

County Disability Leagues: Classification & Eligibility Guidance



Introduction

The FA are committed to making football accessible, enjoyable and safe for everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, background or ability. The principal aims of The FA are to maximise participation through increased playing opportunities; increase the quality for all (players, administrators, officials and coaches); and to give all of the England teams the best chance of competing for honours in international competitions. These aims apply equally across the whole of the football family.

The FA vision for disabled players in football is as follows:

- Appropriate competition should be made available to all people whatever their level of ability;
- Disabled people should be playing in mainstream football competition however we realise that some disabled players may be better provided for in competitive football such as 'pan disability' or impairment-specific football on a temporary or permanent basis;
- The FA also aims to provide player development pathways to elite level for various impairments such as Blind and Cerebral Palsy and the resulting competitions needed to support the player's development.

Classification is needed to ensure that disability sport is fair, and that people compete against others with recognised impairments. As the County Pan Disability Leagues have grown ensuring this fairness has in some instances become an increasingly difficult issue to deal with.

This document aims to outline which impairment groups should be eligible to play within County Pan Disability Football Leagues. It also outlines some simple forms of evidence that County Leagues can request in order to prove an individual's eligibility. As such, County Leagues are encouraged to adopt the guidance offered in this document.

It is acknowledged that due to the broad disability spectrum that exists individual cases may arise that are not covered within the guidance. In these instances County Leagues are able to request further guidance from the FA.

Impairment specific provision is necessary for certain impairment groups such as the blind and wheelchair users therefore no reference is made to these impairment groups throughout the document.

In some instances the eligibility criteria within this document differs from that required to be eligible to participate in international competition as it is intended to allow a wide participation base within grassroots County Pan Disability Leagues. If an athlete progresses to international events or is on an elite pathway, they are likely to require further testing to determine eligibility.

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Data Protection

There must be a data protection statement included on any player registration form that is seeking proof of eligibility. The statement must ensure that the individual (or parent/guardian where the player is a minor) giving you their personal data is in no doubt how their personal data will be used. Leagues may use the sample statement below, however The FA takes no responsibility for the legal efficacy of this statement and if a League is in any doubt as to their legal position they should seek independent legal advice:

***“The information you provide on and with this form (including any proof of eligibility that you submit) will be used by **CUFC** Ability Counts League for administrative purposes only, including completing your registration, allocating a competition classification and confirming your eligibility to compete in the competition. In addition, your personal data may be shared with Cumberland Football Association, any other appropriate County Football Associations, FA Regional Talent Hub or similar organisations to enable those entities to confirm your eligibility for any competition or activity.*”**

If any of the information submitted changes, please notify us immediately by emailing Ray.Sempill@CumberlandFA.com.

By signing this form you acknowledge that your personal data will be used for the purposes outlined above.”

It is important to understand that given the nature of the medical data being collected, it must be kept confidential and will only be used and passed on as expressly set out above i.e. to confirm eligibility to participate in the County League and other FA Programmes and not for any other purposes such as marketing.

Data should only be stored as follows:

Data bases

- Data bases that contain personal data must be password protected and all reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the security of the data including (but not limited to) ensuring that computers are encrypted and locked when not in use, and ensuring the reliability of employees accessing the database.
- Access should be limited to personnel authorised to view the data in order to carry out the purposes for which it is held i.e. league classification officer, centre of excellence head coach etc.
- Users must not share their login and password details with anyone else.

Hard copies (doctor's letters etc.)

- Hard copies of personal data should be stored in a securely locked filing cabinet and must not be left lying around.
 - Personal data should not be held for any longer than is reasonably necessary to achieve the purpose for which it is held, after which it should be securely deleted/destroyed.

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Explanation
Ataxia	Ataxia is the name given to a group of neurological disorders that affect balance, coordination, and speech.
Athetosis	Athetosis is a condition that is characterized by involuntary, writhing movements of the neck, fingers, arms and legs. Lesions in the brain are the direct cause of athetosis.
BBS	British Blind Sport BBS is the National Disability Sports Organisation for the blind and visually impaired, and internationally is a member of IBSA. BBS provides sight classifications for individuals who wish to participate in competitive structures.
CPISRA	Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association CPISRA is a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), where it represents sport for athletes with Cerebral Palsy or a related neurological condition.
CVI	Certificate of Visual Impairment A form issued to patients and their local social services department after acuity and field tests carried out by an ophthalmologist have confirmed that they are either blind or partially sighted.
dB Hearing Loss	Decibel Hearing Loss A measure of hearing loss.
Diplegia	A form of Cerebral Palsy with more involvement in the lower limbs than the upper limbs, may be asymmetric.
DSAUK	Dwarf Sports Association UK DSAUK is the National Disability Sports Organisation for athletes with a restricted growth condition in the UK.
Hemiplegia	A form of Cerebral Palsy with involvement in upper and lower limb and trunk on the same side of the body.
IBSA	International Blind Sports Federation IBSA is a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), where it represents sport for the blind and visually Impaired.
ICSD	International Committee of Sport for the Deaf ICSD is the International Federation for sport for the deaf. ICSD organises the Deaflympics (winter & summer).

