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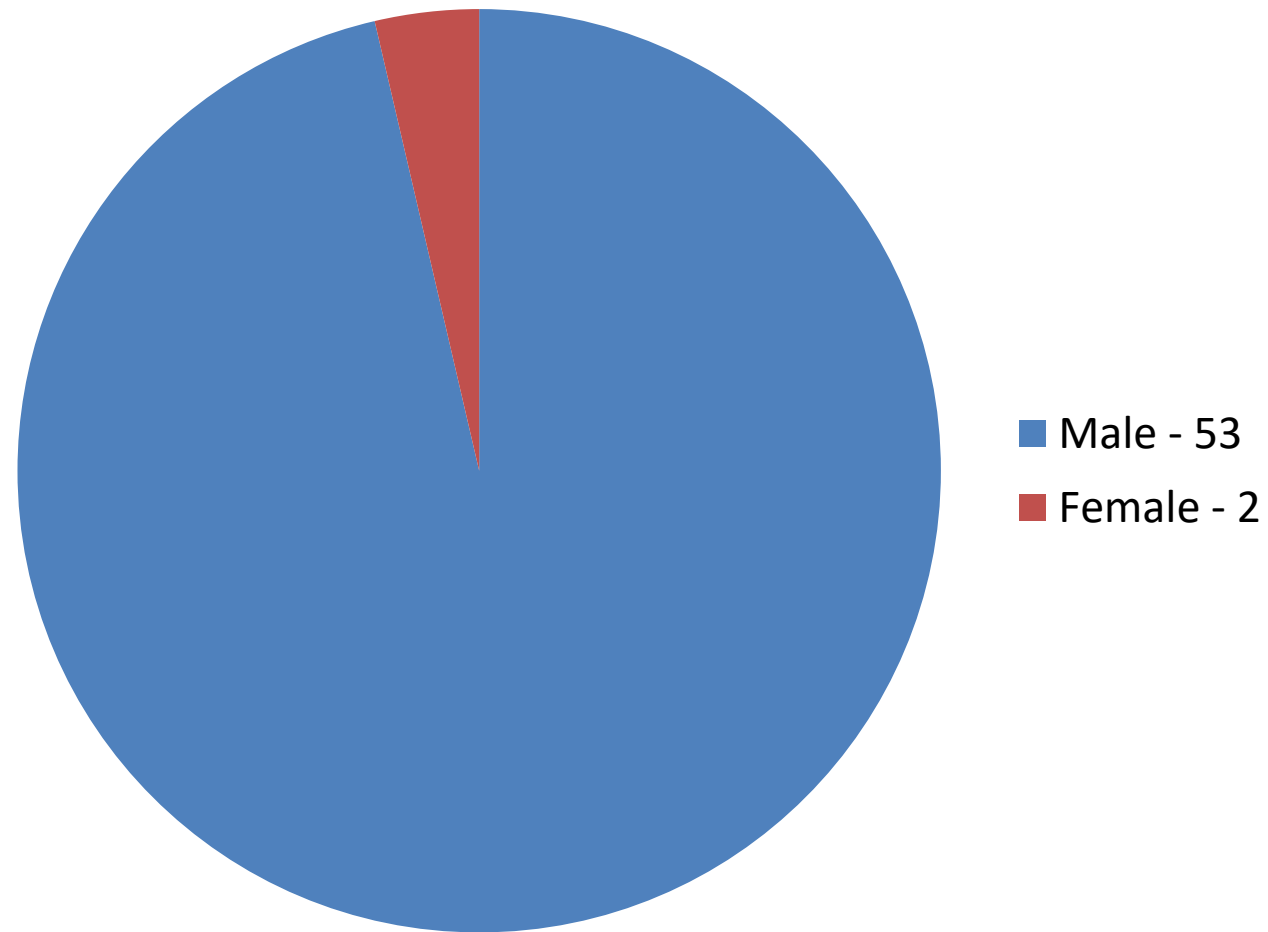
Ability Counts - MUDSA

