheelagh You can email us at centralbrittanywalkingfootball@gmail.com, find us on Facebook (the page is Brittany Walking Football).

Jeff Sheelagh, thank you very much for giving us that information. The other week, when one of the sessions was taking place at Josselin, I took the opportunity to speak to a couple of people about what they thought of walking football. And here they are. Your name is?

Rob I'm Rob

Jeff You're Rob. And how did you hear about us?

Rob Well, we know Jon, Jon Ward. Um, we play petanque with him, and cricket with him ...

Jeff Yeah.

Rob And when we heard about this we thought 'ideal'. It's a great way to help keep fit, really.

Jeff Yeah, yeah. And you're pleased you turned up?

Rob Yeah. I mean it's a lovely day, a good, friendly crowd, and, er, and more than I expected to be here as well, so it gives you time to have a rest, which is... I think is quite important.

Jeff That's lovely. So you think you'll carry on?

Rob Oh definitely, yeah. I think the first five minutes told me I do need a bit more fitness, and this is a great way to do it without hurting anything, hurting yourself ...

Jeff That's right, that's right. I can see there's a bit of a competitive streak there with you as well.

Rob I've got to try and get rid of that.

Jeff Oh no, no, it's alright ... When, when, when we get to play in tournaments and whatever, international tournaments, we're going to need that competitiveness.

Rob Well the talking came back quite quickly, I found. I was playing football until about 25, and of course most of that is, is chatter, you know, because you can't see everything when you've got a ball ...

Jeff No, no. That's right, yeah. That's brilliant. Well thank you very much indeed. And you are?

John John Trewell.

Jeff And where are you from, John?

John I originate from Yorkshire. I've been living for 13 years in Morinsac (?), which is just down the road from here.

Jeff Yeah. And how did you hear about this?

John Anglo Info. A big advert.

Jeff Yeah, yeah.

John It's what I've been looking for for years, a bit of exercise in my old age. It makes you realise that's (inaudible) ...

Jeff And have you played a lot of football?

John In my younger days, yeah. Probably up to the age of about 35, something like that, but you just grow too, too slow for it then. So I packed it in and started rugby. And when I was too slow for that I tried tennis and badminton. I just love sport.

Jeff Yeah.

John And er, I'm enjoying this. It's something I didn't expect.

Jeff Absolutely. And I can see, you know, that you've still got an eye for it. I mean there was one save you made there which was absolutely terrific. No, it was. It was

absolutely terrific. I thought that ... well I thought 'that's bound to be in'. And you got it right in the middle of your face, didn't you? It didn't hit your face. It was a lovely save. Everyone, you know, everyone I've seen here is showing some signs of skill. And that's ... that's the thing about this game. It's all about skill. It's not necessarily about fitness.

John No, it isn't.

Jeff And so, you'll come along again, obviously?

John Oh yeah.

Jeff And encourage other people to join us as well.

John Well I've got two friends from home who want to play but were ... just weren't able to turn up today, so they'll probably turn out next time. Yeah, I hope it turns into a weekly event. 'Coz the doctor's advice is to actually walk more regularly, and I don't like walking because it's such low benefit for me. Yeah, it's fine.

Jeff Well that's lovely. Thank you ever so much for talking to us.

John It's a pleasure.

