

Sport

Life saver: Grandmother finds new way of beating health problems

Sheila gets first kick boxing belt – age 63

By Iwan Davies

A NEWPORT grandmother says she owes her life to kickboxing after taking up the sport has helped her combat serious health problems.

And a proud Sheila English, 63, from Ringland, has just achieved her first belt – a yellow one – after putting in the hours at the gym.

It was on doctor's orders that the grandmother-of-three decided to enroll in kickboxing classes.

Mrs English was overweight and had high blood pressure.

Her lifestyle had to change drastically from the stark warning from her GP. At 5ft 3in and 16 stone, she was, by her own admission "very unfit".

And then fate played its part in helping turn her life around.

With the doctor's words ringing in her ears, she just happened to be passing Maindee's Martial Arts and Fitness Centre.

"I wondered to myself if they took on old farts there as I was making my way to the bus stop on the way home," she said.

"I decided to go and enrolled in cardio classes which were great before joining kickboxing classes.

"I was afraid people would laugh at me but it couldn't have been more different and everyone was so welcoming. People laugh with you, not at you."

The former soldier who spent two years in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers hadn't done much exercise since her basic training.

"Fitness and I didn't really get on," she admitted. "But now I train five times a week and I really think it's saved my life."

The blood pressure has gone



SUPERGRAN: Sheila English in action at her gym

down and Mrs English has shed three stone in as many years.

She is under the instruction of Master Gary Gassor, a seventh degree black belt, who is delighted with his pupil's progress: "Many people start training but all for dif-

ferent reasons - some to get fit, some to enter competitions and some to make friends and socialise - it's not just the fighting side.

"Kickboxing appeals to all ages, from children as young as six through to adults in their sixties.

"Sheila is an inspiration to others as she is very determined and focused on her training and is showing great progress."

Mrs English is very determined to carry on with her kickboxing training adding: "I really hope to

reach the next belt and I know with the support of my friends I've made, I'll make it!"

For a full list of classes held at the Martial Arts and Fitness Centre you can visit mafcmar-tialarts.com or call 01633 222260.

New rules will ruin the game, I swear

IT'S football Jim, but not as we know it – and it's causing quite a stir among followers of the game in Gwent.

This column has already had one pop at the fresh clamp-down on foul and abusive language introduced as part of the Respect for Refs campaign – but enough is enough now.

I went to watch a game last Saturday, but ended up watching something completely different because of the new guideline – plus the previously-issued one which will surely eventually lead to the sport becoming non-contact!

And while the match referee did his best not to baffle people with some of his decisions, a

lot of these new rules are left open to an individual match official to interpret – and there lies the problem.

Some refs give free kicks for incidents which others would ignore and what we have at the moment is referees who are more important than the players.

Now we have this scenario: if a referee has interpreted the rules in such way which will spoil the match, it matters not what the level of skill is on show – and that can not be right.

The game I refer to produced seven yellows and three red cards – and I swear there wasn't a malicious foul in the

Terry Daley's Gwent football diary

entire 90 minutes.

In his defence, this particular referee gave fair warning to all players that one more swear word would lead to a sending off.

But it seems to everyone else involved – players, managers, club officials and even spectators (of both sexes) - that this is simply Big Brother flexing his muscles to show off to those in the pc brigade.

I have never enjoyed a game off football less before and some decent people have indicated to me that should the game continue in this fashion,

then they'll seek new entertainment elsewhere.

So if it's happening at grassroots football in Gwent that fans will start to drift away, imagine what will be the outcome if life at the top is reflected in this way.

The passion is being ripped out of the sport, the very heartbeat which we all rely on at kick-off time is slowly being stopped.

First of all we had the thou-shall-not-say-boo-to-a-goalkeeper rule, which quickly spread to all outfield players, then we had the introduction of the new

offside law, which research claims has not yielded a better goal return, and now we have to put up with an edict which wouldn't be difficult to evoke in a comprehensive school playground!

In a very short space of the time, those at world-governing body FIFA and their European counterparts at UEFA have managed to turn the beautiful game into an ugly eye-sore.

Be afraid, be very afraid!

● I have been accused many times of ignoring the grass-roots of local football. Well it doesn't get any more grassroots than under-13s cup football and I'm here to tell you the draw for the preliminary round of the Tesco

Cup, as organised by the Gwent County Football Association.

Chepstow Garden City will host Rockfield Rovers; Abergavenny Thursdays will entertain Pont Red Stars; Rogerstone Rangers will receive Henllys Rangers; Pontymister travel to Pill Juniors; Caldicot Town are at Ebbw Vale Town while Thornwell will receive Crusaders.

All matches will be played on the morning of Saturday, October 4, so if you are planning to watch a senior game in the afternoon, why not pop along to see the stars of the future at a match near you.