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Winter Care of Feet for Children

The cold and damp of winter can sometimes seem to last forever and this is the time for intensive field sports, rugby, hockey, football etc.

Aside from the tired legs and cold parents on the sidelines a few tips to consider about your child's feet over winter.

Chilblains

Children are more prone to chilblains than adults. Sore, irritated patches of skin that have got too cold and thawed out too fast cause a disruption of the blood vessels near the skin and result in pain. They can blister and be a really sore. Prevention, as with most things, is better than cure. So ensure your child wears good, warm socks and well fitted shoes. If they get wet feet; dry them thoroughly with a towel and rub in some moisturising foot cream. Both these actions will help to return blood flow to the frozen toes. Put them into clean dry socks and shoes. Do not be tempted to warm up digits too fast as that is when the chilblains start. If they do occur, keep them covered with a dry sterile dressing and use antiseptic cream sparingly if needed.

Heel pain

A common condition that increases during the wet winter months as children run up and down wet fields. As the ground is soggy the heels sink into the ground and the calf muscles have to work harder to get the heel back up again. In some cases, especially in children with a tendency to flatfeet, this causes heel pain. This is because the child's heel bone is not yet fully formed and has across the middle an area of growth called the growth plate (these close when we reach adulthood). The growth plate can become sore and tender, making running and activities painful. See your podiatrist for a full assessment. If this condition is diagnosed (it is called Severs) a calf muscle stretching programme and simple insoles can help considerably.

Fashion shoes

65% of children's shoes are now not fitted by a trained shoe fitter at the time of purchase. Today's parents are more likely to fit their child with shoes themselves; so do take the time to get your child's foot measured and take care in choosing the styles of shoes. Currently there are increasing problems with little girls wearing higher heels. As their toes and front of the feet are still very soft and vulnerable to damage; this can lead to bone damage, ingrowing toe nails and other foot related problems. Remember that a child's foot does not stop growing until 18 to 20 years – a long time to be careful about the shoes they wear.

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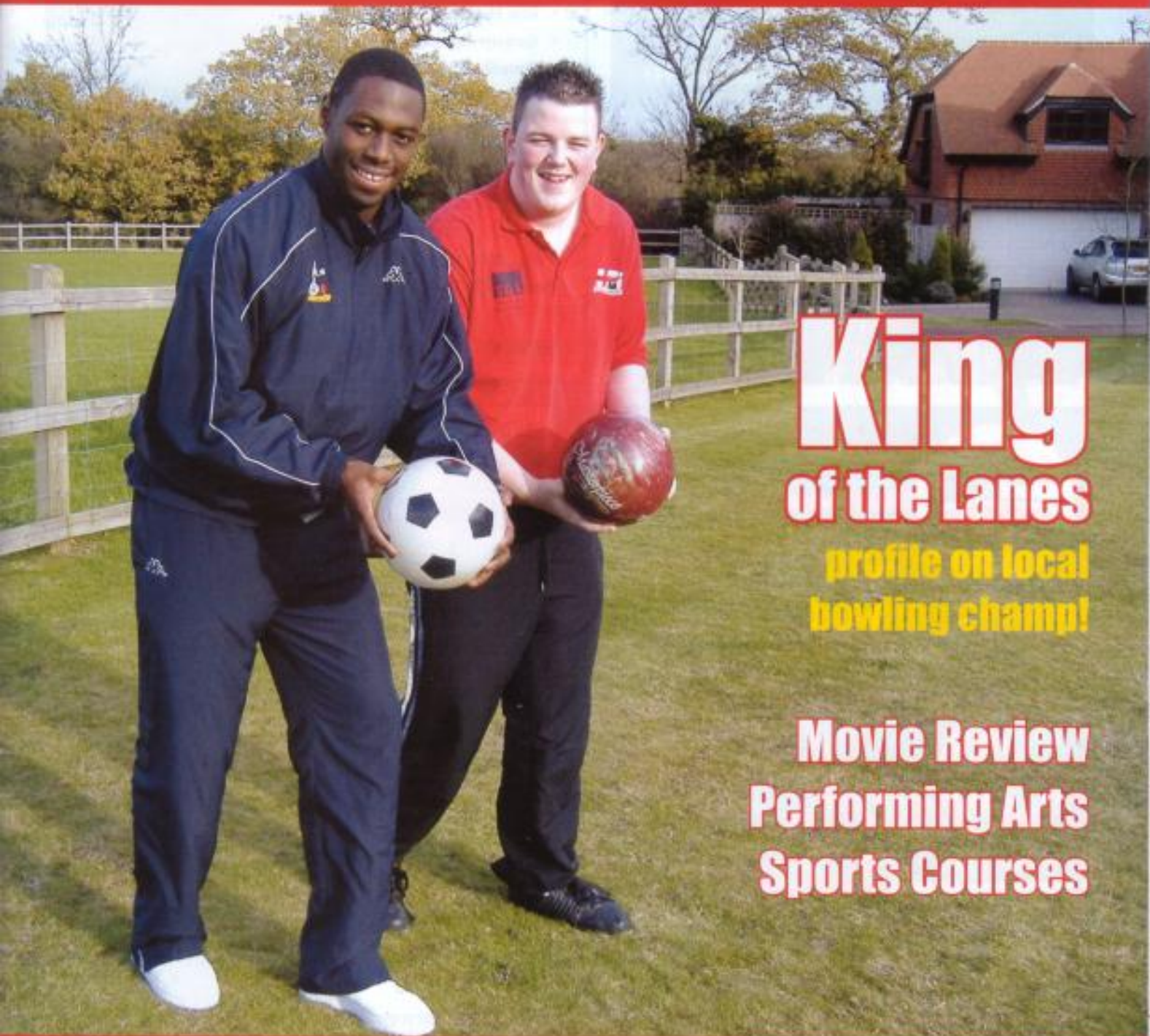
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