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THE SOLDIERS' GAME

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARMY FA
ISSUE 5 - MARCH 2010



COVER STORY:

Help for Heroes game at Wembley

ALSO FEATURING:

The day we really did 'Live the Dream'

Taking penalty kicks under pressure

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COUNTY STAFF

Secretary

Maj WTE Thomson
billy.thomson@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 348571
Tel: (Mil) 94222 3571

Deputy Secretary and Referees Secretary

Mr Graham Brookland
graham.brookland@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 348574
Tel: (ATN) 94222 3574

Discipline and Registration Secretary

Mrs Sue Clarke
susan.clarke@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 348574
Tel: (ATN) 94222 3574

Coaching and Development Officer

Steve Stone
steve.stone@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 347280
Tel: (ATN) 94222 2280

Coaching and Development Administrator

Gill Jones
gill.jones@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 347962
Tel: (ATN) 94222 2962

Office Administrator

Carol Williamson
carol.williamson@armyfa.com
Tel: (Civil) 01252 347962
Tel: (ATN) 94222 2962

Army Football Association

Ministry of Defence (ASCB)
Clayton Barracks
Thornhill Road
Aldershot
Hampshire
GU11 2BG
Fax: 01252 348630

www.armyfa.com



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THE ARMY FA WELCOME

Welcome to the fifth edition of The Soldiers' Game. We are delighted that the magazine is proving to be popular with such a wide spread distribution.

The Heroes Cup, played at Reading Football Club, proved to be a popular initiative raising thousands of pounds for 'Help for Heroes'. Teams included international celebrities and personnel from the three Armed Services. We also supplied players to compete in a mixed Army/RAF side versus the Royal Navy at Wembley, in November in aid of the Bobby Moore Cancer Fund (see page 8). In addition to raising awareness and funds for another excellent charity, it also gave those soldiers involved the chance of a lifetime to participate either as a player, coach or match official.

Despite the inclement weather this season we are up-to-date with the Major and Minor Units cup competitions with both finals being played at the Aldershot Military Stadium in April. At the time of writing both Men and Womens teams are challenging for The Southern Counties Cup and South and West Counties Cup. Preparations for their Inter Services competitions are now underway.

Refereeing numbers have increased this season and we have a healthy number of officials who are currently looking to complete their promotion packages. It is an honour to note that we have match officials in the Premier League, Football League and Conference, in addition we have had appointments in The FA Cup fifth round and FA Vase quarter finals.

Coaching remains productive and rewarding. We continue to attract excellent numbers in attendance, which is an indication of the high standards maintained by our FDO, Steve Stone.

Sponsorship is an important factor in the running of the Army FA and we are grateful for the continued support of Serco, Towergate Wilson, Trinity Insurance, Fujitsu and UMBRO.

Please also note that our new website is now live and can be viewed at www.armyfa.com

Billy Thomson

Major (Retd) W T E Thomson
Secretary, Army Football Association

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TAKING PENALTY KICKS UNDER

By Dr Matt Pain and Anna Stodter

Last summer, England's Under-21 side achieved the unprecedented - winning a penalty shoot-out in a major competition.

This was no 'lottery win'. Stuart Pearce, who had been on FA psychology courses - had his players practising for two years, using crowds to increase pressure, and analysing preferences and success rates for all 23 squad members, including goalkeeper Joe Hart, who scored in the victory against Sweden.

These hugely pressurised situations provide a clear demonstration of how the mind influences performance. Even the most skilled players in the world often appear unable to perform the relatively simple task of beating the goalkeeper from 12 yards, and yet, many players and managers still see shoot-outs as a lottery, with no agreed strategy to ensure success.

Famous misses, such as Roberto Baggio's 1994 World Cup-losing penalty, are a high-profile example of 'choking under pressure', when, despite their best efforts, players cannot perform a well-learned skill under intense pressure and anxiety.

Sport psychologists have claimed that anxious performers in these situations direct

their attention inwards, trying to consciously control the components of the skill. In other words, this 'conscious processing hypothesis' states that thinking too much about how to perform the shot causes a breakdown in automatic performance.

Instead of undertaking the skill naturally, in an expert fashion, players go back to a step-by-step, beginner stage of performance.

Support for this idea comes mainly from studies in golf. Shouting random letters of the alphabet while putting under anxiety appears to improve performance compared to using technique-focused coaching points. It seems that thinking up random letters helps by preventing golfers from thinking too much about how to perform the skill.

You might think then that we could help players avoid choking by encouraging them not to think about how exactly to execute the skill, to just let it happen. The problem with this is that, under extreme pressure, negative thoughts often rush in to fill a blank mind. So, a common method used for some years in applied sport psychology has been to use simple task cues, which help players focus on the specific actions and elements needed to carry out skills.

In football, for instance, instructional cues (such as "focus on the target") have been found to improve passing skills and shooting performance.

The key seems to be in choosing cues that help players keep task-focused but don't lead to over analysis of the technique. This gives a point of focus, blocking out negative and distracting thoughts, while also preventing players thinking about the skill in a very detailed, step-by-step way.

Indeed, process goals relating to specific movements of dribbling (such as "keep low with knees bent") seem to harm performance under pressure, while more strategic goals about the positioning of the ball in relation to the player, or the player's position (such as "keep the body over the ball") do not.

Our study was designed to test this argument, and find out whether performance differs when players think about skill execution at a higher, more general level, versus at a step-by-step, specific level.

Explaining the psychology of taking penalty kicks under anxiety in this way is crucial in creating useful strategies to help players cope when the pressure is on.

Thirty one experienced male and female players took penalty kicks in practice low-anxiety, and competitive high-anxiety sessions. The latter involved league tables of performance, cash prizes, and an audience, including sport science judges, to increase pressure. In both sessions, players took five penalties in three blocks:

- As they normally would, with no extra strategies.
- While using swing-thought cue words, for example 'smooth' and 'balance'. These related to general technique as a whole.
- While focusing on coaching-point cue words, targeting specific parts of technique, for instance 'head down', 'follow-through' and 'direction'.

