

Wembley mascot role leaves Connor seeing stars and stripes

A YOUNG football fan who's had a lifetime of heart problems was chosen as a mascot for England's game against the USA.

Connor Shaw, eight, from Chorlton, was picked because of his fundraising activities for the British Heart Foundation, which has nominated the mascots.

The youngster who supports Manchester United was due to walk out on the famous Wembley turf in front of 90,000 fans.

His mum Maria Chebrika, said: "He's been looking forward to it for weeks. It's so nice that the British Heart Foundation asked him because they thought he deserved it, and he jumped at the chance. He's really been looking forward to meeting his favourite player Wayne Rooney."

Connor, who lives with his mum and elder brother, Anthony, 18, on Darley Avenue, was born with only half his heart working and has endured 25 operations.

Last year he was given the all-clear by doctors, although he still has to have annual biopsies and regular check-ups.

And to give something back for all the help he has received, Connor and his family - including



Connor Shaw prepares to walk out at Wembley with the USA footballers

dad Terry Shaw - do various fundraising activities for the British Heart Foundation, such as taking part in the annual Salford Quays Jog.

Connor, who goes to St Ambrose School on Princess Road in Chorlton, has also met former England cricket captain Matthew Vaughan on several occasions for charity events, and last summer he took part in the British Transplant Games. For the friend-

ly international game which took place on Wednesday, May 28, Connor donned a USA kit.

Maria said: "He doesn't mind that he's going as a USA mascot rather than an England one, he's just so pleased to be asked to do it."

"He loves football and although he can't play properly yet, because he still has to be careful with his heart, he has a kick-about and he's getting on like a normal little boy."

Frisbee title is up for grabs

A GROUP of Frisbee enthusiasts are organising their first national tournament.

DUFFA - Didsbury Ultimate Frisbee For Amateurs - are looking for more players to take part in the tournament they will host in July.

And although they say the emphasis is on having fun, the game is a world away from the casual throw-about that most people remember from childhood beach holidays.

With teams running the length of a football-sized pitch to throw, catch and employ strategies to score points, the game requires a reasonable level of fitness and a definite competitive streak.

But sportsmanship is a must too, as games don't have a referee, leaving players to call their own fouls.

Shelley Heckman and her husband Alan, who live in Hulme, are two of the organisers.

Shelley, 30, said: "It's all about having a laugh as well as trying to win, and it's good exercise too because you're running all over the place."

"But it's important to us a group that we're open for anyone to come along and have a go. And the social aspect's good too, because after we've played we all go off to the pub."

DUFFA started a year ago when Shelley - a manager for a local authorities organisation - and Alan - who works with a volunteering agency - began playing Frisbee casually with friends in Didsbury Park. They decided to start



Two players enjoy a warm up game in Didsbury Park

their own club, and contacted other Frisbee fans through the facebook website.

They take their rules from the international game of 'ultimate' which was started by a group of hippies in the USA in the 1960s - leading to the spirit of sportsmanship such as one side cheering when their opponents score.

The group play matches on Thursday evenings and Sunday evenings in Didsbury Park and hold warm up sessions on Sundays at 4.30pm.

Games are played in teams of seven per side, with any number of substitutes allowed. Teams are

made up of men and women.

DUFFA is holding its first tournament on the weekend of July 26 and 27, and they are looking for individuals over the age of 18 to take part. The tournament will be held at Burnage Rugby Club, at Varley Park off Battersea Road, Heaton Mersey.

Entrance is £16, which includes camping, a t-shirt, and prizes for the finalists and the Most Valuable Player on each team. DUFFA is also looking for sponsorship to cover costs. For more information, go to www.duffa.org or email info@duffa.org.

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