Matt Pilkington

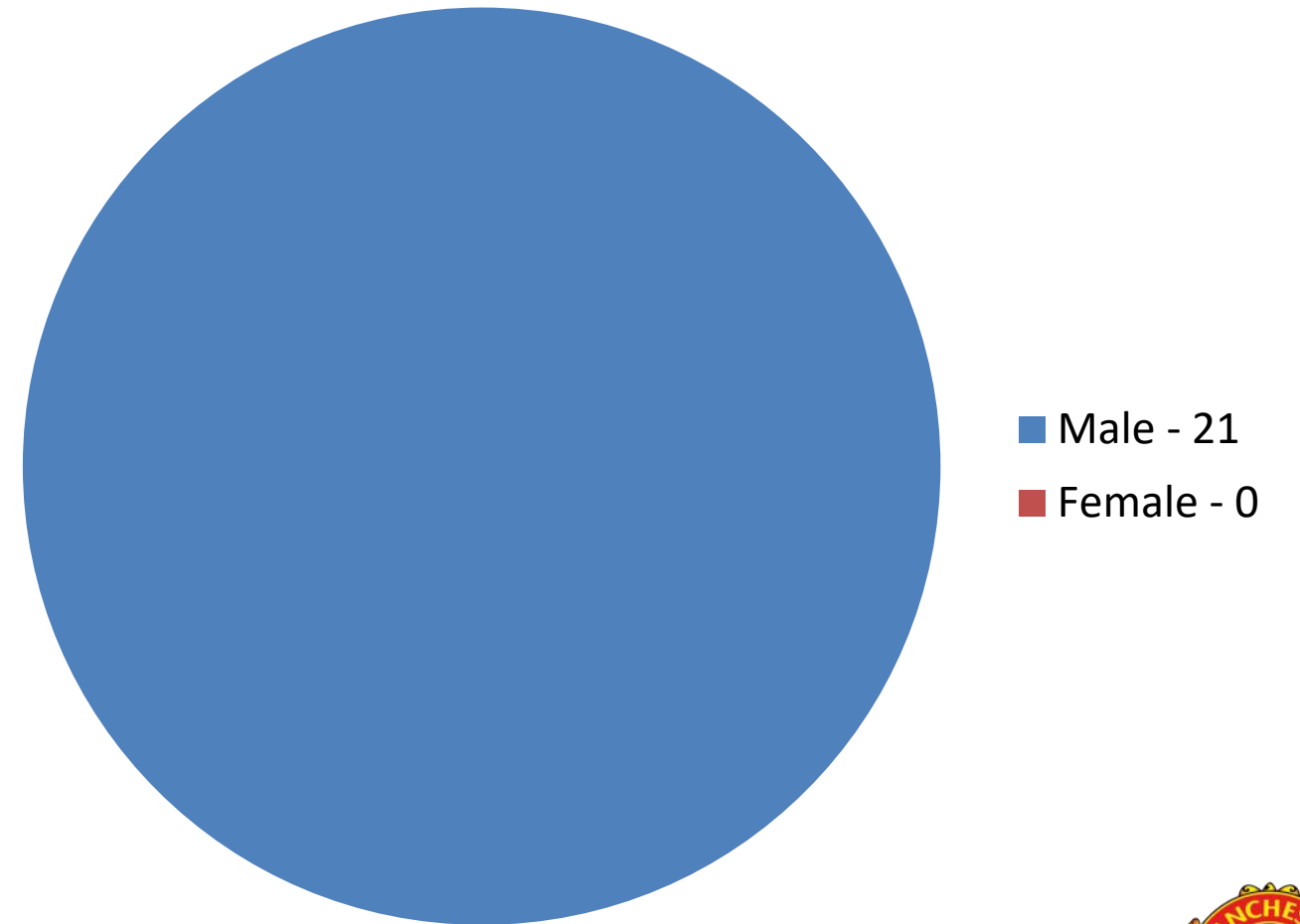
Attendance

Across two sessions 76 participants have participated in Ability Counts Football sessions

Over 16's



Under 16's



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Ability Counts



Friday Evening Sessions

- Since Ability Counts restarted in September there has been lots of changes for participants to become familiar with. The sessions have had to relocate due to government guidelines stating in September that no sport should take place indoors.
- As the temperature dropped and we headed towards winter it was clear to see that participation levels dropped due to the weather. In addition, to the weather being colder many participants have been isolating due to COVID-19.



