



DISABILITY FOOTBALL *YOUTH ENGAGEMENT* **CONSULTATION**



NOVEMBER 2022



INTRODUCTION

Alongside the Oxfordshire FA Youth Leadership Team, we are excited to launch the report of our latest youth consultation initiative. This is where we are regularly getting feedback from children & young people across the county to help make continuous positive improvements.

The aim of this youth consultation was to get the views of disability players in the county to understand their current experience and how we can improve this for them and encourage more players into the game.

This feedback will shape our work around disability football and hopefully support us to continue the growth of the game in the county.

I would personally like to thank all 114 players that took part in the study during a recent visit to the Berkshire, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Inclusive (BOBi) League Event and provided some valuable feedback for us take forward.

Michael Thurlow
Football Development Manager

Oxfordshire FA



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"The disability game has made huge progress in Oxfordshire over recent years. It is vital the views of young people are at the heart of any future decisions to ensure the game continues to develop and grow over the coming years"

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CONSULTATION SAMPLE

Consultation was carried out face-to-face at a Berkshire, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Inclusive (BOBi) League Event where respondents answered a series of questions as a team with their coaches' present.

A range of open questions were used.

51

players aged 8 to 15

63

players aged 16+



YOUTH PLAYERS

(AGED 8- TO 15-YEAR-OLDS)

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT FOOTBALL?

The two most prominent themes for what players enjoyed the most were **making new friends** and the **positive interaction** with their **teammates**. Almost all teams spoken to brought this up and included it as a main factor.

The second theme was the **friendly, safe, and inclusive environment** and **sportsmanship** they experience at their club sessions and while attending the BOBi League.

Linked to this, it was mentioned **how supportive their coaches** were and how this contributed to an enjoyable experience.

The words **fun** and **'having a laugh'** were used by many players for what they enjoy about football.

The final main theme that was mentioned several times is football **'helps and motivates them to get out of the house'** which they highly valued.

It was also mentioned how it was great for getting everyone **physically active** and helped with any challenges with their health or disability.

It was clear players loved to learn and practice as the love of **shooting, passing and skills** was brought up several times.

HOW COULD FOOTBALL BE BETTER?

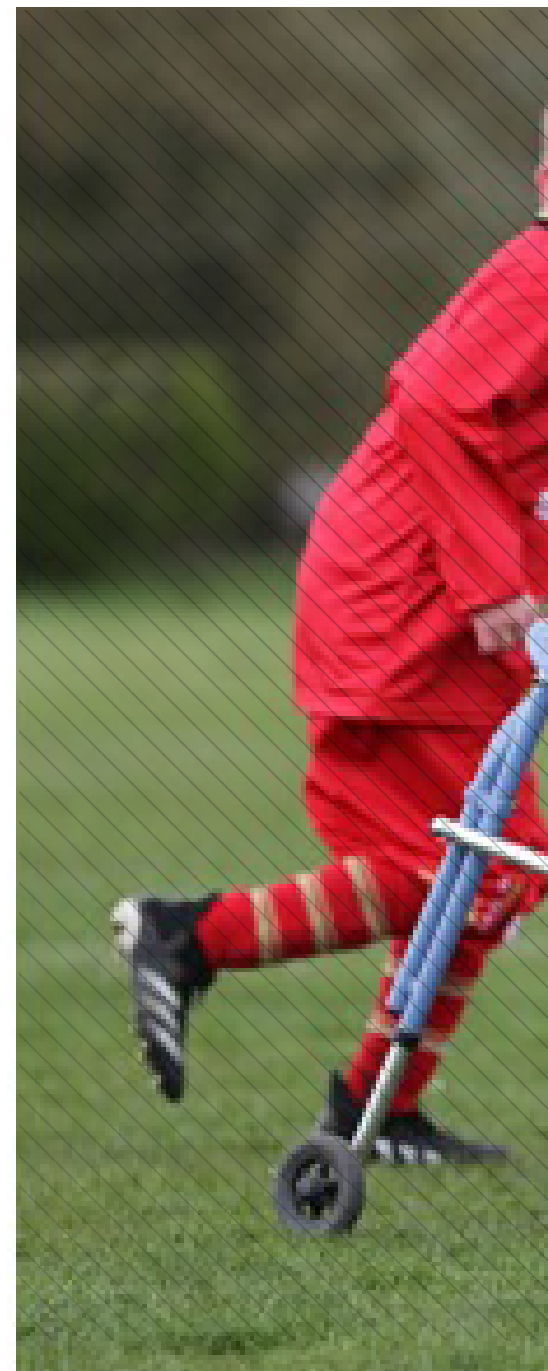
Positively, the most common answer for this question from this age group was **'Nothing'**.

