

Report of the Chief Executive – Season 2019/2020

I have much pleasure in submitting the Report for Season 2019/2020: without doubt the past Season was one of the most difficult ever for all football participants.

In my last Report I made mention of the building of a meeting room at the end of the Specsavers County Ground. This has now been constructed and is used constantly for meetings, Education Courses and by Pro Direct Soccer Academy each week day: in addition to this the toilet facilities have been totally revamped and we are very proud of our facilities.

As always I will continue my report under a number of headings:

Club Football

Unfortunately, grassroots football was brought to a halt when the Government placed the country in lockdown during March 2020 and it did not resume for the remainder of the Season. The recommendations from The Football Association were that Leagues should be declared null and void with no promotion and relegation. Leagues sanctioned by the Dorset County Football Association followed this advice although local leagues were able to adjust the composition of Divisions at their Annual General Meetings.

Steps 1 and 2 of the National League System did complete their Season and our congratulations go to Weymouth on their promotion from Step 2 to Step 1: we wish them every success for Season 2020/2021.

The only Dorset County Cup Competition that was played to its conclusion was the Dorset Senior Cup: this was won by Weymouth, who beat Dorchester Town by 4 goals to 2 in a very exciting match.

Representative Football

Dorset County FA planned to operate two representative teams, but unfortunately it was necessary to withdraw the Women's Team from the Championship. The U16 Team also had a very disappointing campaign losing the first three matches against Somerset, Cornwall and Berks & Bucks. They drew away in Gloucestershire but unfortunately the Competition could not be concluded owing to the pandemic.

Discipline

During the 2019/2020 Season 2142 Yellow Cards were administered compared with 3080 the previous season: 191 Red Cards were shown compared with 350 during Season 2018/2019. As no competitive football was played after mid March the numbers are pro rata comparable.

Safeguarding

During the Season the Dorset FA went through the Independent Assessment process, measuring against the 74 standards in order to meet The FA's CFA Safeguarding Operating Standard. Dorset FA have continually demonstrated our firm commitment to safeguarding and were the first County FA to meet the standard, we remain the only County to achieve a pass in the first assessment. Several areas of strength were recognized, including our dedicated webpage, "Kids Pitch" and the U18 Referee Armband initiative. All Staff, Directors and Council have demonstrated willingness to adopt new practices and work together for the betterment of the game. Dorset FA recognize our collective responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk across all football in Dorset, which is paramount in ensuring progress is made in understanding, embedding and delivering safeguarding.

Development and Coaching

Despite the difficulties our Development and Coaching activities continued to flourish. Delivery stopped in March 2020 but prior to this 15 Level 1 Courses and three Level 2 Courses were completed. In addition to this 5 Standalone FA Safeguarding Workshops were organized and 15 Introduction to First Aid in Football Courses held.

The FA Girls' Advanced Coaching Centre has continued to flourish and I am delighted to report that Lucy White was called up by the FA to attend an England Under 15's training camp: she has now secured a place at Brighton Regional Talent Camp for Season 2019/2020.

Our performance against our NGS targets are detailed below:

	Target	Actual	% Achieved
Male affiliated and recreational players	14,616	14,443	98.8
Female affiliated and rec players	1,605	1,627	101
Disability affiliated and rec players	340	340	100
FA Charter Standard Youth Teams	98%	96.36%	96.36%
FA Charter Standard Adult Teams	50%	65.05%	130%
Safeguarding Operating Standard	Passed at first attempt		
Affiliated Player Registration Coverage	70%	91.37%	131%
Youth Teams with a qualified coach	98%	97.89%	97.89%
Grass Pitches Improved	31	29	93.5%

Unfortunately, the end of season events that we normally run including the Mini Soccer Festival and our Awards Evening were all postponed.

Funding

I am delighted to report that many Dorset Clubs have taken advantage of the various small grants available from The Football Foundation especially the Cov-19 Support Grants. 11 clubs operating at Step 5 or above of the National League System and Step 6 and above of the Women's Pyramid received a total of £73,500 from the Matchday Support Fund, whilst 27 Clubs collectively received £57,000 from the Pitch Preparation Fund. A grant of £500 was available from the Club Preparation Fund and 31 clubs received this grant making a total of £15,500 received by Dorset Clubs.

Dexter Sports Youth FC, Lytchett Matravers FC and Wool United FC received a total of £116,524 for enhanced grass pitch maintenance whilst small grants totally £62,428, mainly for goalposts, were received by 19 clubs.

Gillingham Town FC received a grant of £10,000 towards their floodlights.

To date for the 2020 submission window a total of £334,952 has been accessed by Dorset Clubs.

Referees'

The number of registered referees' in Dorset was 175 which included 6 female referees; this exceeded our target.

Referee promotions for current season

Promoted to Level 4	1
Promoted to Level 5	8
Promoted to Level 6	8

Our congratulations go to our team of officials who were selected for the Dorset Senior Cup Final: Mike Begley, Simon Mitcham, Jonny Pike and Tom Holden. Mike was selected as the reserve assistant referee for the National Play Off Final at Wembley, Notts County v Harrogate Town. He completed a great season gaining promotion to the Football League list of assistant referees.

Tom Holden was the reserve assistant referee at the Conference South Play Off Final.

Lewis Ward, Mike O'Donovan and Matthew Peart have been nominated to join the FA Core programme.

The Board of Directors has again given great support to the Company with Directors having specific responsibility for Committees' and other areas of the Business. Throughout Season 2019/2020 the Directors have been looking at a new Governance Structure which will enable us to comply with the FA Governance Code. The Articles being presented at this Annual General Meeting reflect the changes to our structure.

Since lockdown the Directors have worked diligently to monitor the finances of the Association with the losses being incurred owing to the shut down of the Specsavers County Ground, no courses operating, no discipline income and the reduction in income from The Football Association. We have worked towards a break even budget for Season 2020/2021 provided that we do not have a further lockdown. Our thanks go to our Finance Director for leading the forward look.

During the lock down the Dorset County Football Association operated with a workforce of four with other staff being furloughed. Unfortunately, a reduction in funding from the Football Association has seen two members of staff being made redundant. On behalf of the Company I would like to thank both Alex Rush Fear and Grant Smith for their hard work whilst employed by Dorset FA and to wish them every success for the future.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors, under the Chairmanship of Spencer Miles, for their support during a very difficult Season.

Thank you to all Clubs who have worked very hard to commence their competition programme, Season 2020/2021. The work undertaken by volunteers has increased considerably owing to the risk assessments needed for the Return to Football: your work as volunteers is very much appreciated.

S A Hough
Chief Executive