

BIRMINGHAM COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



CLUB WELCOME PACK SEASON 2023/2024

IMPROVING LIVES BY IMPROVING FOOTBALL

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WELCOME TO THE NEW SEASON FROM THE CEO

Thank you for affiliating your Club for the 23-24 football season. Whether you are a new or existing club, you are one of over 1,000 football clubs within our catchment area who have contacted us to play this forthcoming season. This figure is testament to the appeal of the game locally and the work of the many volunteers within clubs and leagues all of whom provide a safe and enjoyable environment for 80,000 players playing for 5,200 teams playing all formats of the 'beautiful' game.

Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) has an all-inclusive football FOR ALL philosophy and our dedicated and experienced team of 24 staff administer, facilitate, govern, support, promote and develop all formats of the game in order to help new establish themselves and existing Clubs grow and improve with the overall aim of increasing participation in our National Game. The social and economic impact of the game across the West Midlands is an incredible £522m each year which is why it is so important for people's health and wellbeing as well as the local economy that the game flourishes at every level – no matter your background or beliefs.

There are 1,300 qualified referees within the region which includes FIFA, Premier League, EFL and WSL officials in our ranks, and over 90% of the 50,000 matches which are played each season are covered by a qualified match official. We have 14 local authorities whom we work closely with alongside seven professional clubs and their charity foundations – just some of the many delivery partners we engage with to support participation initiatives such as Business Leagues, Wildcats, Snickers Just Play, walking football and disability football as well as the traditional adult and youth formats of the game.

Our team is one of the best and most diverse County FA workforces in the country with an average customer satisfaction rating of 90%. We are working towards the FA's new Code of Governance as well as the Advanced level of the Equality Standard for Sport, having already proudly attained the Intermediate Level. In doing so, we'd urge all of our clubs to sign the Football Leadership Diversity Code (FLDC) as part of your affiliation and play your part in offering opportunities For All, both on and off the pitch and on your Committees.

Our experienced Safeguarding team work with our leagues and clubs on their compliance and best practice in order to make the game safer for children and vulnerable adults.

During the affiliation process and throughout the season, we ask that someone takes responsibility for club compliance – DBS, courses, etc and updates your club portal accordingly when changes occur.

Please keep a keen eye on coach recruitment and also short term coaching cover as we are still finding suspended individuals participating in the game in various roles, which is a particular concern and a serious risk to young and vulnerable adults and leads to major investigations and club sanctions.

Indiscipline both on and off the pitch is still a serious concern, especially abandoned fixtures and parent/spectator/coach behaviour within mini-soccer and youth football. This is simply not acceptable and is a blight on our game and spoils the enjoyment for the majority. We ask all clubs to take responsibility for the behaviour of your players and spectators and act as per club rules and codes of conduct if any of your members cause issues and cost your club points and bad publicity and large fines!

We recognise our responsibility to lead on creating an environmentally friendly and sustainable model of football in order to facilitate a positive step change to reduce carbon emissions and the use of single use plastic which blights our game and football facilities. With this in mind, I ask you and your Committee members to think about how your players, coaches and spectators can help to clean up 'your' game.

We hope you have an enjoyable and Respectful season and we wish you and colleagues every success, whatever format you play or level of the game your team(s) play at. We are here to help so please contact us and we will do all we can to guide and support you and colleagues in your football endeavours.

Kevin Shoemake

CEO of Birmingham County FA

SAFEGUARDING

At Birmingham County FA, we place the safeguarding and welfare of children and adults at risk at the heart of our mission in creating a safe, inclusive and positive environment For All. Safeguarding involves a collaborative effort from everyone within football. All Clubs are required to adhere to The FA's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policies. It's important to remember that every child or young person (defined as any person under the age of 18) or adult at risk who participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. We ensure safeguarding requirements are met as a requirement of club affiliation and we support clubs to maintain these standards throughout the season. This includes making safeguarding visits to clubs annually, each season, to ensure that our member clubs are providing us with the correct information on club volunteers.

Sarah Willis is the Birmingham County FA Safeguarding Manager and the main point of contact for all Safeguarding concerns across the County.

Anyone working within regulated activity with children is required to have a Disclosing and Barring Service Check (DBS) carried out through The FA. Each CWO has the ability to manage their club's DBS checks so they are always aware who is clear to work in regulated activity. In addition to this, Birmingham County FA operate an automated email reminder service for individuals, highlighting any pending expiry dates. Once a DBS certificate has expired, the individual is unable to hold any role of regulated activity within football and the Association hold the right to suspend the individual, team and club should this found to be breached.

To start your DBS check, please speak to your club welfare officer who will be able to start your application process or for more information about an FA DBS, please speak to a member of our dedicated Safeguarding team who will be happy to support you via, support@birminghamfa.com

AFFILIATION REQUIREMENTS - YOUTH CLUB AFFILIATION

As a Youth Club you will need the following in place before completing affiliation:

- Club Welfare Officer (who has completed the Club Welfare Officer workshop)
- All committee members to have completed The FA's Safeguarding for Committee Members course
- All coaches, to obtain an FA Certified DBS check
- All coaches, to complete the Safeguarding Children Course

OPEN-AGED CLUB AFFILIATION - SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

It will be mandatory from the 2024/25 season for coaches working with 16-17 year olds within open-age football to have an FA DBS Check, in line with UK Government legislation.

Please ensure that all Open-Age clubs and Disability clubs have a designated Club Welfare Officer, and all coaches have FA DBS certificates to comply with the future mandatory requirements.

All Safeguarding online courses can be found [here](#) which provide learners a greater understanding of Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults for anybody that works within football, regardless of your involvement. Any Welfare Officer can also join the ['Birmingham County FA Welfare Officer Forum'](#) on Facebook. If you would like to know more about support offered, please contact us on the details below.

For Safeguarding concerns, please contact:

Sarah Willis - Safeguarding Manager

Email: safeguarding@BirminghamFA.com

Mobile: 07791 120 829 | Telephone: 0121 357 4278

Please note, this inbox is for Safeguarding concerns, and all DBS queries should be sent to Support@BirminghamFA.com.

For all DBS and general queries, please contact:

Support@BirminghamFA.com

Telephone: 0121 357 4278 (option 1)

SUSTAINABLE FOOTBALL

SAVE TODAY, PLAY TOMORROW



Birmingham County FA is committed to pioneering the way in which football minimises the impact of its activities on the environment. The award winning Save Today, Play Tomorrow Programme is the first project of its kind for a County FA, offering access to services, education and fundamental resources that support clubs, leagues and teams to make simple, practical changes to help positively benefit themselves and their local community.

The programme consists of four workstreams where, with the support of local and national partners, we believe we can make the greatest impact.



Health & Wellbeing We will create an environment where the Health (Physical and Mental) and Wellbeing of all participants and volunteers is at the heart of what we do.



Positive Education We will develop educational resources on the environmental challenges specific to football to help make informed decisions around reducing the environmental footprint, particularly on waste, energy and travel.



Climate Action We will responsibly support all clubs and leagues with innovative ideas that reduce, re-use and recycle.



Reconnecting Football To Nature We will lead on educating leagues, clubs and facility operators to consider the use of their green spaces, creating protected areas that can reconnect communities with natural habitats.

During the 22/23 season over 130 clubs signed our Sustainability Pledge, committing to small changes in how they travel, eat, consume energy & water and engage with their local community on environmental activities. Each month these clubs asked their members to undertake carbon saving activities that were recorded by our partners Pledgeball creating highly competitive league table which every 4 weeks rewarded the club at the top with £500 towards their running costs.

The overall winners for the season were FC Crystal whose members contributed to pledge over 3 million kg's of carbon savings. In total our clubs pledged to save over 6 million Kg's of Co2e which is the equivalent to taking 1338 cars off the road!

