

Introduction

Westfield Park was formed in 1999 to operate an equestrian competition centre holding show jumping and dressage shows, employing 4 full time and 5 part-time staff to run the 150 shows per year. The stable complex was used to stable competitors horses for the duration of the shows. Weekend show would have approx. 250 to 300 entries per day competing in classes with sponsored prize money. This proved to be a profitable business at the time.

Decline of the Business

Over the last 4 years there has been a steady decline in entries over the competitions provided. We have gone from approx. 250 entries per day to approx. 85 per day. We are also finding it increasingly hard to find sponsorship for the classes. As a result we have had to reduce the amount of shows from 150 per year to 55 per year. We feel there are several factors resulting in the decline:-

- Cost of owning and maintaining horse
- Economic downturn
- High fuel costs
- Increasing Livery charges
- Feed and Vet costs
- Transport regulations

After speaking with other equestrian venues it seems to be a trend which is also felt by other equestrian centres. Entries are at an all time low with many established venues cancelling events.

The viability of the business is now at risk. I know of three equestrian centres which have diversified to become Multi-Activity Centres. All are operating profitably, employing more staff and offering excellent facilities for a wider community.

We feel by offering indoor football facilities running alongside outdoor equestrian events we can maximise the business potential.

Introduction of 5-a-side Soccer Centre

We would like to introduce a 5-a-Side Soccer Centre, to be housed in our existing indoor buildings, consisting of 3 x 5-a-Side pitches and 1 x 7-a-Side Pitch.

Viability of the Business

5-a-Side Soccer is one of the fastest growing sporting activities, with the introduction of the new 3G playing surfaces along with purpose built facilities offering affordable sport and exercise to all age groups.

This business model was used 5 years ago at an existing equestrian centre, starting with, one pitch growing today to three indoor pitches and four 7-a-Side pitches outdoor. They are fully booked in advance all year, employing a total of 20 staff.

Our research over a three month period, visiting and inspecting other facilities has proved that this would be a viable addition to run alongside our equestrian business.

The 4 x 5-a-side pitches would be housed within the existing large indoor arena (at present only used 1 ½ days per week) offering an opportunity to play football all year round on the finest artificial surfaces available approved to FIFA 2 star Accreditation.

An On-site Manager will organise regular team competitions and soccer leagues for adults, children, football clubs, pub teams etc, using approved local referees. FA Approved coaches will be assigned to run training days, after school clubs & corporate events.

The venue will also provide opportunities for local businesses to sponsor leagues and use advertising space in order to promote their business to all competitors.

Competition Research

We have found one other indoor 5-a-Side soccer business based in Huddersfield. Research shows that players will travel approx. 25 minutes to a facility and that there is a need for an indoor venue within the Barnsley area.

The Huddersfield based centre is open from 10am to 10pm 6 days per week and we have found it continually difficult to book a pitch.