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INAS	International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability INAS is a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), where it represents sport for athletes with an intellectual (learning) disability.
Monoplegia	A form of Cerebral Palsy with involvement in only one limb.
Prosthesis	An artificial device extension that replaces a missing body part
Spasticity	Spasticity is a condition in which there is an abnormal increase in muscle tone or stiffness of muscle, which might interfere with movement, speech, or be associated with discomfort or pain.
UKDS	UK Deaf Sport UKDS is the National Disability Sports Organisation for the deaf and is a member of ICSD.
UKSA	UK Sports Association for People with a Learning Disability UKSA is the National Disability Sports Association for athletes with a learning disability and internationally is a representative member of INAS-FID. UKSA has the responsibility for classification of athletes with learning disability in the UK.
Visual Acuity	Visual acuity is acuteness or clearness of vision and is measured using the Snellen scale. After the test, individuals are given a score made up of two numbers. The first numbers represent how far away from the chart they were able to successfully read the letters on the chart. The second number represents how far away a person with healthy vision should be able to read the chart. For example, a visual acuity score of 6/60 means they can only read 6 metres away what a person with healthy eyesight can read 60 metres away.
Visual Field	Visual field refers to the total area in which objects can be seen in the side (peripheral) vision while you focus your eyes on a central point.

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Impairment	Competition Criteria	Proof of Eligibility
Amputee	<p>According to the World Amputee Football Federation an amputee is someone who is 'abbreviated' at or above (proximal) to the wrist or ankle.</p> <p>Any person with an amputation, congenital deficiency, or other limb affecting disorder will be eligible to participate in CUFC Ability Counts League. However, as outlined in the FA Amputee Risk Assessment Framework, the use of aluminium, titanium or carbon fibre elbow crutches in FA sanctioned competitions is only permitted on 3rd Generation Artificial Turf Pitches or Sand Based Artificial Turf Pitches.</p> <p>Players from this impairment group can play in any position within pan-disability football.</p>	<p>FA guidelines for footballers wishing to play football whilst wearing a prosthesis state that the prosthesis must be assessed by The FA medial department. Applications for assessment should be made via the County FA.</p> <p>Amputee footballers who use wish to use a prosthesis within the CUFC Ability Counts League must have their prosthesis assessed in accordance with the above referenced guidelines.</p>
Partially Sighted	<p>An individual must be categorised as one of the following:</p> <p>B2 From the ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to a visual acuity of 2/60 and/or a field of 5 degrees or less.</p> <p>B3 From a visual acuity above 2/60 up to 6/60 and/or a visual field of more than 5 degrees and less than 20 degrees.</p> <p>B4 This class is determined purely by acuity and ranges from the top of B3 to an acuity of 6/24 Snellen. An individual with an acuity of 6/24 would be able to read the three top lines on a Snellen chart at six metres.</p>	<p>Partially sighted footballers should provide the CUFC Ability Counts League with one of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) B2/B3 permanent medical status documentation (IPMS) • IBSA B2/B3 review medical status (IRMS) • IBSA B2/B3 new medical status (INMS) • Written confirmation of the footballers British Blind Sport B2, B3 or B4 classification • Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) <p>All information must be on headed paper and be an original.</p>
Cerebral Palsy	<p>A diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy in itself does not necessarily make a player eligible to participate in the CUFC Ability Counts League.</p> <p>Athletes must have a neurological impairment with motor control or</p>	<p>Players should provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with one of the following documents:</p>

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	<p>power impairments originating from the brain with spasticity, ataxia or athetosis causing permanent and verifiable activity limitation. The level of neurological impairment associated with these conditions must disadvantage athletes as far as competing in high performance able bodied sport is concerned.</p> <p>Players must fall into one of the following categories:</p> <p>Class 5 athletes are diplegic, have a noticeable hip and shoulder rotation when walking, inwardly rotating hips, knees and feet in standing/walking. There is only minimal difficulty with upper limbs and stride length is reduced with exertion.</p> <p>Class 6 athletes have involvement in all four limbs and have particular problems in trying to control their movements. Walking can be laboured and uncoordinated but running is often easier. There is often a noticeable rolling head movement during running.</p> <p>Class 7 athletes are hemiplegic and when walking or running a limp is often noticed. The dominant upper limb should have normal strength and movement. The affected arm muscles will have increased tone when running and appear bent while the athlete may be flat footed on affected side when running; often the head will tilt to one side during exertion.</p> <p>Class 8 athletes are minimally affected diplegic, hemiplegic, monoplegic or have minimal movement control problems. They will run without a noticeable limp but must demonstrate evidence of a functional disability during testing. They must have one major and one minor sign plus their disability must have impact on the sport they participate in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cerebral Palsy International Sports & Recreation Association (CPISRA) photographic identification card • Confirmation of registration with an FA National Cerebral Palsy Football League team • Letter from a GP or a specialist consultant stating that the athlete has a neurological impairment with motor control or power impairments originating from the brain with spasticity, ataxia or athetosis causing permanent and verifiable activity limitation <p>All information must be on headed paper and be an original.</p>
Deaf	<p>The term deaf covers a wide range of different levels and types of hearing loss. It can refer to people who are born deaf through to elderly people who have become deafened through old age.</p> <p>Players eligible for the CUFC Ability Counts League must have as a minimum, moderate deafness.</p>	<p>Deaf players should provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of their membership of UK Deaf Sport • Athlete ID number issued by International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (ICSD)