These cue words, chosen by the players themselves, were mentally repeated from ball placement up to the point of contact. They can be seen in box one.

Performance was measured using the scoring system shown in box two. Participants faced goalkeepers matched in ability to themselves and knew they could get more points for hitting target areas, but were not aware of the actual scores.

Box 1: Swing thought and coaching point cue words.

SWING THOUGHTS

Cue word	What to focus on
Smooth	Even, easy movements
Easy	Effortless technique
Balance	Aware of balance, centre of gravity
Rhythm	Natural rhythm of movement, back and forth
Tempo	Rate of motion, fast versus slow

COACHING POINTS

Cue word	What to focus on
Head	Head down and over ball
Centre	Strike through centre of ball
Follow-through	Big, fast follow through
Direction	Follow through in direction you want shot to go
Aim	Aim with non-kicking foot

PRESSURE – THINK ABOUT IT!

RESULTS

Firstly, and importantly, players reported feeling significantly more anxiety in the second session, evidence that changing situational pressure successfully made players anxious. Average penalty performance scores, shown in box three, seemed to suggest that players did best overall without the use of cue words.

However, when players did not use cue words, their performance got worse under pressure, something that didn't happen when using coaching points or swing thoughts. With the use of these, players performed equally well under pressure as they did in practice situations, and there was no difference in performance of swing-thought and coaching-point penalties.

The results provide no evidence to support the idea that different levels of conscious processing have different effects on performance. Instead, patterns support a rival attention-based explanation of how anxiety affects performance.

It appears that cue words are a little distracting or difficult to use in initial practice settings. Without anxiety, players can quite easily concentrate on the easier single task of taking a penalty without interference from cue words or anxious thoughts. When the pressure is on and anxiety increases, players can get distracted by anxious thoughts and irrelevant information.

For example, they might be worrying about the consequences of missing or paying undue attention to opposition fans, using up mental resources vital for the task at hand. In this situation, cue words appear to help by

providing a task focus, keeping the player's mind focused on the skill. Processing the cue word also leaves less mental space for distracting or unhelpful thoughts to interfere with performance.

For players and coaches, these results show that cue words relating to the task or skill of taking a penalty are helpful under pressure. Carefully selected and well-learned cue words that address either part of or capture the whole technique should keep the players' mind on the job and not wandering or worrying, which harms performance.

Like the words used in this study, they should be short and simple, to avoid over-using mental resources. Worth noting is the suggestion that concentrating on things outside the player, in the environment, rather than an internal, thought- or body-related focus prevents any harmful conscious processing.

Two of the coaching points involved focusing on the ball, which could have lessened any negative effect of 'specific' processing.

An example of a simple, task-appropriate and externally focused cue word could be 'net', used to direct attention towards hitting the inside of the goal-side netting. Once chosen, the key is to repeat this instruction mentally and not change your mind. Of course, some expert penalty-takers maintain an external focus on the goalkeeper and use the dive as a cue. Under extreme pressure, however, this strategy can be risky as it involves a lot of mental work and the keeper may not move.

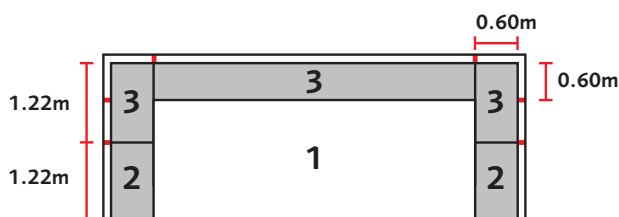
COACHING IMPLICATIONS

- Practise penalty kicks under pressure. Bring in a crowd, ask spectators to stay after matches. Recreating shoot-out situations, like walking from the centre circle and waiting for the referee's whistle, will allow players to get used to pressure, test different strategies and give the coach an idea of how they react.
- Run competitions with league tables and prizes to add pressure and systematically identify the best penalty-takers. Without this kind of knowledge, Joe Hart's penalty abilities may have remained unexploited for England.
- Emphasise concentration on the task at hand, and work with players to create and select cue words relating to the process. These words should be simple and possibly externally focused.
- Different cue words work best for different players. They will need to experiment and practise to find the most effective strategies for them.

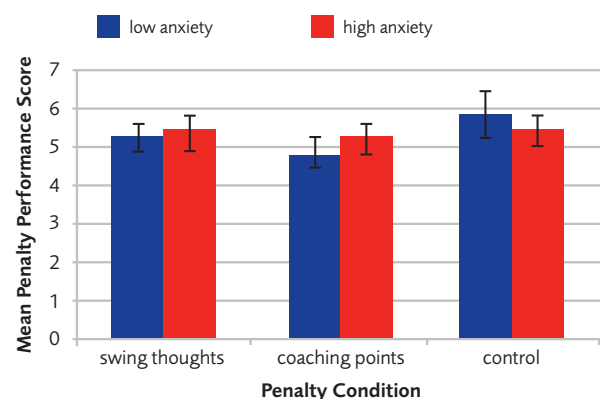
Dr Matt Pain (CPsychol) works full-time as a sport psychologist for the Football Association and Loughborough University. His work incorporates research, coach education, and working with England's various squads. Read more about sport psychology and football at <http://www.staff.lboro.ac.uk/~psmap2/index.html>

Anna Stodter, MSc, works as an applied sport psychologist in football.

Box 2: Scoring system. The number of points available for hitting each target area (shaded) with the ball is shown, as well as the measurements of each area. The boundaries of the target areas were indicated to players using red markers on the goal frame in the positions shown below.



Box 3: Chart of average penalty performance scores.



