



SHEFFIELD & HALLAMSHIRE COUNTY FA

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL AWARDS 2023

THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER
HILLSBOROUGH STADIUM

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WELCOME

The England Football Grassroots Football Awards are for people who make a positive difference. It's our way to celebrate the fantastic individuals, clubs, leagues and projects who put their heart and soul into the grassroots game across England and our region – and to say a huge thank you to the incredible volunteers who inspire us all.

Each year, we come together locally to recognise our local winners and highly commended recipients across 12 categories.

This year's categories are:

- The Lioness Award
- Grassroots Club of the Year
- Grassroots Grounds Team of the Year
- Grassroots League of the Year
- Grassroots Coach of The Year – Male Pathway
- Grassroots Coach of The Year – Female Pathway
- Grassroots Coach of The Year – Disability Pathway
- Grassroots Match Official of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Grassroots New Volunteer of the Year
- Positive Football Environment Award
- The Geldart Award

Thank you to our grassroots community for your 160+ nominations. Every volunteer we celebrate. Every nominee we applaud. Most of all, every winner and highly commended we congratulate. You are the beating heart of football in our region and we salute you all.



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

I am delighted to welcome you all to celebrate the local winners and highly commended recipients of The England Football Grassroots Football Awards 2023.

As a County FA, this is our chance to recognise and say thank you to the many grassroots volunteers in our region who are changing lives through football.

We can never take for granted the tremendous work that grassroots volunteers do year in, year out. They are the beating heart of grassroots football, and it's a privilege and an honour to recognise their achievements at these awards.

Every single nomination was submitted by somebody who felt that person went above and beyond in their local community, recognising the incredible amount of time, effort and energy they commit to making the game the best it can be.

Congratulations to all our local winners and highly commended recipients, and I wish you even more future success as you continue to play a critical role in growing the game.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Andy Giddings for hosting the event, as well as the team at Sheffield Wednesday FC for providing us with a fitting venue to recognise our grassroots heroes.

BRIAN CODDINGTON

SHEFFIELD & HALLAMSHIRE COUNTY FA CHAIR







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CATEGORIES

The Lioness Award

Inspired by the Women's Euros victory and its impact on and off the pitch, this award recognises the people who are using football as a way of inspiring positive change in the women and/or girls' game.

Club of the Year

The Club of the Year are the beating heart of their local community. They demonstrate, both on and off the pitch, that they are inclusive, play their part in the local community and support The FA with initiatives such as Wildcats, Squad or Just Play, increased on pitch opportunities for male, female or disabled players.

Grounds Team of the Year

This award is for the grounds team who excels when it comes to making sure grassroots football happens, and the pitch and facilities are ready to go. They might not have a specific title, but these people are the ones who make sure the whole space – from the pitch to the facilities – are always safe, welcoming and fully prepared for the game.

League of the Year

The League of the Year has dedicated volunteers who clearly demonstrate, both on and off the pitch, how they proudly create a safe, fun and inclusive space for everyone. The judging panel has considered how they demonstrate support of The FA initiatives and its valuable role in the community.

Coach of the Year – Female, male and disability pathway

This award recognises those coaches who are inclusive, encouraging and inspiring when it matters most. In particular, it identifies those who have stood out when engaging players, developing strong positive relations with players and parents, and creating a safe, inclusive and positive space for everyone involved.

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Match Official of the Year

This award category is to recognise the match officials who have impressed on match days or in the refereeing community. It's for those who have shown dedication and commitment to supporting the game and match officials, whilst showing empathy and respect to all involved.

Young Volunteer of the Year

This is someone who has made a real contribution to football in the community. A person who is a role model and gives the best of themselves to make the game for all. Someone who provides a valued voice for other young people, or a valuable skillset as part of a wider team.

Grassroots New Volunteer of the Year

This category recognises volunteers who have started in football this season and immediately made a positive impact at their football club, league or other organisation.

Positive Football Environment Award

We're looking for a volunteer who's gone the extra mile to create a positive football culture. One that is warm and welcoming, and fun, safe and inclusive for everyone. It could be someone in your club or league, or a volunteer, player, referee or an organiser of social football.