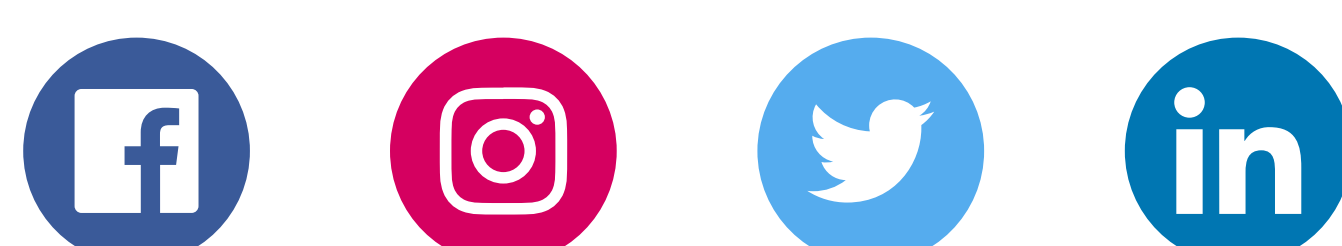
The new league kicks off in September so if your club haven't registered yet then please email: SaveTodayPlayTomorrow@BirminghamFA.com

NEWSLETTER

Receive the latest sustainability news directly to your inbox by signing up to the Save Today, Play Tomorrow supporters club [here](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow our [#SaveTodayPlayTomorrow](#) social channels to stay up to date with the latest information.



SUSTAINABLE FOOTBALL PLEDGE

SAVE TODAY, PLAY TOMORROW

Birmingham County FA is committed to pioneering the way football reduces the impact of its activities on the environment, providing innovative solutions and positive education that allows the game to be enjoyed for generations to come.

By committing to this pledge we are committed to actively supporting Birmingham County FA's goals to achieve a greener more sustainable game through the following 6 point plan.

By making this commitment we understand that we have a responsibility to lead a change within football, challenge poor practice and educate others in how they can become more sustainable.

The pledge consists of six points where, with the support of local and national partners, we believe you can make the greatest impact.

<p>Travel</p> <p>Our club pledges to change how we travel to & from football and will commit to using the car less for journeys under 2 miles. All alternatives will encourage our members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use public transport where possible Car share (with Covid-19 protocols permit) Walk, cycle or run to football Share public travel information across social media/websites for evening teams & spectators 	<p>Waste</p> <p>Our club pledges to always use the waste disposal facilities provided on site and where the option to recycle is not available we will take this waste home. Furthermore we will encourage our members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the amount of waste created at football in particular single use plastics through reusable drinks bottles, and clear signage to refill stations Reuse kit & equipment extending the end of life of these items, responsibly disposing where necessary Recycle as much waste from the game as possible
<p>Energy</p> <p>Our club pledges to reduce the energy it consumes both at our own venue and also those we visit. Where possible as a club we will switch to green energy supplier and will encourage our members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Switch their home energy supplier to green alternative Educate themselves on reducing their energy consumption, such as turning off lights that aren't be used, taking devices off standby, washing clothes at lower temperatures, hanging washing out instead of using tumble dryer Be an awareness of fuel poverty, be able to direct people to schemes that may help 	<p>Water</p> <p>Our club pledges to reduce its consumption of water, and will encourage members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not waste water Wash less and look for 'eco-cycled' that use less water and energy Take shorter lower temperature showers at venues Install a rain water harvesting unit at home or the club
<p>Food</p> <p>Our club pledges to reduce the amount of meat consumed on matchdays at our venue and also those we visit. We will also encourage our members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste less food, by planning meals when shopping, freezing leftovers and composting Consider meat free days, go vegan/vegetarian or replace some meat or animal products with plant based alternatives Purchase locally sourced seasonal food 	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Our club pledges to commit to at least one community engagement day per season encouraging all of our members to volunteer in activities that benefit the local environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moveover Engage with the Canal & Rivers Trust for volunteering opportunities Club litter picks Club plastic collection challenge Club free & shared planning projects

Positive | Supportive | Inclusive | Innovative www.BirminghamFA.com



SUSTAINABLE FOOTBALL

SAVE TODAY, PLAY TOMORROW



FOOTBALL REBOOTED

Football Rebooted - We now have over 60 'boot bins' in operation across the county, collecting & redistributing pre-worn football boots supporting the goal of keeping one million pairs in circulation for longer and out of landfill. Our aim is to have 100 'boot bins' by the end of the 23/24 season, but we need clubs to get involved. If you are interested in becoming a collection centre, then please [click here](#). (application window opens in September 23).

CARBON LITERACY FOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL COURSE

Carbon Literacy for Grassroots Football Course - This one-day course gives learners a months' worth of knowledge & awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community, and organisational basis. Furthermore, learners will gain an understanding of the interdependencies between football & climate change to allow them to take the necessary steps to reduce the impact the game is having on the environment.

Over 60,000 learners are now Carbon Literate right across business and industry sectors, but this is the first course of its kind within football. Everyone that completes the course is contributing to the 100,000 carbon saving actions already undertaken which it is estimated to have saved 180,000 tonnes of co2e.

This course is the first step to creating a more sustainable grassroots game which will allow it to be enjoyed by future generations. All course dates are on the website - [click here](#).

100% GREEN ENERGY PRODUCT

With our partners UtilityWorks we have gone live with the BCFA Green Energy Product that offers football clubs of all sizes the opportunity to move to 100% renewable energy provided by a tier one supplier at rates usually only accessible by the most energy intensive industries.

By combining their consumption clubs can take huge strides in their own sustainability journey and open further opportunities to deploy carbon saving technology like solar arrays or EV chargers. This innovative energy product will also create both a Sustainability Fund for clubs to access support for other infrastructure but also a Community Fund that will help alleviate the burden of cost on clubs for kit, equipment, or clubhouse renovations for example. [Click here](#) to complete the expression of Interest Form.

GREEN INNOVATION FUND

Green Innovation Fund During the 22/23 season our Green Innovation Fund supported 97 clubs with grants of up to £750 towards eco-friendly infrastructure changes like;

- Reusable water bottles (saving an estimated 8-10K plastic bottles per week being purchased)
- Drinking water fountains
- Cycle racks
- Electric vehicle charge points
- Solar/battery storage equipment

This fund will open in April 2024. All clubs are eligible to apply, so please follow our social channels to keep up to date.

BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY WILDLIFE TRUST

We are delighted to inform you that we have partnered with the Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust to help support the Reconnecting Football with Nature workstream. Further details will be released on our social channels, and we are so excited to share with you how your football club can get involved. Find out more about the BBC Wildlife Trust by clicking [here](#).

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

In May 2019, Birmingham County FA were awarded the Intermediate Standard for Equality & Inclusion, making them only the second County FA to meet this standard. Attaining this award further galvanises the good work the Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) are doing in the County, driving improved standards and policy at all levels of the game.

We clearly demonstrate below our commitment to making football **FOR ALL** with targeted interventions across:

- Extended Ramadan Football League
- Refugee Football Programme
- Extensive Disability Football Programme
- Women & Girls Football
- Dementia Friends Café



We picked up our Award for achieving Intermediate Standard for Equality & Inclusion at Wembley Stadium in May 2019

KICK IT OUT

“Kick It Out” is primarily a campaigning organisation which enables, facilitates and works with the football authorities, professional clubs, players, fans and communities to tackle all forms of discrimination. The campaign has been pivotal in persuading and supporting the games stakeholders to take their equality responsibilities seriously.

Kick It Out announced the launch of their new campaign, Take A Stand in 2020. It is a call to action initiative, encouraging people across the football community to take an action or make a pledge, in the fight against discrimination. It is the first digital campaign where individuals and organisations will be invited to publicly commit to their own pledge. The initiative marks a new chapter in the fight against discrimination in football, which will give fans the confidence, the tools and the means to confront discrimination and make a change.



Realising the essential role played by grassroots clubs in their local communities, Kick It Out aims to develop understanding between different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs so they can help make football more accessible and equal for all. The organisation is willing to provide assistance in any shape or form which will enhance inclusive practices either at a local or national grassroots level. Kick It Out can also help bridge the gap between local groups and the leading bodies within the game, who historically may have felt excluded or overlooked.

For further information, please contact: info@kickitout.org

FA CUP TICKETS BALLOT INFORMATION

The application process for FA Cup Tickets opens the Monday following the semi-final matches being played, and the finalists confirmed. Applications will be open for 14 days and will be carried out via an online registration form. The link will be emailed to Club secretaries and will be released on our social media networks and website.