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SOUTH AFRICA HERE WE COME

ARMY PHYSICAL TRAINING CORPS SETTING OUT ON COACHING TOUR TO IMPOVERISHED TOWNSHIPS

The Army Physical Training Corps (APTC), which was formed largely because of poor fitness standards of soldiers during the Crimean War, has arranged a number of spectacular events to celebrate its 150th anniversary this year.

These include sports tours to Florida and Australia, gymnastics displays at the Edinburgh Tattoo, cadet adventurous training expeditions and, the jewel in the crown, a football coaching tour to impoverished townships in Durban, South Africa.

The date of the tour has been set with the World Cup in mind – the APTC travel on 24 April and return on 10 May.

Organiser Capt Lee Dyson has already been out to recce the coaching areas and meet the Sports and Recreation Department from the Durban Municipality. Lee went to South Africa in 2004 to run a similar tour, but with the focus on playing local teams. This time the focus is firmly on coaching in the impoverished townships.

In addition, the APTC felt strongly about leaving a lasting legacy behind and, as such, would like to leave the townships with enough equipment and materials to enable them to continue coaching when they have left.

The coaching will be broken down into the following areas:

- Basic football coaching.
- Train the trainer – to enable the more senior boys to run the coaching.
- Lifeskills – based around the core values of loyalty, courage, respect for others, self-discipline, honesty and integrity.

Twenty members of the APTC will be conducting 10 coaching clinics with up to 100 children per clinic. The ages will vary from 12 to 20. The impoverished townships are Wentworth and Amaoti, both of which suffer all forms of social problems – high levels of unemployment, crime, drugs and extremely poor housing conditions, as well



APTCs presenting coaching equipment to local school in Durban.



Coaching clinic for impoverished children in Durban.

as all the other problems associated with poor townships in South Africa.

A number of Premier League clubs (Man United, Arsenal, Everton) and Football League clubs have made kit donations to be handed out in the townships. These have

been in the form of old strips, balls, cones and football boots. The FA will also donate kit and equipment.

If you would like any further information or would like to make a donation, please contact Capt Dyson on 01252 347110.

IN ADDITION, THE APTC FELT STRONGLY ABOUT LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY BEHIND AND, AS SUCH, WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THE TOWNSHIPS WITH ENOUGH EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS TO ENABLE THEM TO CONTINUE COACHING WHEN THEY HAVE LEFT.

THE DAY WE REALLY DID 'LIVE THE DREAM'

CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH AT WEMBLEY STADIUM, MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2009

**BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL
MICK COTTON MBE AGC (SPS)**

In early October, I received an invitation to lead a joint Army and Royal Air Force football team to play the Royal Navy at Wembley in aid of the Bobby Moore Fund.

My immediate thought was to go for a run and prove my fitness. I did, but soon realised that I should stick to the management side and therefore began the privileged task of selecting and preparing a joint team to grace the hallowed turf at Wembley Stadium.

To ensure a true joint approach to the game, I was grateful that Warrant Officer Keith Christie RAF accepted the offer to be team manager. We were soon joined by a coach from each Service, with Warrant Officer Dean Boughen RSIGNALS volunteering his experience and, to complete the management team, Major Stacy McQueeney RAMC agreed to be the team's physiotherapist.

The difficult part was still to come, selecting nine Army players (to form half the squad) from a cast of thousands, of which one must be under-23, one under-19 and one a veteran. After considerable deliberation with various Army coaches and the Army Football Association, as well as 'generous offers' from some players, the playing side consisted of the following personnel:

SSgt Kev Haley - 42 Engr Regt (GEO)
Cpl Keith Emmerson - ATC Pirbright
Bdr Christian Holliday - 4 Regt RA
Cpl Paul Douglass - 4 GS Med Regt RAMC
Cpl Danny Bemrose - HQ ARRC
Cpl Carl Boyd - 1 RRF
LCpl Tony Lannan - KRH
LCpl Jason Bates - 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Nigel Wiscombe (ex APTC) - 42 Engr Regt (GEO)

With the fierce and respectful rivalry between our two Services during the Inter-Service Championships, it was imperative to have a training session the day before the game, with the idea of at least passing the ball to one another and, with luck, formulating a game plan understood by all of the players.

We all met at RAF Uxbridge, with its close proximity to Wembley Stadium, on the Sunday and, as is the norm in the changing room, the players positioned themselves with their tribal instincts. The manager and coaches talking tactics was an education for all involved, the suggested RAF formation was too 'delicate' for the Army players to understand and the look on the RAF players when Dean Boughen suggested a 4-2-4 formation was a sight to behold.



Joint Army and Royal Air Force Team.

The training session under floodlights became a defence and attack exercise, with everyone volunteering to take free-kicks around the box in case the opportunity arose 24 hours later. I am not sure how the players prepared that night for the biggest game of their lives, but I do know that the management team retired to the mess for a nightcap and spent nearly four hours working out tactics - with the occasional top-up.

With a 1400 hours kick-off, the team coach set off around midday - minus a television crew, which I had thought was the norm for cup final day teams - for the short journey to the ground. As the now famous arch came into view, the excitement aboard was clearly evident.

Even without motorcycle outriders, we made it to the stadium and, as we drove down Wembley Way and disappeared into the complex, we knew we had arrived at our holy grail. It was one of the few military coach journeys I had been on without an infamous 'haverbag'.

Walking into the changing rooms was like entering a five-star hotel and, once the players had found their lockers, the moment arrived when we walked out to take a look at the pitch and the magnificent stadium. It was a sight to behold, nothing compared to the 'Little Wembley' pitch at Hobart Barracks in Detmold.

As you would expect, everybody had a photo shoot for about 20 minutes, and the surge on the local mobile telephone network must have been considerable.

I have never been in a changing room where so many 'staff' wanted to say a few words before a game and, once the coach driver had rounded off with his words of wisdom, we lined up in the tunnel for what seemed an eternity.