The Geldart Award

The Geldart Award was donated to the Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA in 2018 by David Geldart in memory of his parents, who did so much to establish and develop youth football in the Worksop area in the 1970s and 80s.



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JUDGING PROCESS

The judging panel was made up of a team of four external judges from across the local community who were each assigned their own categories. The judges assessed every nomination anonymously, with great effort made to remove references to names, clubs, leagues, etc. to ensure each nomination was judged fairly, equally, and without bias.

No Sheffield & Hallamshire staff or board/council members were involved in the judging process. All winners and highly commended recipients were chosen by the independent judging panel.

The judging panel made their decisions by scoring each nomination on the positive impact a nominee has made on grassroots football, with guidance notes provided by the County FA. During this stage, judges determine which entries are worthy of winning the category as well as selecting a highly commended award.

Highly Commended awards are given when a nomination has scored highly but just misses out on being the winner of a category

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JUDGING PANEL

Thank you to our judges for helping us to recognise our grassroots heroes:

- Becca Gallagher, Development Manager, Yorkshire Sport Foundation.
- Chris Siddall, Head of Sport, Leisure and Strategic Partnerships, Rotherham Council.
- Safiya Saeed, Project Manager (Volunteer), Reach up Youth.
- Zanib Rasool, Community Projects Manager, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust.



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The Lioness Award

WINNER

GAIL FLETCHER - SILVER STRIKERS

Gail is the founder of Silver Strikers, a women's recreational football team based in Rotherham. Sara nominated Gail for this award after seeing her set up a women's rec team from scratch, initially with no funding, to what it is today – a team of 30+ women of all ages and abilities, most of whom have never played football before or have returned to the game after many years away.

"Gail is an incredible role model who works tirelessly as the founder of Silver Strikers. The Lionesses inspired a new generation of girls to get into football and to fight for their rights and equality. Gail is inspiring the missed generation to do just that, as well as building a community for all."

Sara H - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

MEGAN WYLDE - MILLMOOR JUNIORS

Megan has brought people together and provided them with opportunities to become part of a team. She has dedicated a significant amount of her time to planning and organising activities such as recreational football sessions, fitness sessions, social events, fundraisers, and much more.

"Despite her humility and belief that she isn't doing anything special, I strongly disagree! Without Meg, these ladies wouldn't have had the confidence to pursue these activities independently."

Louise W - Nominator

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GRASSROOTS CLUB OF THE YEAR

WINNER

KIVETON PARK FC

Kiveton Park FC embodies the principle that all teams and players are treated equally. The club openly promotes the idea of players aspiring to progress from youth teams to adult teams, and this year that dream became a reality for both the men's and women's teams. These achievements have provided additional positive role models for others within the club.

"This club lives and breathes the fact that all teams and players are treated the same. There is no preferential treatment and everybody has the opportunity to give football a go."

Rachel H - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

DARNALL DIAMONDS

Chairperson Kabier Aslam dedicates over 20 hours a week to keep this club running, providing opportunities for players of all ages and abilities to enjoy football. As a club, they are breaking barriers for female Asian footballers and fostering a safe environment for children from diverse backgrounds and cultures to participate in the beautiful game.

"We'd like to think we are a very hospitable club, welcoming and fun environment. Which is what we try and install in everybody associated with the club."

Mohammad W - Nominator



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GRASSROOTS GROUNDS TEAM OF THE YEAR

WINNER

MALCOLM GEAL - SCISSETT FC

Malcolm is affectionately known as the 'grass whisperer' by everyone at the club due to his unwavering commitment to achieving the best possible condition for the club's pitches. Just three years ago, the ground was locally referred to as 'The Deep' because, come late November, players could expect to be knee-deep in mud. Then Malcolm joined. Despite lacking formal training or extensive experience, he embarked on a mission to transform 'The Deep' into Yorkshire's very own field of dreams.

"The transformational Malcolm has had on the club and our facilities is immense. He has turned The Deep into our very own Field of Dreams in just three years."

