

Surf's not up for Olympics

GOVERNMENT sports Minister Richard Caborn visited Cornwall last week to visit sports facilities and build on the excitement of the 2012 successful Olympics bid.

But he had bad news for Newquay's surfers, saying there was no chance the sport would be on the Olympic menu.

Mr Caborn also held a behind closed doors meeting the resort's Surf Capital Steering Group about the regeneration of Newquay through surfing and beach-related sport, and how the group could communicate better with other sporting organisations.

Mr Caborn then met members of the English Surfing Federation on Fistral Beach and watched a surfing demonstration before moving on to the town's leisure centre which has been funded by Sport England.

He was told about the Cornwall Sports Partnership and its coaching development and sports voluntary work in Cornwall.

ESF Director Paul Jeffrey said English surfers currently had no funding from Government and had to pay to travel and take part in surfing competitions.

by PAT NURSE

"It appears that the chances of us getting funding before the year 2012 looks like nil," he said.

"We choose the teams and then find that we have to charge them to represent their country."

"We are in the top three in Europe for both juniors and adults and top ten in the world."

"If we had more funding, we have the ability to be number one."

Mr Caborn said the Government had put £120,000 into surfing and £1.5 million through Active England for the Newquay Fistral Beach programme which had created some 60 jobs.

He said surfing was a long way from becoming an Olympic reality.

"I've also been lobbied by rugby, golf and cricket organisations which also want their sport to be Olympic."

"Surfing is not alone and I have to say there is very little chance of it becoming an Olympic sport at the moment," he said.



ABOVE: Richard Caborn gets some surfing tips on dry land from 17-year-olds Adam Griffiths and Madi Johnson, members of the British Junior Surfing Squad.

LEFT: The Minister for Sport, Richard Caborn, at Newquay Surf Centre, Fistral Beach, with, from left: Tom Crawford, Joanne Hillman, Amy Ward (Private secretary to the Minister) and Tom Butler.

Pictures: Bernard White