Each club is entitled to apply for two or four tickets in the end of the stadium of their choice. Applications for odd number of tickets will not be accepted.

Four price ranges will be available to purchase and the applicant will be able to rank the order of prices they would like to be considered.

All tickets provided will be in either the home or away end – No neutral tickets are available.

All successful applicants will be contacted via email approximately one week after the ballot closing date. The number of tickets issued to each applicant will be subject to demand, and meeting the strict criteria outlined in the application form.

Tickets must be paid for in full, either via card or cash before they can be released - Cheques will not be accepted.

All successful applications will incur an admin charge of £3, which will be added to the cost of the transaction at the payment stage. If tickets are to be posted out to the applicant, they will be dispatched by secure postage and the applicant will have to cover this cost at the relevant special delivery postal price at the time of application.



AFFILIATION & COUNTY CUPS

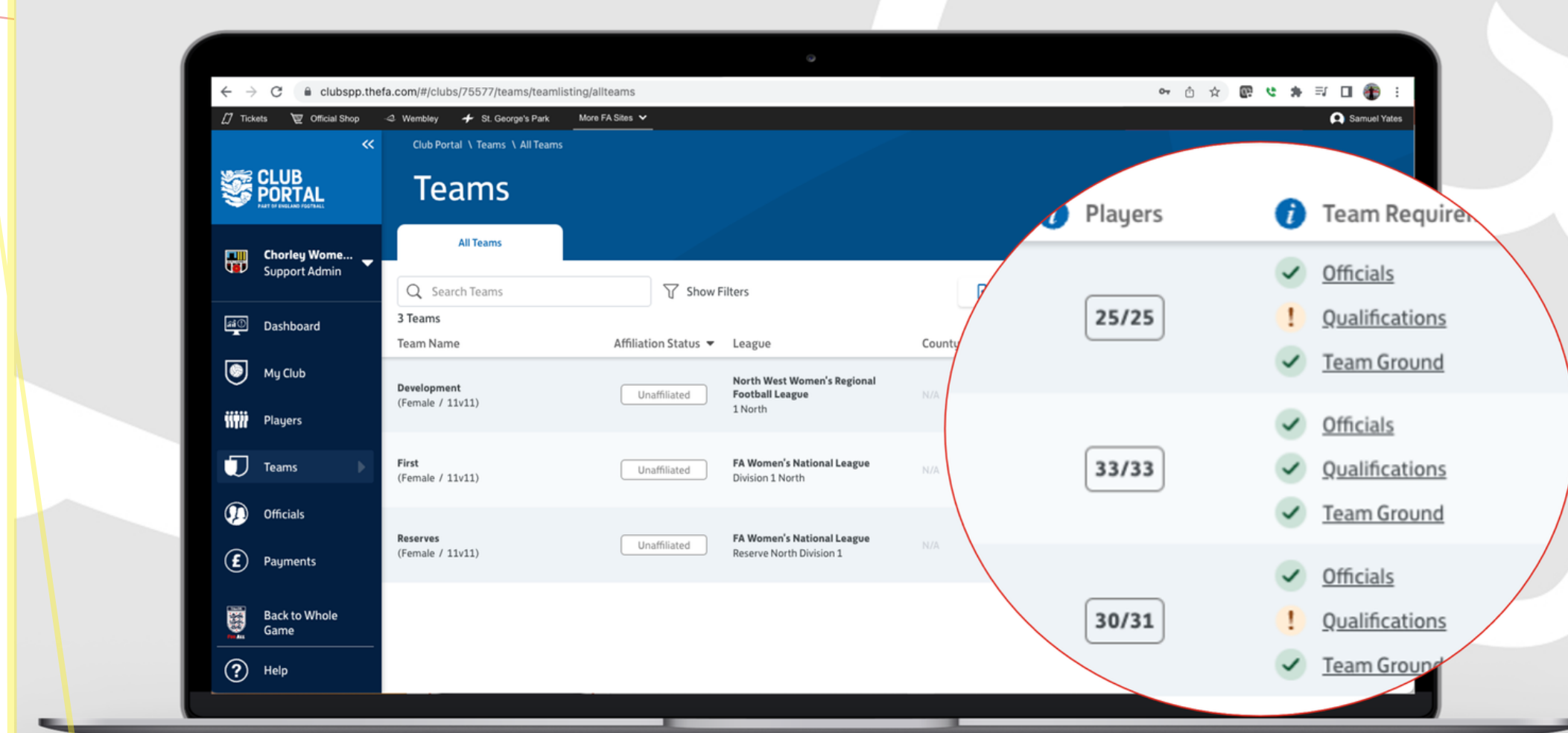
AFFILIATION 23/24

We understand the landscape of football is changing and with that, some of our processes have to change with it. We recognise teams can start at any time during a season, especially in youth football which our current affiliation process via Whole Game System, makes very difficult for Clubs. Opening in June 2023, your affiliation will be available in the [Club Portal](#) without a 'window' to complete your affiliation as we move to managing your Club and teams year-round. This means you'll be able to add and fold teams when your Competitions require and means any teams which aren't yet ready to affiliate, will not stop your Club from affiliating.

AFFILIATE BY TEAM

In Whole Game System, a Club could not complete their affiliation until every team within the Club was compliant with regulations. Moving to affiliation by team means that when a team is ready, they can affiliate at the touch of a button. For example, if you're a Club with a First Team in the National League System as well as having youth teams & disability provision, you can affiliate the First Team for their earlier start and complete the youth teams when they're ready.

Go all green and be good to go!



MANAGE LEAGUE

We know as the season approaches kick off, things can quickly change. Should a team need to change League, provided no players have been registered, you will now be able to manage this yourself. You can find guidance on how to update your league [here](#).

FOLD TEAM

If at any point in the season, any of your teams unfortunately have to fold, you can do this directly in Clubs Portal without the need to speak to your County FA. If your team is folded, all players assigned to the team will be removed and both your County FA and League will be notified automatically through Clubs Portal.

AFFILIATION & COUNTY CUPS

CONTINUED

INSURANCE

Your County FA can now allow you to purchase your insurance directly in Clubs Portal. Please speak to your County FA to see if this is available to you.

AUTOMATED APPROVAL

Once your team is fully compliant to affiliation regulations, and if you've purchased insurance directly through Clubs Portal, your affiliation will be automatically approved so you will no longer have to wait for your County FA to manually review and approve, meaning you'll have more time to spend elsewhere in your Club.

