

The Search is on for Greater Manchester's Football Chant Star
Get On campaign launches chant competition to inspire fans to brush up language skills

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The Get On campaign is calling on the chant writers and singers of Greater Manchester's football stadia to put their talent on paper and write new chants for the nation. From Manchester City, Manchester United, Bury FC and Oldham Athletic to Stockport County, Wigan Athletic and Bolton Wanderers the hunt is on to find Greater Manchester's best chant writers.

Chants are an outlet for the emotion and passion that fans have for the beautiful game – and show how creative with language supporters can be. The competition is part of the campaign to encourage adults to see the ability they have with words in their day-to-day life and use this to inspire them to improve their English skills and gain a qualification.

A host of football players, organisations and pundits have got behind the competition including football legend and '*World in Motion*' rapper John Barnes, broadcaster and poet-in-residence at Barnsley FC Ian McMillan, Liverpool's Fernando Torres, Manchester United's Ryan Giggs, The Football League Trust, Manchester City, Manchester United, Oldham Athletic, Bolton Wanderers, Wigan Athletic, Bury FC and Stockport County.

The competition launches today and is being judged by John Barnes and Ian McMillan. The winning chant will need to reflect the supporter's passion for the game, and use originality, creativity, wit and topicality to impress the judges. John, known for his love of words and song, commented:

"People don't often reflect on how clever football chants really are – and how much they mean to players. It was certainly true for me throughout my playing career – and is still

the case for the current generation of footballers. Personally I love a funny chant so humour, as long as it's clean, is going to be big winner for me.”

“Brushing up on your language skills can not only help you to create better football chants, it can also help you get on in work, earn more money and help your kids with their homework. As well as entering the competition, I would urge people to take advantage of the free courses available to them.”

Ian McMillan, an expert on chants and hotly tipped by some to be the next Poet Laureate, has some top tips for would-be chanting stars:

- Keep it simple – make it memorable
- Rhyme helps, repetition helps, and rhythm is essential
- Use humour to inspire
- Always practice saying your chant out loud once you've created it
- Avoid complexity

The importance of chants and the influence they have on the pitch by boosting players' morale shouldn't be underestimated. Top players agree that certain chants can make all the difference between success and failure. Manchester United stalwart Ryan Giggs said: “It is really great when the fans sing your name, it really encourages not just you but the whole team. The fact the fans are behind you is really important and shows the opposition what you are made of. The fans have got some great songs about the players and it shows the fantastic support we have.”

Get On is working with The Football League Trust to distribute entry cards and information about the campaign to football clubs in the Championship, League 1 and League 2, including Manchester United, Stockport County, Bury FC and Oldham Athletic.

To be in to win, fans need to come up with a brand new chant, and enter it together with the tune it should be sung to via one of the following:

- online at the Get On website www.direct.gov.uk/geton

- by post on one of the thousands of entry cards being distributed at Premiership and Football League clubs
- by post to Get On Chant competition, 77 Kingsway, LONDON WC2B 6SR
- email to get-on@fishburn-hedges.co.uk

The closing date for entries is 20 March 2009. In addition to being named as winner, the best chant will receive fantastic Football League tickets courtesy of Coca-Cola. The winning chants will be announced in April 2009.

- Ends -

Notes to editors

About Get On

1. The Learning and Skills Council's "Get On" campaign, which was first launched by the then Department for Education and Skills in 2001, is part of the Government's Skills for Life strategy. The campaign encourages the millions of people in England who experience difficulties with literacy and numeracy skills, or would benefit from 'brushing up' on these skills, to enrol on a free course by calling **0800 66 0800**.

2. Help is at hand with free courses which offer an entirely different experience from school days, focus on helping adults improve their skills so they can deal with practical, everyday situations in life and work. As an added incentive the courses can also lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

3. It is estimated that an individual with good literacy and numeracy could earn £50,000 more over a working life than someone with poorer skills. The increased self-confidence and motivation learners gain from completing a course is of huge personal value and helps them start the process of transforming their lives, both at home and at work.

About Skills for Life

4. The Skills for Life Strategy was launched in 2001 to tackle the legacy of adults with poor literacy, language and numeracy skills within England. The strategy aims to help create a society where adults have the basic skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society, through:

- * Boosting demand for learning
- * Ensuring capacity of the learning provider delivery system

* Improving standards of teaching and learning

* Increasing learner achievement

5. In 2008 the Government exceeded the target to ensure that 2.25 million adults improved their skills and gained a qualification by 2010 – over two years early. The Government plans to improve the literacy skills of 597,000 adults, and numeracy skills of 390,000 adults, over the next three years. This will be backed by a further £3.9 billion in Government funding between 2007/08 and 2010/11. The Government's long term ambition is for 95 per cent of adults to have functional literacy and numeracy skills, up from 85 per cent and 79 per cent respectively in 2005.

6. The Skills for Life National Needs and Impact Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and IT skills, published in October 2003, estimated that in England, 5.2 million adults aged 16-65 have literacy levels below Level 1 (broadly equivalent in difficulty to an English GCSE at grades D-G), and 6.8 million have numeracy skills below Entry Level 3 (the level expected of 11 year olds). The full survey is available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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