



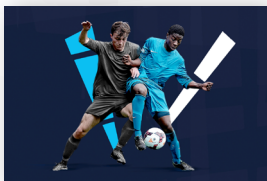
THE GRASSROOTS BULLETIN SPRING 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the second issue of The FA's Adult Grassroots e-bulletin aimed at enhancing The FA and County FAs communication with its adult grassroots clubs and leagues operating outside the National League System.

We are aware of the challenges being faced in the adult game, and we want to provide you with practical content that hopefully makes the running of an adult team or league easier. We'll also highlight some good news stories and celebrate the traditions and culture of the grassroots game.

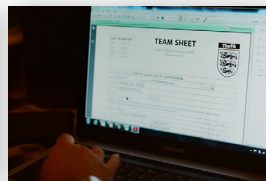
CONTENTS



**Funding
Retain The Game 2018**



**Young people playing
in open age football**



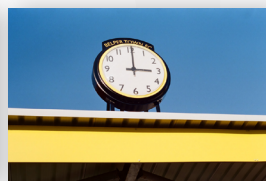
**Support for WGS
Player Registration**



**"The first five yards are
in your head"
An experience of
Vets Football**



**Same game,
different approach
freshening up
league competitions**



Game Time
Grassroots Football on the Telly!
Pitching In

FUNDING - RETAIN THE GAME 2018

The latest affiliation figures for season 2017/18 show a further fall in the number of adult male grass root clubs and teams and its clear many adult clubs are experiencing challenges. In response to this the FA and Football Foundation will be launching a 'Retain the Game' funding scheme in April 2018 aimed at supporting the retention of adult male clubs. Whereas many grant schemes focus on supporting the creation of new teams for adult male football it is clear that the priority lies in offering existing hard working clubs a helping hand. A fund of £1 million has been allocated to 'Retain the Game' with grants of £750 available to support the essential costs of pitch hire, training venues, First Aid courses and playing kit. The following age groups and categories are eligible for support; u/17-u/21, Open Age and Vets Male Teams.



Despite a £1m budget there is a need to prioritise applicants and the following funding criteria will be applied to clubs with two or more adult teams:

- Adult Male Clubs that hold the FA's Adult Charter Standard Award
- Adult Male Teams (u/17-u/21, Open Age and Vets) operating in Charter Standard Development or Charter Standard Community Clubs

- Existing Adult Clubs that commit to become Adult Charter Standard by the end of the 2018/19 season

The scheme will be launched in April 18th and run for six weeks. Further details are available from your CFA or the Football Foundation website following the launch.



YOUNG PEOPLE PLAYING IN OPEN AGE FOOTBALL

Recent distressing revelations as to the historic abuse of young people in professional football have rightly obliged all of the football authorities to review safeguarding measures. The FA's Senior Safeguarding Manager Rachel Tarr provides guidance to adult clubs as to how best to ensure that young people 16 -18 have an enjoyable introduction to open age football;

Many players at the age of 16 -17 are faced with a 'Where next' decision as youth football comes to an end and they are faced with the opportunity to move into u/18, u/21 or open age football. Some don't manage this transition and consequently give up playing competitive football. The challenge for adult clubs is to make this progression really easy. Consider the following:



1) Being visible is key, sign up to The FA Play Football search engine, make full use of your club or league website – let young players know you want them.

2) Be clear about what you are offering – a friendly supportive environment, a club that embraces Respect, FA qualified coaches, FA Charter Standard, social activities, tours, tournaments...

3) Make information readily available for parents/carers they are often key where lifts are required to training and games!

4) Be clear about your club ethos; in effect what's on offer, share your selection criteria, training expectations, fees, range of teams, age range of players and level of competition you are involved in

5) Be clear about what you specialise in; men's and/or women's teams, disability pathways, futsal, walking football...

6) You might want to nominate someone as the key point of contact for teenage players, have a Designated Safeguarding Officer; someone who steers younger player recruitment, ensures the transition to adult football is as smooth as possible looking out for player welfare

7) Ensure everyone knows how to report a concern about the welfare of a young person or the behaviour of someone towards younger players, provide information for coaches, parents and players alike

8) And finally, simply get out there - have club representatives visit your local youth clubs. Ensure this is formally arranged via the youth club committee. Just showing up is not helpful or professional – make a good first impression.



SUPPORT FOR WGS PLAYER REGISTRATION

Deciding to move player registration processes online through the FA's Whole Game System is a big decision for all leagues. For this reason the FA have invested time and resource into making sure we have the support in place for all leagues and clubs wishing to use our system next season. All relevant FA and County FA staff have received comprehensive training, and a dedicated support officer has been nominated in each County.

To help make your decision easier, we have listed some (but by no means all), of the benefits to using the system;



- Reduces pressures on grassroots volunteers
- Embracing new technology will incentivise the next generation of volunteers
- Secure storage
- Provides the FA/CFA/League/clubs improved insight on which to make more informed decisions to drive participation
- Records updated annually – creating a lasting history for each player
- Integration with Full-Time
- Its FREE
- GDPR compliant
- More efficient club discipline management
- Fewer ineligible players
- Links to WGS and any future developments (i.e. suspensions, developments)

Preparation for next season is underway, and a series of 10 webinars have already been held, briefing league officials on the current process. If you were unable to attend, a recording of one of the sessions can be found here - [Play recording](#). If you have any questions regarding the webinars, then please contact us on playerregistrations@thefa.com

We also have an interactive [e-learning resource](#). This is a complete walk-through of the WGS player registration process and can be completed at your own speed. This compliments the numerous training resources signposted under the Need Help sections in the WGS Portal.