Nick S - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

WILL BURDEN - WICKERSLEY YOUTH JFC

Will consistently maintains the pitches so that they are in excellent condition all year round. He is available 24/7, dedicating himself to the care of the pitches, and utilises his own equipment to ensure they are in the best condition in South Yorkshire. Thanks to his unwavering efforts, the children can continue playing throughout the season without the need to postpone games, except in cases of severe weather that make playing impossible.

"The hours of effort and time given is the greatest in the club. He gives up not only his time, but the use of his own personal equipment and covers the cost of fertiliser and other products in order to maintain the pitches."

Jamie D - Nominator

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GRASSROOTS LEAGUE OF THE YEAR

WINNER

SOUTH YORKSHIRE ABILITY COUNTS LEAGUE

The league has made a significant and positive impact on young and open-age disability footballers. It consists of 14 clubs, with 79% of them being accredited, and encompasses 54 teams and over 600 players. Through this league, football has brought immense joy to disabled players, and their outstanding reputation stands as a testament to the dedication of Chairperson Mike Stylianou, Secretary Paul Jubb, and Welfare Officer Andrew Robson.

"The pleasure that football gives to disadvantaged footballers of any age cannot be underestimated. But safety, safeguards, and discipline are key, and it is in these areas that the league excels."

Peter (Sheffield FC) - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

DONCASTER & DISTRICT JUNIOR SUNDAY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

With the popularity of women's football flying high in recent years, the demand for girls' football has never been greater. The league has taken advantage of this to reflect the community they serve. After being inspired by the clubs themselves, the league dedicated time and resources to enable the launch of the Doncaster Girls' League. The new league ensures that more children are able to get active, meet new friends and boost their confidence whilst engaging in football within Doncaster.

"Previously, girls who wanted to play football in Doncaster either had to play in mixed teams or travel further afield to play girls' only football. But now, girls between the ages of seven and ten have access to a girls' only league on their doorstep."

Molly W - Nominator



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GRASSROOTS COACH OF THE YEAR - MALE PATHWAY

WINNER

DAVID JOHNSON - TINSLEY JFC

David is a coach who consistently prioritises player development and recognises the unique needs of each individual, regardless of their gender, race, or faith. Recently, during Ramadan, he went the extra mile by collaborating with parents of fasting players to ensure inclusivity within the team. While all coaches dedicate time to educate themselves and plan sessions, David has taken it a step further. He not only educates himself but also strives to understand children's behaviours, needs, and faiths, with the aim of providing unwavering support for their enjoyment of football.

"I have nominated David not just because of how much he does as a coach, but also as a Chairman and a mentor. His dedication and commitment is second to none."

Sarah J - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

STEVEN BECKITT - SWINTON SPARTANS

We are saddened to learn that Steven Beckitt passed away after a short illness. Nicknamed Mini, Steven was the coach of Swinton Spartans under-11s. Team captain Noah nominated Steven because he always went above and beyond to support the team, even during his illness when he would watch games via FaceTime and plan weekly training sessions.

"Mini has taught me to love the game of football for all the right reasons. He has shown me that even during the hardest times of your life, you can still give your love, time, and effort to making other people's lives better. We think he's the best coach/manager ever and are thankful for everything he's ever done for us."

Noah - Nominator

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GRASSROOTS COACH OF THE YEAR - FEMALE PATHWAY

WINNER

JOHN BRIDGMAN - HALLAM RANGER U12 GIRLS

John is an exceptional coach who welcomes girls of all abilities to his team, including many who have never played football before. He provides every girl with equal playing time and works diligently to develop every player. John demonstrates respect towards all players, parents, and the opposing team, while ensuring a fun and enjoyable environment for everyone involved. He serves as a shining example of what a grassroots coach should be.

"I can only hope for more John Birdgmans in grassroots football, he epitomises football for all."

Rachel I - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

HOLLY EMERY - SPOTBROUGH AND CUSWORTH
CRUSADERS

Holly goes above and beyond to ensure that no girl in the team is left behind. The club's under 9s team struggled for numbers last season, but under Holly's leadership the girls have grown close and developed friendships, caring for each other while having fun at training and learning the basics of the game. Holly has made the girls feel that enjoying football is more important than the result and yet has still managed to improve the team.