David Elleray, who was officiating at Wembley for the 15th time, then gave the signal and, as we came into view of the 500 spectators, we all realised that we were at last living the dream. Being an Ipswich Town fan, I thought it would never happen.

The presentation party comprised, among others, Sir Trevor Brooking, Patron of the Bobby Moore Fund as well as the Football Association's Director of Football Development, and Stephanie Moore, who founded the Bobby Moore Fund in 1993 to honour her husband's memory and to use his iconic status to save lives.

The game itself was a closely-fought affair, with two totally committed teams, neither players nor management wanting the game to end.

The result was a 4-3 victory for the joint Army and Royal Air Force team and every player and member of the management team played his part - a true team effort. Are we the only team with a 100 per cent record at Wembley?

The after-match reception in the stadium was attended by all spectators, players and officials and the unanimous verdict was that the occasion was a great success. A large sum of money was raised, including £150 from every member of the joint team through sponsorship and personal contribution.

Leaving the stadium and heading back onto the North Circular was a reality check, but no one cared - we had the trophy.

In true military fashion, I was missing four match footballs after the game and, despite my best diplomatic skills to find them, I accept that they are sitting in a trophy cabinet in someone's home. That said, I know who you are. The look on your face gave you away. Your secret is safe with me.

After 36 years of Army service, this has to be one of the most memorable sporting occasions of my career, and I would like to thank all the players and management of both teams and The Football Association for making it so.

The Bobby Moore Fund has benefited both from a financial perspective and from awareness of its aim. All those involved with this particular match have now 'lived the dream'.



FA NEWS

We've made a flying start

FA's new National Game Strategy is making huge strides already for grassroots football – but there's still plenty to do

Less than two years in and The FA's £200m National Game Strategy, one of the most ambitious and far-reaching projects ever undertaken in any sport, is already reaping huge dividends for grassroots football.

Thousands of new teams have been created, more and more children and young people are flocking to the game, and real progress has been made in football for the disabled. More coaches and referees are being better trained, clubs and leagues are becoming stronger, safer, more responsible and more community-orientated, and on-field behaviour is improving by the day.

Put simply, more people are playing football to a higher standard in a better environment than ever before.

The four-year strategy got under way in March 2008 after a massive consultation exercise, involving more than 37,000 of you at the heart of the game.

You told us you wanted:

- Poor behaviour to referees and young players addressing as your top two priorities.
- A qualified referee for every game.
- Improved facilities.
- Skills training for young players.
- 1.1m five to 15-year-olds wanted to know how to join a club.
- Equality across football.
- Support at every level, from Conference to Sunday league.
- More direct communication with The FA.

Four clear goals were adopted:

- To grow and retain participation.
- To raise standards and address abusive behaviour.
- To develop better players.
- To run the game effectively.

To make it all work, two 'key enablers' were agreed:

- A skilled workforce.
- Improved facilities.

The FA then put in place a national and regional team focused on delivering 17 key targets to achieve these overall goals. And the County Football Associations also received FA investment to deliver support where it is most needed – on the ground in your community.

The 17 key targets are measured quarterly, locally and nationally, as part of a scoreboard. This allows us to react quickly to areas of concern and understand which areas of the game are the biggest priorities.

So how are we getting on?

It was an enormous undertaking – we are investing £200m over the four years – but, as we approach the half-way point, there's no doubt progress against key objectives is encouraging. Just look at what has been achieved so far:

GOAL 1: Participation

4,212 new Mini-Soccer teams have been created.

3,213 young people have joined club teams across the UK through The FA Club Links programme.

13 county disability leagues have been established.

Strategic alliances have been developed with British Colleges Sport and British Universities and Colleges Sport to increase participation across education.

20 Focus Colleges and Universities are now hubs of football development.

A powerful men's 11-a-side recruitment campaign has been encouraging lapsed players to join local teams.

GOAL 2: Raising standards and addressing abusive behaviour

The FA **Respect** programme has been introduced at all levels, from the professional game to Mini-Soccer, with 570 leagues already signed up as **Respect** leagues.

A paid welfare officer has been funded at each of 46 County FAs to support safeguarding children measures.

11,500 youth league and club welfare officers have been CRB-checked, appointed and trained in safeguarding children.

A new FA Charter Standard League award has been introduced.

- The FA Charter Standard Club programme has been reviewed, and we've re-launched criteria to ensure clubs continue to meet high standards.

Case study 1: Participation

'The best thing that has happened to school football'

An innovative new nine-a-side school-club link league has proved inspirational in uniting a previously disjointed community in South Bristol.

It was introduced by Somerset County FA after being created by an action group involving local schools, Charter Standard Clubs, the local authority and the School Sports Partnership. Sue Jay, a teacher at Christ the King School, Knowle, Bristol, said: "The 9v9 school-club link league is the best thing that has happened to school football. This provides us with a hassle-free solution to finding extended safe and fun opportunities for our children to enjoy and achieve.

"The project will also provide our teachers, teaching assistants, parental volunteers and local young people with necessary training and support to ensure that this activity continues for years to come."

Two County FAs have achieved the Foundation level of the National Standards for Equality – Middlesex and West Riding. Eight others have set up equality advisory groups.

GOAL 3: To develop better players

Vital funding has been extended into The FA Skills Programme through increased contributions from Tesco and Sport England.

Amazingly, more than one million children have now been trained through the Skills Programme. That landmark was reached in August 2009 – one year ahead of schedule.

The FA Youth Award has been launched, with nearly 2,000 candidates completing the first module. A second module was introduced late in the season.

32,000 coaches have now qualified at Level 1, 6,000 at Level 2 and 1,100 at Level 3 through The FA's education arm, FA Learning.

200 free in-service events have been run through the regional team for coaches working in FA Charter Standard Clubs.



