



NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

FOOTBALL FANS SCORE THOUSANDS OF FREE PENGUIN BOOKS

Over 10,000 books to be given to families at football matches across the country to encourage reading at home.

15 September 2008... The National Literacy Trust (NLT) and Penguin Books today announce a large scale book giveaway to families across England.

Penguin Books has donated over 10,000 books to a total of 20 football clubs as part of the NLT's Reading the Game initiative which uses the motivational power of sport to kick start reading and literacy among fans. The first books will be given away at home matches for Norwich City FC (vs Sheffield Utd) and Bristol City FC (vs Doncaster Rovers FC) on Saturday, 20 September 2008.

Football clubs will give the books to families entering the stadium on matchday. Families have been informed of the project through Playing for Success study centres based at local clubs. Local libraries will be on hand to talk to families, with the opportunity to join the local library and gain free access to books long after the match is over.

Parental involvement in reading has a stronger influence on children's achievement than many other factors – including how wealthy or well educated their parents are.¹ This giveaway draws on the experience of clubs, such as Brentford FC, in engaging families, particularly dads and lads, in reading. It also hopes to encourage a lifelong love of reading made possible by local libraries.

Premier League player, Portsmouth goalkeeper David James, has supported the NLT's sport and literacy projects for six consecutive seasons.

David James said:

“I know how important it is for children to get into reading - and as a father, I know how much influence parents have in making this happen. Being separated from my children means it can be difficult, but my youngest likes a bedtime story so we get two copies of his book, so even if I'm on the road we can still read together over the phone.”

Mark Barrow, Sales Operations Director, Penguin Books, said:

“We're very pleased to be able to give these books away to families. Through the National Literacy Trust and the support of the football clubs, we have been able to reach a wide number of families in various locations around the country. Books can be a wonderful

¹ (Dearing et al., 2006; Jeynes, 2005).



source of pleasure for any family so it's great to see our books involved with the fun of football."

Jim Sells, project manager at the National Literacy Trust, said:

"We were really excited when Brentford FC and Penguin approached us with this idea, as having worked with them on numerous earlier projects; we knew that this could develop into something on a larger scale. Football has the power to engage parents and children alike, while the presence of local libraries ensures that families will be able to enjoy free books for life. It's fantastic to see such support for literacy at the games, from the clubs and from their players."

The giveaways will take place throughout the 2008/2009 football season with each of the 20 clubs involved receiving approximately 500 books.

- Ends -

For more information please contact Emma Smyth on 020 7820 6256 or email

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Notes to Editors:

1. **Research: Why family reading matters?**

Jeynes, W.H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40, 237-269.

Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., and Weiss, H. B. (2006). Family involvement in school and low income children's literacy performance: Longitudinal associations between and within families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 653-664.

Further information and research on this topic can be found at:

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/familyreading/whyitmatters.html>

2. **National Literacy Trust**

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that changes lives through literacy. It links home, school and the wider community to inspire learners and create opportunities for everyone. The National Literacy Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales, no. 1116260, and a company limited by guarantee, no. 5836486, Registered office: 68 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

www.literacytrust.org.uk

The National Literacy Trust sport and literacy initiative, Reading the Game, works with professional football to promote literacy and uses the motivational power of football to encourage reading for all ages. It is largely funded by the Football Foundation and works in partnership with the Premier League, the PFA, the FA, the Football League, Football in the Community, and the DfES initiative Playing for Success. www.readingthegame.org.uk

3. **Pearson/Penguin**

Penguin was established in 1935 and is one of the world's leading trade publishers. Penguin publishing in the UK comprises the following imprints: Allen Lane, Fig Tree, Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Penguin, Penguin Classics, Puffin and Viking. Penguin has offices in 15 countries and is part of the international media company Pearson. Penguin is



home to a prestigious list of authors in the UK, publishing a range of award-winning, best-selling writers including Nick Hornby, Zadie Smith, Jamie Oliver, Marian Keyes, Jeremy Clarkson, Michael Moore, Melvin Burgess, Roald Dahl, Eric Carle, Madonna and Charlie Higson.

4. **Playing for Success**

Playing for Success is a Department for Education & Skills (DfES) initiative which establishes study support centres in sporting locations. It began in 1997 in partnership with the FA Premier and Football Leagues and their clubs, and local education authorities, and is a 10-week study support programme targeted at underachieving pupils in key stages two and three. The principle behind the scheme is that because the literacy and numeracy support takes place in high profile local football clubs and other sports venues, pupils are more motivated to learn. Originally intended to run at Premier League and First Division football clubs this hugely successful initiative is now also established in a variety of professional football, rugby league, rugby union, cricket and gymnastics clubs. PFS centres have proved an ideal partner for [RTG projects](#).

For more information visit www.dfes.gov.uk/playingforsuccess

5. **The 2008 National Year of Reading**

The 2008 National Year of Reading is a year-long celebration of reading, in all its forms. It will help to build a greater national passion for reading – for children, families and adult learners alike. The Year will encourage people to read in businesses, homes, and communities around the country, providing new opportunities to read and helping people to access help and support through schools and libraries. The 2008 National Year of Reading is being managed by the National Literacy Trust and lead partner The Reading Agency.

www.yearofreading.org.uk