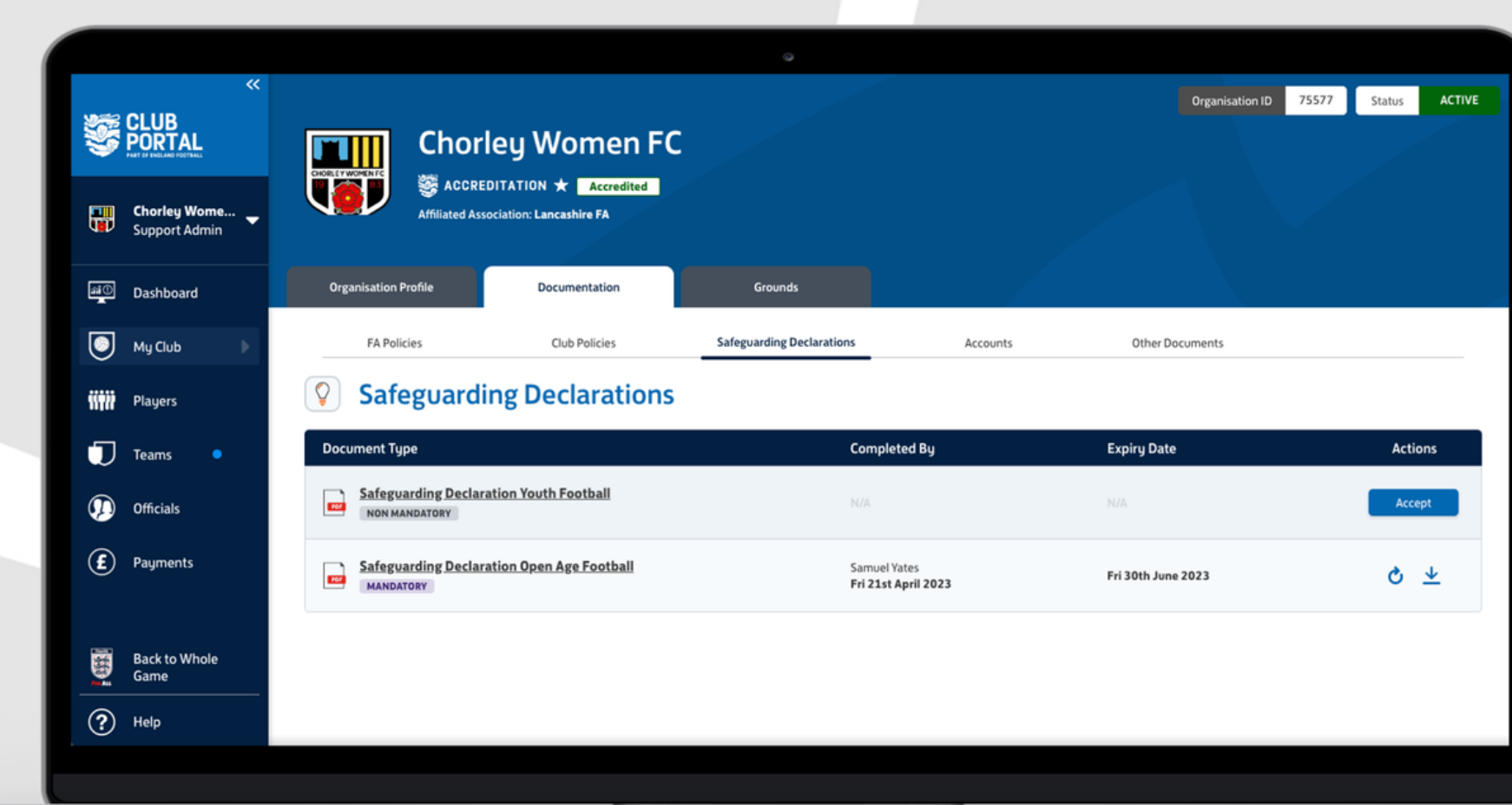
ADDING COUNTY CUPS

All guidance on how to enter your Team into a County FA County Cup can be found [here](#).

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Clubs will be asked to confirm they understand their safeguarding responsibilities when affiliating. The 'Safeguarding Declaration' reflects football's safeguarding policies and procedures and the Club's commitment to create an ever-safer culture. For more information on safeguarding in football please click [here](#).

Creating an ever-safer culture



AFFILIATION FAQ'S

The FA have put together guidance around affiliation FAQ'S. Please find the link to this [here](#).

PLAYER REGISTRATION

Player Registration can be done online via the Club Portal subject to competing in a participating League. To do this, your players must be added on to the Club Portal to then be assigned to team(s), consent granted, prior to submission to the League who will then review the registration.

Birmingham County FA can provide assistance with this process. Please contact Support@BirminghamFA.com.

FINANCE

There are different payment methods available when you need to make a payment to Birmingham County FA. See below for the details.

To make a payment, the first port of call should be the Whole Game System.



WHOLE GAME SYSTEM

In order to make a payment via WGS, you must ensure that you have acknowledged the case first to be able to complete it. Guidance on how to do this can be found [here](#).

If you experience any issues with the Whole Game System, please follow the steps to use our external payment system [here](#).

BCFA PAYMENT PORTAL

A new and secure payment portal has been developed that allows you to make immediate debit/card payments outside of the Whole Game System (WGS). Please open the camera app on your smartphone and scan the 'QR code' below.

Then tap on the link to access the payment portal and simply follow the on-screen instructions.



BANK TRANSFER

We also accept payment via bank transfer - however please ensure that the Reference is either the Case ID or invoice number.

- Account Name: Birmingham County FA
- Sort Code: 30.99.06
- Account No: 01030278
- Reference: Please add the invoice number or case number

CONTACT

If you have any further finance queries or issues, our Finance Manager can be contacted between 9am – 5pm (Monday - Thursday, 4:30pm on Fridays) on 0121 357 4278 and selecting the 'Finance' option. Our support portal is live and colleagues can be contacted on: Support@BirminghamFA.com.

ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION

Football leagues and clubs accredited by The FA have positively changed the football landscape over the last 20 years, creating the ideal environments to nurture players, coaches and volunteers. The result is greater diversity and inclusivity throughout football. England Football Accreditation replaces The FA Charter Standard and is the next chapter in this amazing story as we unite even more communities by supporting Leagues and Clubs over the next 10 years.

In addition, The FA recognise Clubs that provide one or more of the accredited player pathways, either for male, or female, or for disability players. The star that a club achieves and is then recognised for, demonstrates that they have football teams within their set-up that support the three accredited player pathways. It helps us to align the relevant support and services you need to become the best version of your Club.

HOW TO GET ACCREDITED

Becoming an England Football Accredited club or league is a simple process. We have put together an application [walkthrough guide](#) to show you just how simple it is.

The application can be accessed in the Clubs Portal under your 'My Club' tab on the left hand side. The Accreditation subtab then has the checklist that needs to be completed. The Walkthrough guide supports this process and you can also access further guidance [here](#).

[Click here](#) to find out how you can become England Football Accredited.



ACCREDITED
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

COACH EDUCATION

COACH DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Birmingham County FA host a Coach Development Workshop programme which includes both face to face and virtual workshops to support our football volunteer workforce. The sessions help coaches develop their skills and allow attendees to better understand the next steps in their own coaching journey. To view our Coach Development Workshops please visit [here](#).

We also offer clubs the opportunity to host their own Coach Development Events which can be bespoke with a theme or topic of your choice. If you would like to offer this at your club or discuss this further, please email support@birminghamfa.com (minimum numbers apply).

All of our Coach Development workshops are FA Accredited and therefore, coaches who attend will gain the CPD hours on their FAN.

COURSES

All coaching, safeguarding and medical courses are now administered and delivered by England Football Learning. The FA provides a range of learning opportunities for you to engage with, and the courses are suitable for coaches of all levels (see below). For more information, [click here](#).

We would like to remind all clubs, coaches and volunteers that all queries regarding these courses must go to Education@TheFA.com or via the FA Support Portal.

START YOUR COACHING JOURNEY

STEP 1: EE Playmaker (FREE)

STEP 2: Introduction to Coaching Football – (previously known as FA Level 1)

STEP 3: UEFA C (previously known as FA Level 2)

STEP 4: UEFA B (previously known as FA Level 3)

WANT TO GAIN, RENEW, OR EXPLORE?

FA Safeguarding Children (mandatory for all coaches)

FA First Aid

FA Welfare Officer Course

WANT TO UPDATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

FA Concussion Guidelines / Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Guide to Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding for Committee Members

OTHER COURSES

[Goalkeeping - New course](#)

[Introduction to Futsal](#)

[Introduction to Disability Football](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

England Football Learning host an array of sessions for coaches to view and take to their team?

Ongoing Learning is also available!

REFEREES

Birmingham County FA are proud to have 1,300 referees who operate across a number of competitions around the County and nationally. Our referees range from the FIFA match officials who cover the Premier League, Women's Super League and International Competitions to mini soccer referees who operate across under 8's grassroots football every Saturday and Sunday morning.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

The first step to get into refereeing is to complete the Referees Course (You need to be 14 or older to enrol onto this course). This course takes place across a number of dates and involves practical assessments.

Full details of this are available on our website by [clicking here](#).

HOW ARE REFEREES APPOINTED?

Appointments to fixtures are made by referee secretaries and appointment officers across the County FA. Referees at grassroots level would be allocated an appropriate appointment based on leagues in their area.