However, the main theme on a suggestion on how it could be better was **longer training sessions** and **more of it**.

Similarly, it was also stated by a number that they would like to have more opportunities to play against other teams throughout the season.

It was mentioned by a couple of players that **slide tackles** were impacting their current experience.

Finally, having more consistent referees when playing against other teams was mentioned by two teams.



IS THERE ANY REASON YOU MIGHT STOP PLAYING FOOTBALL?

Again, positively, the most popular answer to this question was **'I will never stop playing football'**.

The biggest reason for players potentially giving up was due to injury, their health, or their disability.

The other themes for why players might give up was poor behaviour, people not playing fair, always losing or always being on the bench.

These responses were linked to playing against other teams opposed to their club sessions.

Another factor that was mentioned was **inclement weather** and this sometimes impacted their experience and could influence whether they continue playing or not. This was

only mentioned by one team. The final point was if they stopped enjoying their regular club session they would be unlikely to continue.



ADULT PLAYERS AGED 16+

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT FOOTBALL?

The two main themes for what they enjoyed the most were **making new friends** and **positive teamwork** with their teammates. Interestingly, this was the same top answer as youth players (aged 8 to 15).

The next most prominent theme for what players enjoyed the most was their club being **one big family** and a **brilliant support network**.

Adult players really valued the **positive, safe, and inclusive environment** at their club sessions.

Another theme that came up was they felt they '**were not judged based on their disability**' when they were at their club session or participating at the BOBi League. This contributed a lot to them having a **highly positive experience**.

The players loved their club sessions and having the **opportunity to take part,**

socialise and take their mind off everyday life.

Similar to youth players, it was mentioned how they appreciated the benefits playing club football had on their physical health and disability.

The final main theme, again like youth players, was football giving them the opportunity and motivation to get out of the house and giving them fresh air.





HOW COULD FOOTBALL BE BETTER?

The main theme was centred around **more football**. Players wanted **more training**, and **more opportunities to play fixtures as part of the BOBi League**.

The next most prominent theme was **more teams and players** would make football better.

Having more opportunities to play football across the county and more players involved in these sessions would make the experience even better

Linked to this, they felt **more advertisement of disability football** was needed.

Finally, it was felt more consistent referees were needed when playing fixtures against other teams as this was impacting players experiences.

WHAT ENCOURAGED YOU TO PLAY FOOTBALL FOR YOUR CLUB?

The main theme for wanting to start playing football was around **meeting new people** and **making new friends**.

Each team mentioned how it was a family member that encouraged them to find their local opportunity to play football.

The want to '**improve my physical and mental health**' was a key factor in encouraging a number of people to start playing.

Another theme that came up was wanting to have that '**sense of community**' and '**expand my support network**'. These were deciding factors for many when deciding to start playing football for their local club.

Finally, wanting a **new challenge** was mentioned by a couple of players.

IS THERE ANY REASON YOU MIGHT STOP PLAYING FOOTBALL?

Like youth players, positively, the most popular answer was '**nothing will stop me from wanting to play football in the future**'.

The main theme for potentially giving up was due to an injury or their health or disability.

Old age was the final theme that was given but only mentioned by one person.

YOU SAID, WE WILL!

THESE WILL BE ACTIONED
THROUGHOUT 2022 AND 2023.

OFF THE BACK OF THIS
VALUABLE FEEDBACK, AS A
COUNTY FA WE WILL COMMIT
TO A SERIES OF 'WE WILLS'
WITH THE AIM OF DEVELOPING
THE DISABILITY GAME IN
THE COUNTY.

OUR 'WE WILLS' ARE:

1.

Work with local clubs, BOBi League and stakeholders to further promote and raise awareness of the disability game and BOBi League in the county. Feedback from this study will help shape the key messages to engage new players into the game.

2.

Work closely with England Football Accredited Clubs to support the creation of new sessions and teams where there are gaps in the county across the youth and adult disability game.

3.

Support the upskilling of coaches across the county that are engaged with the disability game with the aim of continuing to provide an inclusive environment and improving the overall player experience

4.

Supporting the upskilling of qualified referees and parent/coach referees involved in the BOBi League to help provide a consistent and high-quality experience for all

5.

Work with the BOBi League to develop their offer and the experience they provide to their members.

As part of the visits for this study, separate questions were asked specifically to players experiences at BOBi League Events. These findings were not included in this report but have been collated and will be presented to the league committee.





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