Case study 2: Raising standards

Pioneering boys' league shows how it's done

Hull Boys' Sunday Football League has been a pioneer in the development of The FA's Charter Standard programme, becoming the first FA Charter Standard League in the country. By working with clubs and volunteers, it has helped provide a high-quality, safe and enjoyable football experience.

League chairman Les Fussey said: "I am delighted the HBSFL are the first in the country to achieve this award, which is in recognition of the forward thinking we have tried to bring to soccer in this area.

"This award is about us achieving high standards in providing safer, more enjoyable soccer for boys and girls at a younger age through bringing a much-needed emphasis on respect on and off the field. It's also about opening the doors for opportunities for clubs and teams through the excellent development team at the East Riding County FA. We have to thank them for their hard work in helping us achieving this award."



GOAL 4: Running the game

50 County FAs have received investment after developing and delivering against local area plans linked into the over-arching strategy.

- Match-based discipline procedures have been extended to Step 7 of the National League System for 2009-10 after successful implementation at Steps 5 and 6.

Administration grants topping £650,000 have been handed out as support continues for leagues in Steps 1-7.

A digital communications strategy has been introduced, including a newly re-launched TheFA.com, three monthly grassroots football e-newsletters and direct targeting through social networking (including The FA's men's 11-a-side YouTube channel).

A joint County FA and FA magazine is now being published in 40 areas to communicate with participants and providers.

England and FA Cup matches are being used to promote grassroots messages.

An annual online survey has begun, testing perception of The FA and County FAs.

ENABLER 1: Supporting the workforce

32,000 coaches have qualified at Level 1.

6,000 coaches have qualified at Level 2.

1,100 coaches have qualified at Level 3.

2,000 coaches have completed The FA Youth Award.

A referee development officer has been installed in every County FA.

Each County FA has a **Respect** lead officer and nationally these officers have supported 570 leagues to sign up to **Respect**, as well as offering free referee **Respect** training sessions.

A paid welfare officer has been funded in each of 46 County FAs to support safeguarding children measures.

ENABLER 2: Better facilities

Year One investment has been more than £57m in Football Foundation grants in 162 projects, worth £191m in total project cost.

A further £1.2m of Football Foundation small grants (under £20,000) has been handed out for grassroots projects, worth £4.7m total project cost.

We're on target for £300m total expenditure across 2008-2012. 40 artificial grass pitches (AGP) have been supported through Football Foundation grants.

Case study 3: Developing better players

Refugee boys who just can't wait for skills sessions

A foster parent who brings her adopted refugee boys, Ayo and Ade, both aged six, to The FA Skills Centre at Platt Lane, Moss Side, Manchester, each week described how excited they always are about attending the sessions. Their understanding of the week is through knowing how many more 'sleeps' there are until FA Skills football.

"When I put them to bed every night, they want to know how many more sleeps it is until football again," she says.

When skills coach James Burton asked Ade what he thought about the Skills Centre, he said: "I love it. I love coming here and playing football with new friends."

James himself is delighted with the way the programme is progressing. "Ade and Ayo are just two of over 50 children who regularly attend The FA Tesco Skills Centre at Platt Lane. We are delighted with the effect the centre is having on the surrounding community, particularly with children like Ade and Ayo. Long may it continue."



Where do we go from here?

As you can see, we've achieved plenty, but don't think we're resting on our laurels. We're well aware there's still a lot to be done. These are our major priorities for the rest of the current season:

Goal 1:

To grow and retain participation

Pushing ahead with the £5 million Whole Sport Plan investment in player retention.

Using England's participation in next year's World Cup to drive a player recruitment campaign.

Delivering higher and further education football plans.

Creating 20 new disability centres of excellence and 26 new county disability leagues.

Goal 2:

To raise standards and address abusive behaviour

Increasing support for The FA **Respect** Programme.

Reviewing and improving The FA Charter Standard Club Programme.

Working with the 200 leagues who have committed to achieving The FA Charter Standard League award.

The FA has appointed a National League Development Manager to provide direction, resources and support to CFA teams working with leagues.

Developing a training programme for league personnel within the pyramid, as well as those at grassroots level.

Ensuring more effective reporting and management of safeguarding cases, and piloting information-sharing to develop a closer working partnership in managing cases between The FA and CFAs.



Case study 4: Supporting the workforce

'With such camaraderie, refereeing is a pleasure'

More than 150 entry-level referees have joined up in the North Riding the past 12 months – a sure sign that the County FA there is making great strides in its drive to boost recruitment and retention.

That's a 22 per cent increase year-on-year, made possible by a comprehensive set of measures, including the use of three centres of referee development and an enhanced coaching scheme for new recruits.

Matthew Lindley is one of those to benefit, having qualified as a Level 7 referee in the summer of 2008 after a two-day course at Teesside Athletic. "I have been fortunate enough to participate in some fantastic matches and meet some top officials," he said. "In the North Riding, we are particularly lucky to have a Referees Academy.

Aimed at officials who are new to the game, the academy provides us with the opportunity for forum-based discussion.

"As well as providing additional training, it also gives me the opportunity to talk to other referees, who like me, are just starting out, encountering similar complications and yet tackling them in different and sometimes better ways.

"Another vital asset to new referees is the coaching/mentoring programme, through which an experienced official provides personal guidance and support for one or two less experienced colleagues.

"With such a sense of camaraderie and community, refereeing is a pleasure. There has for me been many highlights - cup finals, games in Premier League stadiums, fantastic hospitality and of, course top-class, fast-paced football."



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**BIDDING NATION
ENGLAND**

News from The FA

Goal 3:

To develop better players

Securing funding to maintain and potentially expand The FA Tesco Skills Programme.

Continuing the coach education plan and the age-appropriate course programme.

Goal 4:

To run the game effectively

Testing to see if match-based discipline can be extended outside the National League System by running a pilot in five leagues (four Saturday and one Sunday) in 2009-10.