County Cup referee appointments are completed centrally, you can contact the team via

RefereeAppointments@birminghamfa.com

FA CORE

The FA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) aims to provide a certain amount of identified referees at all levels with quality training, education and development opportunities which are delivered both centrally and across a number of regional locations. FA CORE is for those referees who are demonstrating that they have clear 'potential' and 'opportunity' to progress in refereeing regardless of which part of the country they are from, their gender or age. The CORE programme is a national program for which the County FA's can identify potential referees who have the attributes to progress across the different levels.

NEW INITIATIVES

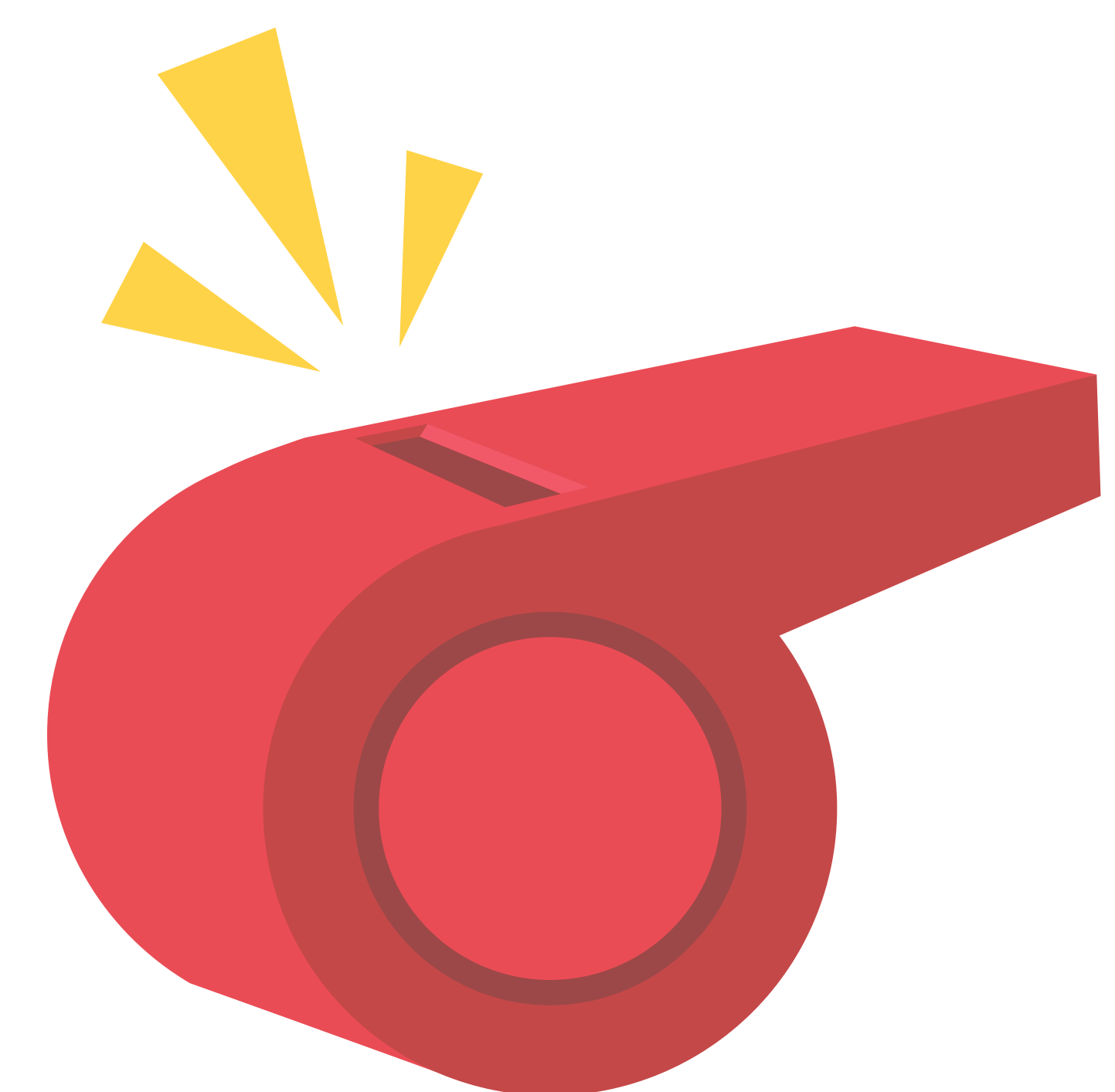
Birmingham County FA have introduced five new initiatives ahead of the 23/24 season including Transition Accredited Leagues, Early Development Scheme, Potential Development Programme, New Promotion Pathway and Women's Game Support Group. You can find out more by [clicking here](#).

TRAINING EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (TED)

Each season, Birmingham County FA identifies referees with the potential and drive to progress in the game. They are invited to an evaluation evening where they are tested on the laws of the game and on the field of play. The group is made up of 30 referees from Level 7 to Level 3 who are given quality training and specialist coaching on how to progress in the game.

REFEREE PROGRESSION PATHWAY

The Referee Progression Pathway will create more progression opportunities for more officials across the grassroots game (Level 5-7 & Level Y). The new pathway has been specifically designed to give you control over your own route up the referee ladder, at the pace you choose. With promotion opportunities at four points over the course of the season (31 October, 31 December, 28 February, 30 April), there is no longer the need to wait until the end of the season before achieving your goal.



DISCIPLINE

The below covers the basic information you should be aware of with regards to discipline matters dealt with by the County FA. There are seven categories for Match Based Discipline:

Saturday

Sunday

Veterans

**Further
Education**

Friendly

Representative

Midweek

Automatic suspensions for dismissals are aligned to one of the seven categories – meaning that if you are dismissed in a game, you are unable to play again in the same category of football until the automatic match based suspension is served. This means that a player sent off in Sunday football would still be eligible to play for a Saturday team as the suspension would apply to Sunday football only.

These categories also apply with regards to continuing misconduct, receiving multiple cautions or dismissals in a season. A player would need to accumulate 5 cautions before the 31st December in the same category of football to receive an automatic one match suspension. For example, if during the same period, a player received 3 cautions in Midweek football and 2 cautions in Sunday football, then they would not be subject to the automatic suspension for accumulated cautions.

Suspensions from misconduct cases (charges issued by the County FA) are from ALL football at CFA level, so a participant will not be able to play until the team they were playing for when they charge was issued serves the appropriate number of games.

POINTS DEDUCTION

From the 2023/24 season, points deductions for serious misconduct will be introduced for Men's teams Step 7 and below and Women's teams Tier 3 and below if their players and coaches commit repeated offences of serious misconduct. Serious misconduct includes acts of discrimination and assault or attempted assault, physical contact or attempted physical contact against a match official.

For more information regarding the points deduction, please click [here](#).

GRASSROOTS DISCIPLINARY GUIDE

The 2023/24 Grassroots Disciplinary Guide is now available to view via our website, and includes all disciplinary guidance, regulation changes and sanctions. You can view this [here](#).

DISCIPLINE FAQ'S

Q: How much is the administration fee?

A: The Administration Fee is £15.00 for non-caution offences (sending-off's and all misconduct). The administration fee for a caution is £12.00.

Q: If a player is sent off or cautioned, who is liable for the fine/administration fee?

A: If the player is involved in youth football the club is liable for the fees. If the offence is in open aged football, it would be the players responsibility to pay the fine, but the club are responsible to ensure this does get paid in the first instance.

Q: I have recently signed a player and I need to check if they have any unspent suspensions, how can I check this?

A: If a player is suspended, a red box with 'suspension' will show next to their name on the club portal. Your club secretary should also be able to check what the suspension was for in the Whole Game System. If you are unsure if you are suspended, or unsure of a players suspension, please contact support@birminghamfa.com with the FAN and the team can assist.

Q: If a club plays a player who is under suspension, who gets charged?

A: It is both the responsibility of the club and player concerned to ensure that the player does not participate whilst under suspension. Therefore both the club and player would be charged.

Q: When will a suspension start for a player who has been sent off?

A: All suspensions commence seven days from the date of the sending off. If the club have not heard or received confirmation within two working days they should make contact with the County FA.

Q: How do I acknowledge a red or yellow card?

A: This needs to be completed by the club secretary in the Whole Game System. Guidance on how to complete this can be found [here](#).