Training for leagues and clubs who commit to using the process will begin in April & May and, in order to deal with any ongoing queries or difficulties, a Player Registration Surgery will take place for all club and league officials for 6 weeks after the system has gone live.

If you would like any further information regarding WGS online Player Registration, please contact playerregistrations@thefa.com



“THE FIRST FIVE YARDS ARE IN YOUR HEAD”

AN EXPERIENCE OF VETS FOOTBALL

I'll always be keen to continue playing football as long as I can. I still ran out on the pitch in my mid 40's for an open age side. A few of the team were over 35 and we were getting the run around by lads a lot younger, but as walking football was a way off yet I looked to veterans football. When our local Worthing & Horsham District Sunday League who already had three open age divisions decided to add a veterans division for over 35's, it made sense for me to make enquiries.

I called us FC Zimmer –and I was really surprised at the interest I got. In a matter of days I had loads of people looking to take part so we joined the League and haven't looked back. It's competitive football at a pace we can now handle and most importantly enjoy.



After a game we head back to our local pub, where we all embellish our on pitch achievements or exaggerate others mistakes, so the banter is a perfect addition. But it's not only for the players, as some of us have our wives, partners and children come along to support us. It gives us all an important social side, as well as winding down the working week or escaping the weekend DIY!

Running a vets side does bring up extra challenges at times as I have players ranging from 35-55 so you might get a few more knocks and injuries that may take longer to heal for example. Work and family life is naturally important to all of us, so for both reasons we might need to keep a larger squad. The Division we're currently in has six great teams who all get on and the League is looking to add more. We play at least twice a month so it keeps the balance of family life and football just right, as well as keeping us in shape.



What has made it especially easy for me as secretary and manager is Whole Game and Full-Time. It's all very easy to use, from club affiliation, player registration through to completing results and match returns and more. It has taken a lot of time out of administration and enabled me to focus more on the things that the players want - which is match day. Without systems like these, I wouldn't be able to run things half as effectively and would probably be in the dog house with the rest of the family.

In our first season we came runners-up and it was a great feeling knowing that we could compete again. Now in our second, we've also entered the FA Veterans Cups in both Surrey and Sussex.

They say the older you get the further back on the pitch you play. In Veterans Football don't believe it. I have a full team of players who all suddenly think their strikers. Even me...

Ricky Dumbrell

https://twitter.com/fc_zimmer



SAME GAME, DIFFERENT APPROACH FRESHENING UP LEAGUE COMPETITIONS

The challenges facing adult clubs have led to a number of leagues innovating in the format or administration of their competitions. A number of leagues have worked with the FA and their CFA to attempt to make life easier for participating clubs or the competition more engaging for participants. Examples include;

The introduction of end of season play- offs for promotion places by the Cheltenham League. This not only extends the season but also adds interest to teams and players that otherwise would have little to play for.

The contraction of leagues with a loss of divisions has raised the question as to whether two teams from the same club can play in the same division. This scenario is possible with the permission of the CFA and if the teams are treated as separate clubs for the purposes of transfers.



The Peterborough League have sought to improve team retention by introducing in its Development Divisions a mid-season split. Departing from the traditional format of home and away fixtures, teams are reassigned after the Christmas break into new divisions that offer fixtures against teams of a similar standard.

Many grassroots leagues have introduced repeat substitutions and whilst some administrators will have concerns as to whether this innovation will unduly disrupt matches, the adopters of repeat substitutions speak enthusiastically about the ability to offer all players meaningful involvement in a fixture.

The use of player registration on WGS has significantly reduced the admin paperwork required from teams on match days which has been welcomed by those normally burdened by triplicate team-sheet forms, player registration paperwork, ID card checks and result postcards.



GAME TIME

Grassroots Football on the Telly!

Have you ever thought that grassroots and Sunday League football would make good TV? Well, due to the wonders of the internet and You Tube, it is possible to watch all 6 episodes of Danny Baker's 'The Game', a series all about the East London Sunday League Division 4, which was screened in 1991

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_kZfYrT0Rw

Possibly the most action packed minute of amateur football can be viewed in this clip from earlier this season, a game between Padiham and Widnes in the North West Counties League.

<https://youtu.be/pUqdT7g8cGA>



Pitching In

Mauricio Pochettino's recent comments about the condition of the pitch at Rochdale before the FA Cup 5th round game will be very familiar to many grass roots players who may have had to deal with who may have had to deal with a lot worse.

But, help is available, to improve the state of the country's football pitches!

<http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/facilities/the-fa-pitch-improvement-programme>

If you would like to know more about the pitch improvement programme please contact your local County Football Association.



FEEDBACK

If you want to follow up on anything featured in this bulletin or contribute to a future issue please contact The FA's Adult Participation Manager dermot.collins@thefa.com you can also speak to the County Development Manager of your local County Football Association.



FOR ALL

The Football Association
Wembley Stadium,
Wembley,
Middlesex HA9 0WS

St George's Park
Newborough Road,
Needwood,
Burton upon Trent,
Staffordshire DE13 9PD

Postal address:
The Football Association,
Wembley Stadium,
PO Box 1966,
London SW1P 9EQ

W: TheFA.com
T: 0800 169 1863
Twitter: @FA