Extending the National Game communications plan by improving TheFA.com content and maximising the reach of e-newsletters to stakeholder groups.

Providing an annual report on performance, and implementing a media plan to communicate progress.

Enabler 1:

Skilled workforce

Recruit 3,753 new male and female referees.

Training, development and mentoring of existing referees.

Expanding the Get into Refereeing marketing campaign.

Introducing an FA-licensed coaches programme through FA Learning to continue to develop our coaches.

Focusing on identifying volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Delivering targets in the coaching strategy to increase the number of coaches at all levels from minority ethnic and emerging communities.

Enabler 2:

Facilities

Expanding the Facilities and Investment team to make an even greater impact on grassroots facilities.

Working closely with the Football Foundation to ensure that the highest priority facility needs are addressed wherever possible. Supporting the work of Sport England and other agencies in protecting playing fields. Ensuring delivery of capital investment secured through The FA's Whole Sport Plan.

Working closely with County FAs to support county facility plans. Working closely with leagues and clubs to create sustainable facility plans capable of supporting retention and growth.

Case study 5: Better facilities

How a village club became hub of the community

Things have changed down in rural West Somerset ever since Bishops Lydeard AFC was awarded Football Foundation funding of £430,357 in March 2008.

The FA Standard Charter Standard Community Club received the grant to develop new facilities and become a sporting hub in the community – and the whole area is benefiting.

The re-development included:

- Four dual-gender team changing rooms with showers.
- Two match officials' changing rooms.
- Male, female and wheelchair-accessible toilets.
- Medical room.
- Ramped access.
- Clubroom with kitchen.

The new facility has created huge momentum, which the club has harnessed to develop new relationships in the village and neighbouring community and to deliver sport opportunities to more and more local people.

Plans are already under way for a disability football section, which will be fully inclusive and provide pathways to the emerging county disability football structure, national disability football squads and the Ability Counts Pan-Disability Football League.

Club Chairman Peter Durman said: "It continues to take my breath away when I see so many young people involved so passionately in sport. We are a community club, and this new facility will give us a long-awaited and much-needed home, allowing us to take the next step in our plans to develop football and other sports in our community.

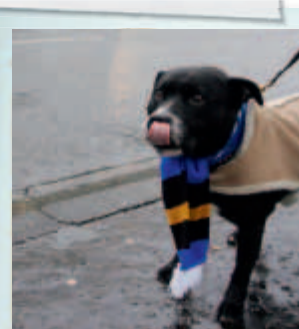
"The club motto is 'Passion and Pride', which we have in abundance throughout the club, and we appreciate the support of The Football Association, Football Foundation and other partners in this project. We are sincerely grateful to them all."

As well as the grant from the Football Foundation – part of the money came from the Sport England Community Club Development Programme Fund – the project received funding from Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Bishops Lydeard Parish Council and other benefactors.



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The football missionaries

It's all go for FA Young Leaders as they spend a week aiming to inspire youngsters in Botswana

For the four FA Young Leaders, it was a punishing schedule and a huge challenge. For the hundreds of African children they met, it was a fresh insight into what football has to offer. For all of them, it was a life-changing experience.

When Sarah Cummings (Manchester FA), Doug Howie (Worcester FA), Elizabeth Adewole (London FA) and Joe Brownless (Isle of Man FA) touched down in Botswana on October 25 as part of an FA contingent, they had little idea how hard they would have to work over the coming seven days – or how uplifting the week would prove.

The four were selected from the 100 who attended the 2009 FA Leadership and Volunteering Camp at Warwick University in July. The idea was to work with a youth-led sports and community development programme in Botswana called SEDYEL (South East District Youth Empowerment League) and pass on some of their expertise to their opposite numbers there.

It was all go from the moment they arrived. First stop that Sunday morning was an SOS orphanage, where they rolled up their sleeves to deliver a mini-festival. The following day, it was on to the SEDYEL youth centre to provide leadership training to a group of 16 SEDYEL leaders.

Over the next three days, The FA contingent visited six schools and more than 300 children took part in football coaching sessions delivered by Sarah, Doug, Elizabeth and Joe, supported by the team from SEDYEL.

As the week progressed, the African leaders began to lead the sessions more and more themselves as they prepared to carry on the work once The FA visit was over.

FA Education Project Officer Steve Swallow, who has recently taken over responsibility for The FA's Leadership and Volunteering Programme, said: "The values statement of the SEDYEL is to inspire and empower young people through football. Both the leaders within our party and from the SEDYEL have enjoyed a life-changing experience, and we are

sure that our time here will create opportunities through football for many young people."

The SEDYEL program is an attempt to channel the energy and enthusiasm of the young in Aids-ridden Botswana to a healthy and productive lifestyle through sport.

It is an initiative of the South East District Council in Botswana, in partnership with the City of Toronto in Canada, and in co-operation with Commonwealth Games Association of Canada, UK Sport and the Mathare Youth Sports Association of Kenya.

Tell us what you think and win prizes!

We believe the National Game Strategy is bearing fruit, and that grassroots football is in increasingly good shape, but are we getting it right? Your views are the ones that count, and you could win some fantastic prizes if you tell us just what you think.

We'd love everyone involved in football throughout the country – including players aged over 11, coaches, referees and volunteers – to take part in the 2010 FA annual online survey and have their say on local football provision and the future of the grassroots game.

This is the third annual online survey, and The FA wants grassroots stakeholders to say what they think about the way their County FA runs the game, the services it provides and how it is implementing some of the key central initiatives, such as the highly publicised Respect programme.

Ian Watmore, The FA's Chief Executive, said: "As we move into the third year of the National Game Strategy, which has seen a £200m investment into the grassroots game through the County FA network, The FA is committed to helping County FAs meet these targets. The annual survey is vital to ensure that we remain on track, and, by listening to the thousands of players and volunteers, it allows us to understand whether we are meeting expectations and whether we are getting it right."