Q: How do I pay disciplinary fines?

A: Disciplinary fines are paid on the Whole Game System, and guidance on how to do this can be found [here](#).

Q: How do I add the matches that I missed towards my suspension?

A: Suspension matches need to be added by the club secretary in the Whole Game System, and guidance on how to add the suspension matches can be found [here](#).

Q: How do I respond to a misconduct charge on the Whole Game System?

A: To respond to a misconduct charge, please follow the guidance [here](#).

TEMPORARY DISMISSALS

As you may be aware, the implementation of the Sin Bin Programme for all on-field incidents of dissent are now mandatory across all grassroots football since the beginning of the 2020/21 season.

You can access more information regarding temporary dismissals via our website [here](#).

WOMEN'S & GIRLS FOOTBALL

Weetabix Wildcats Centres are introductory fun football sessions for girls 5-11. You can play your part if you are a club, school or organisation and by becoming a Weetabix Wildcats Centre you can earn funding, kit and equipment. You must complete an application process which is open twice a year. Please refer to our website for the application process and any updates, or alternatively email Support@BirminghamFA.com to be added to the communication list.

Squad Girls is a brand new programme launched in early 2022, for girls aged 12-14. This is for girls who have an interest through school provision but don't have a team - it's based on non-competitive, but leading to a hopeful route into local teams. Again, this works on an application process, and is for clubs, schools or organisations to help grow the game.

We are working with 'Partners We' to support local clubs in partnering with the relevant education and community groups to ensure the player pathway is well connected in the County. If you want to build your links with local schools, colleges or universities delivering FA programmes or the other community groups engaging with females (Uniform Groups, Faith Groups etc.) please let us know your location and the age you are looking to work closer with.

AFFILIATED FOOTBALL

Available leagues in the County for players are:

- The Central Warwickshire Girls League (U7-U18)
- The Stourbridge & District Youth Girls Football League (U8-U12)
- Birmingham County Womens League (Adult)

League football is not the only avenue, with there being more ways than ever to play:

- Over 30's
- Turn Up and Play
- Women's Walking Football

There are small pots of funding available for the above although please note that the sessions must have a plan to be self-sustainable after 12 weeks, run through the regular season and for the Walking Football have the potential to move to a league format. For further details on this, please contact:

Vicky.Mitchell@BirminghamFA.com.



NEWSLETTER & SOCIAL MEDIA

We want the good news stories and positive work you are all doing to be heard as far and wide as possible. To do this, we encourage you all to send in material for our brand new quarterly female football newsletter called **ROAR!** Please send any details you would like included to Vicky.Mitchell@BirminghamFA.com at any time during the season.

Socially connect with us! @BCFAWG - Make sure you like and follow the new Facebook & Twitter channels, dedicated to all things women's & girls football to keep up to date with everything in our County.

[Click here](#) to view more information on our website.

DISABILITY FOOTBALL

From grassroots to the elite game, whether you are a coach or a player, here is how you can participate in disability football.

Whatever your ability level, there has never been a better time to get involved and play disability football in the Birmingham County FA region, with there being more opportunities than ever.

For more information on disability football, please contact:

Harley.Hetherington@BirminghamFA.com or **Support@BirminghamFA.com**

The FA have a Para Football Performance Pathway, right from Grassroots to the Elite game.

One Player, Two Journeys, Three Lions.

If you have always dreamed of playing for England, then the dream is on!

Find out more by [clicking here](#).

WHAT COULD THE DISABILITY RECREATIONAL PATHWAY LOOK LIKE?



COMETS

Comets is a recreational, pan-disability football offer for disabled children aged 5-11. It's a safe space where disabled children can believe and belong. It steps outside the usual parameters with a bespoke, flexible way of playing. Because this is football that breaks all the old rules and replaces them with a new one; just be you.



VETERANS FOOTBALL, OVER 45'S & WALKING FOOTBALL

Here at Birmingham County FA we are keen to keep people playing the beautiful game for as long as possible. We are constantly exploring opportunities for those in or around their 50's to continue in the player pathway before reaching Walking Football. Most recently we have created the Birmingham County FA Over 45's League, which is a 9v9 format running bi-weekly on Sunday evenings at Boldmere St Michaels.

Birmingham County FA are proud to have a full pathway for players who wish to continue playing throughout their 30's onwards. We have a number of Leagues who operate over 35's divisions alongside a bespoke 9v9 over 45's league and a Walking Football League which includes an over 50's, over 60's and over 63's division.

As of the beginning of the 23/24 season, we are pleased to have registered 429 Walking Football players since the 2021/22 season.

ASPIRING CLUB-COORDINATORS

Birmingham County FA have launched a new Aspiring Club Coordinators programme which is aimed at individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who want to make a positive impact within their football club.

The individuals will be tasked with three projects over the course of the 2023/24 season, which will benefit both themselves and their club.

The projects are as follows:

- Environmental Sustainability (August to December)
- Facilities & Investment (January to March)
- What does your club need? (April to June)

For more information regarding any of the above, please contact Harley.Hetherington@BirminghamFA.com

RECREATIONAL FOOTBALL

SNICKERS JUST PLAY

"A recreational form of football providing access for adults to aordable, fun, organised kickabouts in suitable facilities with trained organisers in their local area."

Snickers Just Play is purely for adults, for men, for women, for those who think they're talented and for those who think they aren't. It's also for those with a disability, 16–25's, women only or even veterans; there is a kickabout designed specifically for you, whatever your age or ability.

The Snickers Just Play scheme is recreational football in its purest and simplest format. It's about turning up for an hour of exercise, socialising and having fun. It is football for those who do not or cannot commit to a long arduous season of training and weekend matchdays.

Funding of £215 is available to groups who run recreational sessions for adults (16+), if applying to run one of these centres, one individual must undertake the online FA Playmaker Course.

Just Play sessions can be added to The FA's website which will enable people searching for local kickabouts to sign up to your session which helps the Centre to grow in numbers.

For more information please contact: Harley.Hetherington@BirminghamFA.com.



GRASS PITCH PROGRAMME

PITCH POWER

PitchPower (PP) is a web app that puts the power in your hands, making it easy to sign up and carry out pitch inspections. You'll then get a detailed assessment report from the grounds management experts at the Grounds Management Association (GMA) with recommendations on improving the quality of your grass pitches.



PP is your gateway to access further funding through the Football Foundation (FF), whether that is Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF), a larger scale capital bid or to access funding to support with grass pitch or ancillary improvements via the Small Grants Scheme.

Click [here](#) to start your PP inspection.

GRASS PITCH MAINTENANCE FUND (GPMF)

The GPMF is a six year grant, providing **up to £3,200 inc. VAT** for every one of your 11 a side pitches in the first two years and scaled down over 6 years (£2,560 for 9 a side and £1,920 for Mini Soccer). 66% for years 3 and 4 for example.

This Grant can be used to **employ contractors, purchase materials** and purchase **a soil sampler**, but not for mowing and marking.

You can now apply for 75% towards **Grass Pitch Machinery and Equipment** through the GPMF of up to 50k.

Click [here](#) for more information about the GPMF.

GRASS PITCH GRANT (GPG)

The Grass Pitch Grant (GPG) fund is designed to help towards much needed equipment and/or extensive renovation works that has been highlighted as a beneficial following a PitchPower report. The clubs involved can apply for up to £5000.

