



<b>Title of Case Study</b>	<b>Elliot Verry Climbs to National success</b>
<b>Contact Name and Telephone Number</b>	<b>Simon Verry 07956 922192</b>
<b>Project Timescale</b>	<b>From February 2009</b>

Merseyside Sports Partnership,  
Unit 1 Dakota Business Park,  
Skyhawk Ave, Garston, Liverpool, L19 2QR  
T: 0151 427 3889 F: 0151 427 3779  
Email: [admin@merseysidesport.com](mailto:admin@merseysidesport.com)  
Website: [www.merseysidesport.com](http://www.merseysidesport.com)

## Summary of Case Study

Elliot first experienced indoor climbing at his 8th birthday party Feb 2009, following that I started to take him to the Awesome Walls Climbing Centre, (AWCC) in Liverpool, and he really enjoyed it.

I am a PE teacher on the Wirral, but my talents lie in Games activities so although I could see his potential it was the instructors at AWCC that told me how naturally talented and strong he was. By this time Elliot had joined the kids club that they run where his skills were developed further and he was encouraged to enter the Youth Climbing Series which is the national competition for young climbers organised by the British Mountaineering Council.

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=2276>

Elliot then climbed in the three North West regional rounds and finished second overall therefore qualifying for the national final in Edinburgh. It was at this point that I started to become frustrated at the lack of support, both financial and logistical, for the group of Wirral athletes who had qualified for a national final.

Elliot plays rugby and cricket, and I know as a parent that after paying our yearly subscription, we could use the facilities every night if required and it would not cost any more money.

The problem is that climbing centres are run as commercial enterprises, and if Elliot wanted to train harder and develop further it would cost even more money. This is coupled with competition entry fees and specialist equipment costs that are associated with niche activities such as climbing. This is surely going to hold back young athletes (or certainly their parents) from the commitment that is required to reach the pinnacle.

I used the Merseyside Sports Partnership website to access info about the junior athlete education programme and then read about the sports bursary awards. I made an application but unfortunately this was at the time that County administration of the bursary transferred to local council administration, however I did receive the award.

After Elliot performed well in last year's national final finishing in first place and 11 points ahead of his competitors at Wolf Mountain in Wolverhampton he was then invited to join the BMC Talented Climber Academy. These events occur twice a year and he will receive expert coaching although the event is only subsidised by Sport England so attendance will incur a fee.

**Why was it needed?**

The major stumbling block in accessing future funding appears to be that climbing is an individual activity with junior climbers supported by enthusiastic parents. They all attend different schools in Merseyside and as such, school minibuses etc cannot be used for transport to events/ training etc.

Most sports funding is now allocated and distributed to registered clubs/organisations who are affiliated to NGB's and this excludes talented individuals such as Elliot, as there is no club/association for him to join.

**Aims and Objectives**

To enable Elliot and his climbing group to progress in their sport of climbing by providing some funding support.

**Main Outcomes**

I went back to Melinda James and the Wirral Council sports development team, but was told that the small amount of funding remaining could only be allocated to registered groups. However I was delighted therefore to receive a sports bursary for £100 from Melinda and this has helped to offset some of the costs involved.

I have tried several other sources of funding, and the best of these has been the Sport Unlimited funding which I have received three times. This has been used to offset the cost of coaching sessions provided by a British team coach for all the Wirral climbers (12 individuals in our group.)

**Who was involved?**

Sport England  
Merseyside Sports Partnership  
Wirral Council

**How was it Funded?**

Simon Verry has to personally fund:

Entry to Awesome Walls Kids Club	£10 x 50 - £500
Entry to Climbing Hangar	£8 x 50 - £400
Competition Fees	£15 x 3 - £45
Equipment/rock shoes etc	- £100

This does not include tunnel fees and other transport costs. Compare this to our family membership at Wirral Rugby club of £80 for the year. If you factor in that my daughter Emily is now following in Elliot's footsteps and finished 21st in the National final, the overall costs start to spiral to well over £2,500 per year.

One bursary fund award from Wirral Council and three Sport Unlimited Funding awards have been received to assist with these costs.

### **How do you know it was good practice?**

The Merseyside Sports Partnership website provided Simon with information about funding opportunities for Elliot which he was able to apply for, and follow up, with Wirral Council. The sports bursary funds are administered in each local authority area and Melinda and Wirral Council have been very helpful in providing information and advice on applying for the available funding.

### **Have you already done any Publicity or Promotion?**

No

### **What Next?**

Climbing is being considered for the Olympic games in 2020 and that would be Elliot's dream, and the British Junior team is a possibility when he reaches 12 yrs old however, short term, he will need to try and qualify for the North West Team again next January, but this will be more difficult as he moves up to the 11-13 age group. We may be faced with the situation where the reigning British Champion is unable to defend his title!

If it's possible to source additional funding for Elliot both Melinda James at Wirral Council and Andrew Wileman at Merseyside Sports Partnership are on the case and will inform Simon as a when a funding stream is available.

### **Concluding Key Point about the Case Study**

Elliot is really lucky to have found a sport he enjoys and is good at, and at the same time to have parents who are able and willing to support his progress. Climbing is a difficult sport to get funding for because the climbing centres are commercial enterprises and currently it is not an Olympic sport. However, if in 2020 it is included the access to funding could be greatly improved.

Elliot has a year to work on his performance before he is eligible to join the GB Indoor Climbing team at age 12.