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	<p>Definition of degrees of hearing loss eligible for the CUFC Ability Counts League are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate: between 41 and 55 dB Hearing Loss • Moderately severe: between 56 and 70 dB Hearing Loss • Severe: between 71 and 90 dB Hearing Loss • Profound: 91 dB Hearing Loss or greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from an audiologist, GP or a specialist consultant stating that the athlete has a hearing loss of 41 dB or more) <p>All information must be on headed paper and be an original.</p>
Learning Disability	<p>Athletes must meet UK Sports Association (UKSA) National Eligibility criteria which is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant impairment in intellectual functioning - this is defined as 2 standard deviations below the mean, i.e. a Full Scale IQ score of 75 or lower • Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills • Intellectual disability must be evident during the developmental period, which is from conception to 18 years of age 	<p>Players with a learning disability should provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with written confirmation from one or more of the specialists listed below, stating that in the specialists opinion, the player meets all UK Sports Association National Eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSA • GP • Specialist Consultant • Educational Psychologist <p>All information must be on headed paper and be an original.</p> <p>Please note that a letter from a teacher or teaching assistant will not meet the necessary criteria</p>
Learning impairment which impacts on their sporting performance	<p>The FA uses the term 'learning impairment' as an umbrella term to cover any condition or impairment which reduces the brain's ability to obtain, process and understand information. This can result in a reduced ability to concentrate, or to read, process, learn, memorise or retain information. It includes conditions such as poor attention and concentration, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome/Autism spectrum, dyslexia, dyspraxia and learning disabilities. Someone with a learning impairment might go to a special school or receive special education within a mainstream school. They may have a statement</p>	<p>Players who have a learning impairment <u>which impacts on their sporting performance</u> should provide the CUFC Ability Counts League with a letter from one of the following individuals <u>stating why the athlete's learning impairment will disadvantage them</u> as far as competing in mainstream (non disability) sport is concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP

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	<p>of education need or similar.</p> <p>A learning impairment does not always affect someone's performance in sport. An example of this type of learning impairment would be Dyslexia.</p> <p>In order to be eligible for the CUFC Ability Counts League an athlete's learning impairment <u>must affect their sports performance</u>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Consultant • Educational Psychologist <p>All information must be on headed paper and be an original</p> <p>Please note that a letter from a teacher or teaching assistant will not meet the necessary criteria</p>
Mental Health	<p>The CUFC Ability Counts League should be open to all individuals who have experienced <u>acute or enduring</u> mental health problems and are living in the community or a hospital setting.</p>	<p>People with mental health issues must provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with a letter stating that the athlete has <u>substantial</u> mental health problems which have <u>been present over the last 12 months or more</u> from one of the following individuals / organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP • Community Mental Health Services • Day Hospitals • Hostels • Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) or self referral as part of their Care Plan Approach (CPA) • Specialist consultant • Occupational health <p>All information must be on headed paper, be an original and be no more than one year old</p>
Dwarf (Restricted Growth Conditions)	<p>The CUFC Ability Counts League should be open to all athletes with a recognised restricted growth condition.</p>	<p>People with a restricted growth condition must provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Dwarf Sports Association (DSA) membership • Letter from a GP or a specialist consultant

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		<p>stating that the athlete has a restricted growth condition</p> <p>All information must be on headed paper, be an original and be no more than one year old.</p>
<p>Other impairments or a medical condition which impact on someone's sporting performance temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer, arthritis</p>	<p>The CUFC Ability Counts League should be open to athletes with an impairment or a medical condition which <u>impacts on their sporting performance</u> temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer or arthritis</p>	<p>People with an impairment or a medical condition which impacts <u>on their sporting performance</u> temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer or arthritis must provide the CUFC Ability Counts League Secretary with a letter from one of the following individuals, stating why the athletes impairment will disadvantage him as a far as competing in mainstream (non disability) sport is concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP • Specialist Consultant <p>All information must be on headed paper, be an original and be no more than one year old</p>