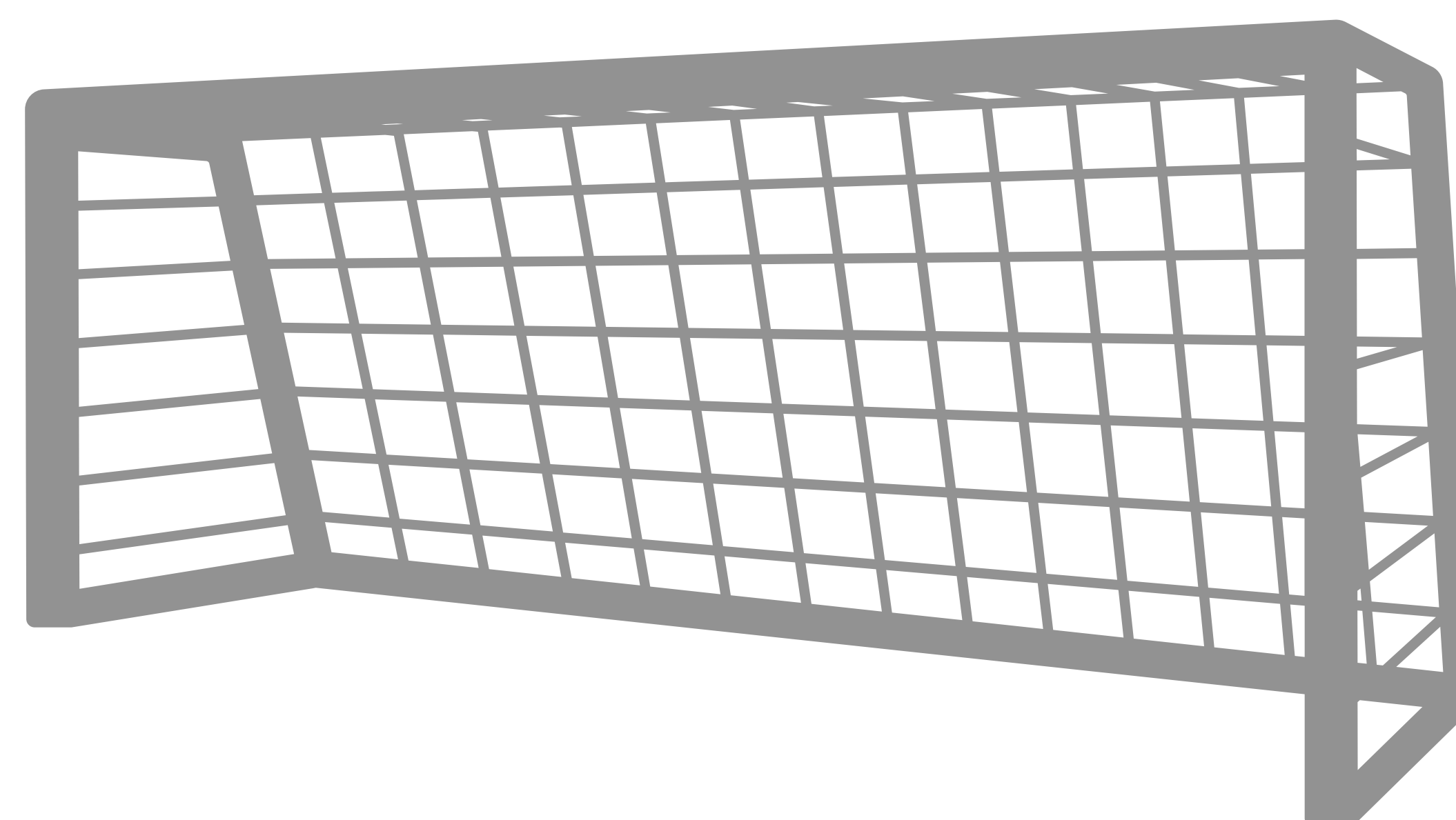
Click [here](#) to start your application.



SMALL GRANTS

The Football Foundation's (FF) [Small Grants Scheme](#) is designed to support with funding applications up to £25k that sit outside of the Local Football Facility Plans (LFFP). Whether its goalposts for one of your junior sides or machinery equipment for your ground staff to keep your grass pitches looking pristine, the FF offer a range of small grants to support the grassroots game. In summary, the scheme can support with grants of up to 75% towards:

- Grass Pitch Drainage
- Changing Pavilion/Clubhouse Refurb
- Fencing
- Goalposts
- Portable Floodlights
- Storage Containers



For more information on the Small Grants Scheme, click [here](#).

The Football Foundation also have a number of targeted programmes throughout the year that you may be eligible for. Current schemes include the Energy Fund, Floodlight Fund and Howdens Game Changer Programme. Future plans include streams to support catering units and a home advantage fund (community asset transfer). For further information on these opportunities, please contact Joe.Robinson@BirminghamFA.com.

PREMIER LEAGUE STADIUM FUND (PLSF)

This funding is for clubs that play in Steps 1-6 of the National League system or Women's Football Pyramid Tiers 1-4. The eligibility of projects and the grant limits available are dependant on the step of the National League System your club plays at.

Dependant on the club's place within the football pyramid historic investment received from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund in the last five years, you may be able to apply to the Premier League Stadium Fund (PLSF) for a grant up to maximum cumulative grant value outlined below.

For example, a club that plays at Step 2 can apply for up to £250k in any given five-year period, and will not receive more than a 70% grant for any project. If they were promoted during this time, the cumulative grant amount would increase to £400k, less than any grants received in the previous five years.



National League System	Max 5-year cumulative grant value	Max percentage grant
Step 1	£400,000	50% to 70%
Step 2	£250,000	50% to 70%
Steps 3 and 4	£150,000	50% to 70%
Steps 5 and 6	£100,000	50% to 70%

There are a number of eligible projects ranging from Floodlighting to Turnstiles. To find out more information about the PLSF, please click [here](#).

THE FA GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL AWARDS

The FA Grassroots Football Awards recognise how grassroots leagues, clubs, volunteers and community projects play their part in making the nations favourite game happen week in, week out up and down the country.

Every year, the awards receive thousands of nominations and are backed by leading football legends such as Casey Stoney, Sir Geo. Hurst, Ryan Giggs, Kenny Dalglish and Pat Jennings.

The 2022/23 Winners:

Club of the Year: Alvechurch FC

Coach of the Year - Disability Pathway: Kevin Redmond, Alvechurch FC

Coach of the Year - Female Pathway: Charlie Jones, Stratford Town Women & Girls

Coach of the Year - Male Pathway: Stuart Bishop, Rugby Borough Junior

New Volunteer of the Year: Anaya O'Brien, Coventry Sphinx Juniors

Match Official of the Year: Michael Powell

Young Volunteer of the Year: Joshua Ruff, Coton Green Minor

Positive Football Environment Award: Hartshill Strollers FC

League of the Year: Coventry & Warwickshire Youth Football League



BCFA RECOGNITION AWARDS

The 2022/23 Winners:

Emerging Talent for Officiating Award: Ellie Powers

Club Welfare Officer of the Year: Kerry Danks, Cradley Town DC

Outstanding Contribution of the Year: Catherine Postin, Balls to Cancer Women

Outstanding Contribution of the Year: Andy Butler, Wolves Women

Sustainability Award: John Danks, Cradley Town DC

Wellbeing Project of the Year: The Albion Foundation



MATCHDAY

In July 2018 the FA launched the new Matchday app to all affiliated football managers and players/parents of players that participate in leagues that use Full-Time, and registered players via the Whole Game System for affiliated football.

The first release of Matchday included a fantastic set of features that gave eligible managers and players a chance to organise training, games, player availability, whilst giving them the ability to pick squads and submit scores all through their smartphone.

In June 2019 the FA launched their partnership with Paypal and Matchday with a series of roadshows and competitions, including winning a “Matchday Masterclass” at St. George’s Park.