It takes just five minutes to have your say, and this year we are offering some tempting incentives to get involved.

To access the survey and for more information about competition prizes, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.TheFA.com"](http://www.TheFA.com) TheFA.com. Hard copies of the survey are available by contacting The FA's Customer Relations team on 0844 980 8200. The deadline for responses is February 14.

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Respect

HOW WE SHOWED VINNIE JONES

REME FA TOUR TO LOS ANGELES: 7-15 SEPTEMBER 2009

"LA's fine the sun shines all the time and the feeling is laid back"
(Neil Diamond, 1971)

Nothing much has changed since Mr Diamond penned the lyrics to his song 'I am. I said' in 1971, but what he fails to mention in any of the verses is that LA is a great place to take a touring Corps football team.

Planning for a REME overseas tour began way back in early 2008. The destination was New Zealand, where we planned to compete in the NZDF inter-service football tournament as a guest team.

All was going well until the NZDF pulled the plug, albeit with sincere apologies, last February. Contingency plans were quickly drawn up in order to get a tour off the ground in quick time, and in the end we were able to secure a trip to Los Angeles with Teamlink.

The seven-day tour had an itinerary that included three matches, a training session with LA Galaxy coaches, a tour of the Home Depot stadium, including a 45-minute Q&A session with the President, Tom Payne, and tickets for an LA Galaxy match.

We stepped off the plane at LAX into 30-degree heat, and after a short wait for the transport to the hotel we were on our way to the Hotel Erwin, Venice Beach, Santa Monica. The hotel was in the heart of the artisanal centre of LA, not more than a pitching wedge from the boardwalk and the site of the world-famous Venice Muscle Beach Gym.

After allowing the lads their heads to explore the surroundings, we congregated on the hotel's roof terrace to view the Pacific coast and the odd TV and movie star frequenting the hotel.

Our first match was scheduled for a 2000 hours kick-off and, even at that late hour, the humidity was telling. Wearing our new kit, sponsored by REME's partners in engineering, VW, warming up was enough to draw heavy sweat from everyone.

Our opponents for the first game were Hollywood United. The pitch was third generation artificial turf and, in truth, a joy to play on.

In 1994 we rolled over the opposition and, in truth, many of us expected a similar fate due to the strength of the playing staff. However, this was not the case, as we were about to find out.

The match was played at a very high tempo, with both teams playing a fluid, accurate passing game. The home side had the advantage of being acclimatised and certainly more used to the field of play (the pitch was also marked out, yellow and white lines, for grid iron – very confusing). There were some stars on display, with cast members from 'Heroes' and 'NCIS' making up their numbers. The match was a nine-goal thriller (4-5) and was to set the standard for the following games.

The second game was against Real Hollywood Football Club. The night was again very humid, but luckily it was a slightly narrower pitch than the previous venue. The opposition started the game short in a few positions, so we lent them a couple of men until their players arrived.

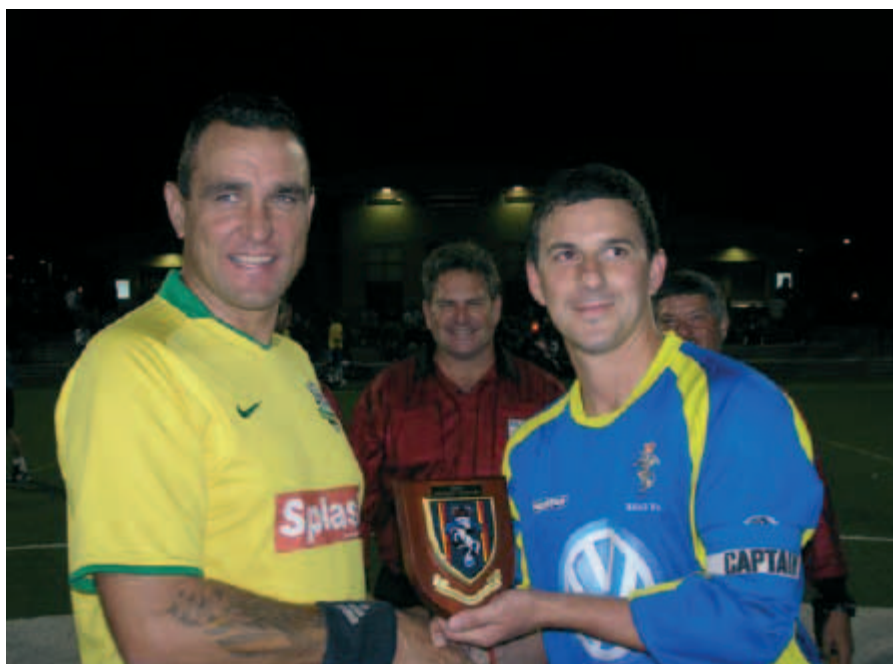
The game was again played at a high tempo, but it was REME who stole the march, scoring two early goals. Real FC played their part to the full and replied twice, to make it 3-2 at half-time.

The second half produced more great football, but it was to REME's credit that we applied greater pressure and were rewarded with a justified winner (5-4). REME played out the last 10 minutes in complete control.

Our last match was against Vinny Jones's team, the Hollywood All Stars. Apparently, Vinny had returned from filming in Hungary especially to play against the British Army football team. It was again a hot, balmy evening and the largest crowd yet turned out to watch us – or them.

The pitch was long and wide, and our players were not looking forward to covering the ground in this, the last exertion of a long week.

The All Stars started the brighter of the two sides, and only the heroics of the REME keeper prevented them taking the lead. On the 15th minute, however, it was REME who went ahead. This goal stunned the home fans and settled the REME side, who started to control more of the ball.