Activity Bags

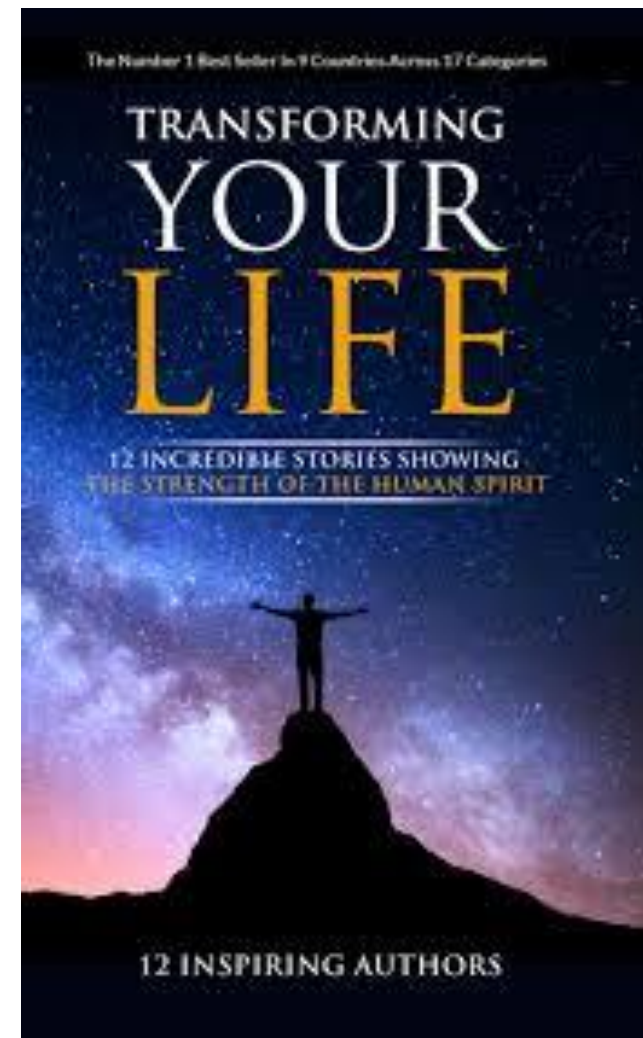
- This year participants were given an activity bag as a Christmas gift from Manchester United Foundation.
- Participants that have attended regularly have also been given Manchester United replica shirts for recognition of their regular attendance.
- Gillian Candlin participants mother said *“Wow, thank you so much for the activity bag, Tom was buzzing when he came home from training. Big thank you to yourself and Manchester United Foundation at this difficult time”*



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Darren Harris

- This year the Premier League Charitable fund set up a new project called Trailblazers, the aim of the project was to raise awareness of influential black people.
- 3 Under 16's participants were given the opportunity to research a Trailblazer given to them by myself. The trailblazer was Darren Harris who was England's first ever black para footballer.
- The participants did some fantastic work and it was brilliant to see how deep they had looked into Darren's career.
- Families have been truly amazed by how successful Darren has been on and off the pitch and has led to parents wanting to read Darren's award winning book.



Darren Harris Feedback

Following the research about Darren Harris the Ability Counts participants found Darren's story really inspiring and extremely useful for them to remember that if at first you don't succeed don't give it up on your dreams.

Euan said: "I learnt that even with all the challenges Darren had in front of him he worked hard and stuck to his beliefs to achieve his goals something I intend to do myself. If you have the right attitude, the will to succeed and the right people in your network you can achieve your goals and help motivate others."

Matthew said: "Darren Harris is proof that sports is inclusive for everyone regardless of your race, sex, religion or disability. Darren doesn't let his disability get in the way and how he represented Great Britain in two different sports. After learning about Darren my mum now wants to read his book."



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Lockdown 2

- During the second lockdown participants from the under 16's were given the opportunity to keep football part of their weekly routine by attending a virtual ability counts session. This gave participants a chance to see their friends from football and to improve their footballing skills
- The sessions consisted of a warm-up, ball manipulation challenges, cool down and weekly challenge which varied from watching a Manchester United Foundation weekly workout video to a list of footballers who's first letter in their last name would spell out the participants name.
- The feedback was fantastic, Catherine Browne an U16 parent said “ *Thanks to you and the team for all your input and support for Joe over the past year. We really appreciate and value all that ability counts has done*”.



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MUDSA Weekly Exercise Session



MUDSA Weekly Exercise Session

- The over 16's were given the opportunity to participate in the MUDSA fitness sessions that take place on a Wednesday morning.
- Many participants in the Over 16's are in current employment or attend college therefore the number of participants from ability counts for the MUDSA session was relatively low.
- During this lockdown participants were given the opportunity to select their choice of music, this brought out some very good conversations and some very questionable music.
- As part of international day for people with disabilities the participants had the pleasure of Wes Brown leading a MUDSA fitness session once again which was very well received.



MUDSA Weekly Exercise Session

- MUDSA members have still been accessing the weekly exercise session. The sessions have become not only beneficial for the participants health but for their wellbeing too. The sessions do not usually commence until 9.30 but the participants join the session early to have a conversation about football and their general wellbeing. The sessions finish with a weekly sports quiz, with members asking their own question.
- After the first set of lockdown restrictions were lifted in September 2020 the number of participants dropped due to work, school and college commitments but throughout the pandemic the sessions have had a core group of 5 on a weekly basis.
- The sessions have had that much of an impact on some of the participants lives that one participant took their laptop on holiday so they were able to access the session whilst away. Another participants wife bought him a Christmas present “*saying oh not exercise 4*” a saying he loved to say as exercise 4 tends to be the most difficult and a picture of him doing the exercise class on the front.



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