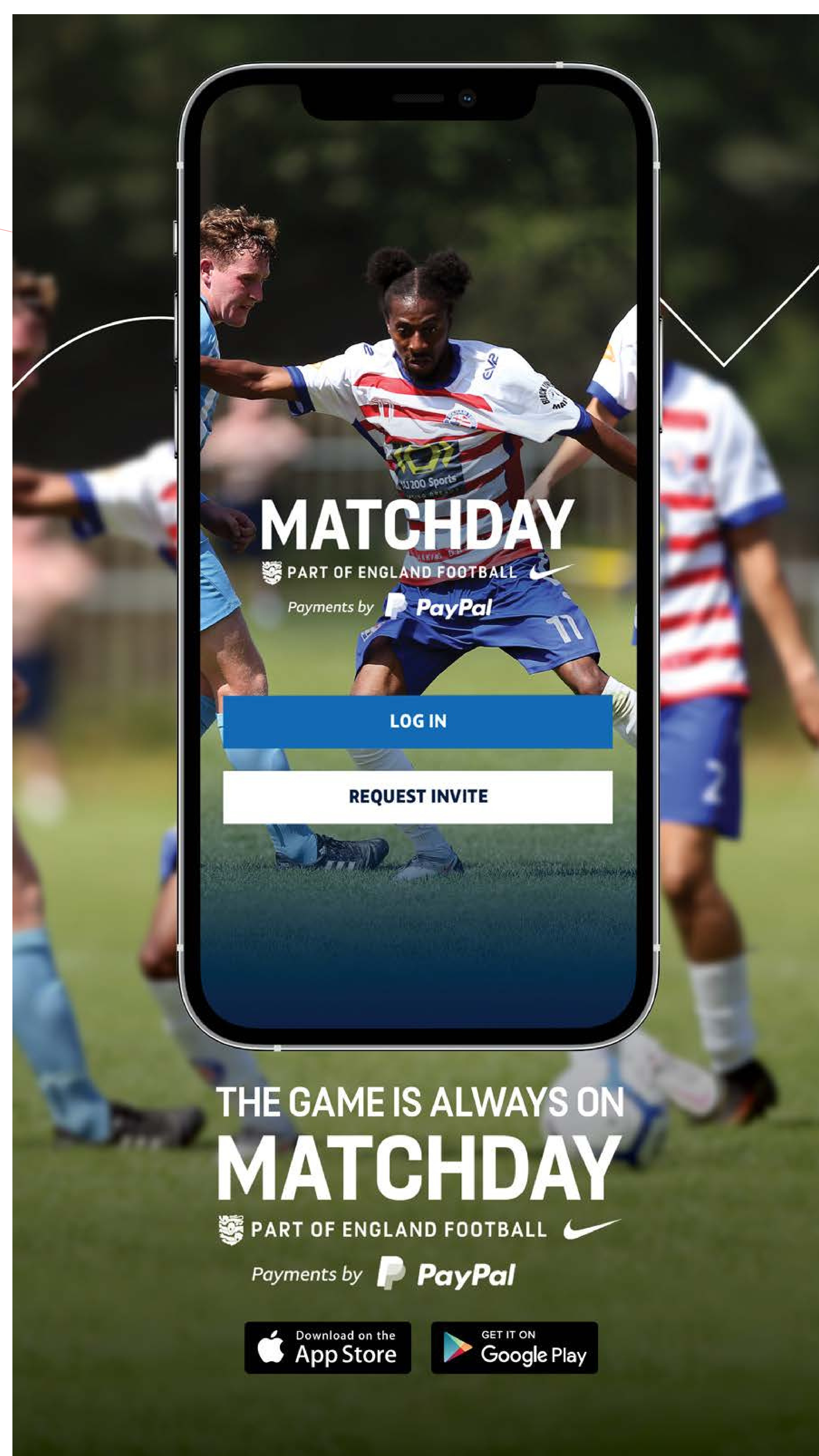
Everything you need to be Matchday ready:

- Your league needs to be using our Club Portal to register players. This is because squad and discipline data is on the WGS. All this data will appear in your Matchday app, allowing managers to pick their squad for each game based on availability and eligibility.

- Your league needs to use our Full-Time service. This service drives fixture lists. Once your league enters fixtures in Full-Time, Matchday will automatically add them to the app. If your league doesn't use Full-Time, you won't be able to see your league fixtures in the app.

- As a club, you need to ensure all your team managers have a ‘manager’ role in the club portal. This could be team manager, assistant team manager, coach or assistant coach. They also need to have an email address in the WGS.

[Click here](#) to find out more about Matchday.



GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

What is GDPR?

The rules that govern data protection have evolved and are now referred to as The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As part of the FA's commitment to share knowledge and best practice, the following advice has been provided to help all leagues and clubs remain compliant.

Does GDPR apply to us?

GDPR applies to all data controllers and data processors, so if you collect any personal data in running your club (which you definitely will do if you have any members) then GDPR will apply to you. There are no exclusions for CASCs, charities or not for profit organisations. It doesn't make a difference for example if you are structured as an unincorporated organisation or company limited by guarantee – the requirements are concerned with the data you hold and how you handle this.

What is Personal Data?

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable data subject who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that person. Examples include: name, address, telephone number, IP address, membership numbers etc.

What if we choose not to use FA Systems?

The FA will not be undertaking any review or compliance activities in respect of non-FA systems. In addition, The FA will not be undertaking compliance activities in respect of leagues' use of data on FA systems for their independent purposes or, to the extent that it falls under the provisions of the regulation, personal data processed by leagues in hard copy forms.

Any non-FA systems or applications which leagues use to collect personal data or processing which is carried out by leagues for independent purposes will need to be reviewed and updated (as necessary) by each league. Each league will need to consider if it needs to update its notices to participants, create internal data protection procedures or spend time considering its information security procedures.

Where Can I Find Further Information?

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has also produced guidance for all UK businesses on GDPR. You can find this document on its website: [The ICO Guide to GDPR](#)

In addition please see below links to example documentation that has been verified by the FA's legal team as meeting the statutory compliance level:

[Data Protection Policy for Leagues & Clubs](#)

[Privacy Notice Clubs](#)

[Privacy Notice Leagues](#)

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SAVE TODAY, PLAY TOMORROW PARTNERS

We are pleased to have partnered with various organisations which will help us to achieve our ambitious goal of creating a low carbon, greener game. You can find out more by clicking on the logo's below.

 **Pledgeball**

BASIS


ctm

 **FOOTBALL
REBOOTED**
utilita

 **Birmingham &
Black Country
Wildlife Trust**

sm


UTILITYWORKS

BioPak
It doesn't cost the earth


PlanetMark

STACK CUP
carry more, waste less

liftshare
for work

 **VEOLIA**

FUNDING DIRECTORY 2023/24

You can access a list of funders who your club may be able to apply to, to support your project, subject to meeting the criteria. Just [click here](#) to see what support could be available to you. The list includes funding nationally, locally, and direct from Birmingham County Football Association. If you come across a funding pot that is not on our list, please get in touch to let us know on Support@BirminghamFA.com.

HOW TO INCREASE LIFT SHARING TO TRAINING

Birmingham County FA are working with your club and team to support you, the parents and coaches to make lift sharing easier.

Reasons to lift share:

- ✓ Save time and share the journey with others
- ✓ Save fuel costs - Families at another Birmingham Club are saving 687 miles a season equating to £200!
- ✓ Boost morale in your child's team
- ✓ Reduce the environmental impacts and air pollution around training clubs and venues
- ✓ Make training venues safer with less cars

"You can still watch your children train, by sharing lifts with other parents".

Nikki, a coach and player's parent, regularly shares and requests lifts with other parents in a WhatsApp group.



LIFT SHARING TIPS

Other Birmingham football team parents and coaches are sharing lifts. Can your team give any of these a go?

- ✓ Find out who lives in close proximity or en-route

"There are 3 groups who regularly share lifts. It's convenient for them because they live in nearby postcodes".

Marcus, Coach at Crusaders U13's

- ✓ Give it a try for a few weeks
You may be concerned that you or other parents may be late. Most people who give it a go are surprised at how well it works!

- ✓ Organise social events so parents get to know each other - as simple as having a cup of coffee together!

- ✓ Share lifts with other parents

This way you don't miss out on watching your child, and you can take it in turns. This also removes any concerns about being responsible for other children.



- ✓ Create a WhatsApp group for lift sharing

It makes it easier for lifts to be arranged outside of other chats that carry on in your team WhatsApp.

Score Big for Your Club!

Join easyfundraising and raise funds simply by shopping online!

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/birmingham-fa



Over £5 million raised for sports clubs and teams



Trusted by over 10,000 football clubs



"Why wouldn't you?
It's quick. It's easy and
it makes free money
for your club"

Michael (FC Union Bristol)

[Sign up here!](#)

**IMPROVING LIVES BY IMPROVING FOOTBALL
IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND**



**BIRMINGHAM COUNTY FA
RAY HALL LANE, B43 6JF**

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