Vinny Jones presenting Sgt 'Ashy' Ashurst with his plaque.

& CO A THING OR TWO IN LA

Report by J M Edwards, Lt Col Vice Chairman REME FA



REME FA and All Stars.

Time on the pitch was beginning to tell, and the REME legs seemed to grow heavier as the half went on. The All Stars capitalised, and went ahead just before half time, 2-1.

After a few changes, the second half started much as the first had finished, with the All Stars making most of the running and the Corps working hard to stem the flow. The All Stars pinched two easy goals, but not before the REME keeper pulled off a remarkable treble save that brought the crowd to its feet.

Then, for some unknown reason, the Corps got a second wind and, for the last 20 minutes, completely dominated proceedings, which included a wonder strike that screamed into the top left-hand corner of the net from a full 30 yards.

The referee blew for full time and, although we were beaten, we were not broken. With pride in tact the next 10 minutes were spent gathering autographs and photographs with Mr Jones. More great memories.

Without funding from the Army Sports Lottery, the Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund and the REME Corps Sports Association, this memorable tour would not have taken place. Moreover, it generated that esprit de corps that is so necessary for fighting power.

Arte et Marte.



Vinny flying the flag.

THE ALL STARS STARTED THE BRIGHTER OF THE TWO SIDES, AND ONLY THE HEROICS OF THE REME KEEPER PREVENTED THEM TAKING THE LEAD.

CELEBRITY MATCH AT WEMBLEY HELP *for* HEROES CHARITY

On Wednesday, 25 November 2009 the Crusaders played at Wembley in a charity (Help for Heroes) game!

The Crusaders joined forces with The Sun (newspaper) Team to battle against a Celebrity XI. The FA let them take over the national stadium and together they netted more than £10,000 with a Help for Heroes charity football match.

Stars including boxing hero Joe Calzaghe took to the hallowed turf. Eastenders actors Jake Wood (Max), Neil McDermott (Ryan) and Charlie G Hawkins (Charlie) swapping The Arches for Wembley's famous Arch to play.

They were joined by Strictly's Craig Kelly, Sky footie pundit Chris Kamara and comics Lee Mack and Dave Gorman.



The Help for Heroes Cup Teams.



Sir Trevor Brooking presenting the trophies.

Premiership referee Peter Walton took charge of the game, while footie legend and The FA's Director of Football Development Sir Trevor Brooking was on hand to present our Help For Heroes Cup with the charity's Chief Of Staff Mark Elliot.

The Sun teamed up with The FA, Wembley and Ladbrokes to put on the fundraiser treat for Our Boys. Big-hearted bookies Ladbrokes showed their ongoing support for our armed forces yet again, stumping up a generous £10,000 donation to sponsor the match.

While Page 3's Peta Todd - who has raised thousands for Help for Heroes - arrived on The Sun battle bus to collect donations on the night, flanked by fellow pin-ups Ruth, Nikkala, Danni and Kelly.

The Sun had invited brave soldiers from across the country to take part. They were Maj Martin Aspin, Capt Simon Langham, Capt Si Smith, Sgt Ellis Langford, Sgt Zain Sharif, Cpl Douglas, Capt Steven Pugh, Capt Dan McBirnie, Lt Col Colin Francis, Maj Nathan Evans, Maj Alex Atherton and Maj John Rendall.



Eastenders Jake Wood under pressure from SSgt Ellis Langford.



Capt Dan McBirnie goes for Wembley glory!

RAISES MONEY FOR



Safe hands from the Celebs keeper.



Maj Nath Evans celebrates following scoring a penalty on the hallowed turf!

Captain Si Smith, 29, from the Royal Signals, based in Wilton, Wiltshire, almost missed out after the birth of his child just hours before.

He beamed: "My son Oliver John Smith, was born on Tuesday and my wife Natalie knew how much playing at Wembley meant to me, so my father-in-law took the day off work to be with her.

"I want to thank her so much for making both my dreams come true this week!"

Retired boxer Joe Calzaghe hailed the charity match, which finished in a 2-2 draw. He said: "Well done The Sun - the charity is so close to my heart because of the great work they do.

"I'm hoping to raise £500k for them in the next four months and with The Sun behind us I'm sure we can do it."

Help for Heroes chief Mark Elliot also praised The Sun, adding: "The incredible match at Wembley on the 25th November organised by The Sun, supported by The FA and Ladbrokes was nothing short of inspirational.

"It was an amazing evening and we can't thank them enough for their kindness, support and commitment to ensuring we can make sure our wounded heroes get the very best."

The FA's Sir Trevor Brooking said: "We're only too delighted to have the troops down - it's nice for them to have something to remember and it's a bit of a reality check for everyone to have an evening like this."

Ladbrokes chief executive Chris Bell added: "The courage our troops show is unfailing and we're delighted to still support Help for Heroes in any way we can.

"Since day one we've been right behind the campaign and we'll continue to give a hero's welcome to our service men and women in all our shops up and down the land."

The FA and Wembley have proved huge supporters of our armed forces in recent years, offering troops free tickets for England and FA Cup matches, as well as raising thousands through collections

outside the stadium.

In March, members of the RAF, Army and Navy were treated to lunch with England skipper John Terry and the team, in early November the squad took time out to meet Armed Forces stationed in Qatar ahead of the friendly against Brazil.

The FA also brought in referee Peter Walton, who applauded The Sun, Ladbrokes and The FA for putting on the event, which he said came as a welcome change from the stick he received in the Premier League.

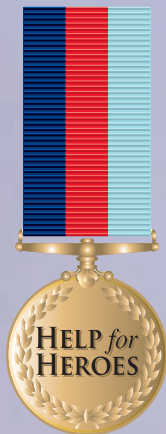
He added: "This time the players were nice to me...that makes a change doesn't it!



Celebs Captain Lee Mack feeling the effects of playing the Army!



... and lunge.



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