"Holly genuinely cares about every girl at the club. Holly will go above and beyond to ensure that no girl in the team is left behind."

Diana K - Nominator



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GRASSROOTS COACH OF THE YEAR - DISABILITY PATHWAY

WINNER

NATHAN PEARSON - DEREK DOOLEY FOOTBALL
ACADEMY

Nathan is an inspiration to everyone he meets and has shown that you can, with perseverance, grow in confidence to become a major part of a club and the community. He has great rapport with all the players who see him as a great role model to what they can achieve for themselves. He takes on board the different needs of everyone he coaches and is always positive and calm in all situations. Every player listens to his training drills and learns how they can improve. He is the one they go to for help and advice and he will always listen to their problems.

"He will always step in to help and is the calm voice the players listen to. He is an outstanding player and a confident and well organised young man."

Claire W - Nominator

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GRASSROOTS MATCH OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

WINNER

VANCE WARNER

Vance is an ex-professional footballer giving back to the grassroots game and is a true inspiration to all who have the pleasure of meeting, speaking and having him officiate at their matches. Respect levels when Vance is on the field of play are always at the highest and the players look forward to having him as their referee.

"He inspires everyone who attends the matches he officiates; I am now a qualified referee after being inspired by Vance."

Adrian (Worksop Town JFC) - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

JAKE RHODES - BEIGHTON MAGPIES U13 BLUE

The players all accept that when Jake is officiating, he's in charge. This is mainly because he's fair but most importantly because he listens to the players which makes them feel more confident that they are going to be safe on the pitch. His approachable manner gets the respect every official deserves.

"To say he's only 16 years old, the way he approaches every game you'd think he'd been doing this for years. My boys love having Jake as their referee and see him as a mate rather than just the referee of their game."

Shaun W - Nominator



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YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

JACK JOHNSON - ELITE FOOTBALL ACADEMY

Jack is an inspiration to everybody at Elite Football Academy and demonstrates everything that the club stands for. He is respectful, confident, thoughtful and interested in the wellbeing and development of others. He not only represents the club as a player and gives one hundred percent in every game, but he is also a coach, ambassador, friend and leader.

"JJ takes a lot of pride in everything he does, and his can-do attitude has seen him become a friend of everyone at the club"

Matthew E - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

RYAN ELLIOTT - ROSSINGTON MAIN FC

Rossington Main is run entirely by volunteers and Ryan is the youngest volunteer at only 15 years old. Ryan supports the club for all match day activities and also helps out with clubhouse functions. He is generally the first person at the ground on matchdays; getting the dressing rooms ready, changing the bins, filling the water bottles, cleaning up etc.

"Ryan learns fast; you only have to show him something once. Whenever we have a staff shortage or a job that needs doing, he is the first to jump in and support us. He always ensures that the club's best interests are taken care of before watching any games which is amazing to see from a young lad."

Daniel L - Nominator

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NEW VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

HELEN KNIGHT - BARNSELEY & DISTRICT SCHOOLS FA

Thanks to Helen, the Barnsley & District School FA is now a sustainable district football association, with clear financial planning that has brought equity and parity for girls' football. The association is now not just surviving but flourishing and can look forward to more of the same for years to come.

"Helen has energy, enthusiasm and incredible effort and commitment to the role, all while holding down a full time job as a carer for the local council. She is simply SUPERWOMAN!"

Stephen G - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

DANIEL GODDARD - DEARNE & DISTRICT FC

Danny has supported the Dearne & District U12 girls' team since its inception. Without the support that Danny offers as the manager's right-hand man, the team would not be where it is today. Being based in a mining community in Goldthorpe means there isn't always opportunities for young girls to step out of their comfort zone. But Danny has given the girls the opportunity to play in a sport which they love but also to make new friendships, which is equally just as important.

"Danny is part of a team alongside James Blessed. The pair of them are an absolute credit to girls' grassroots football!"

Ashley W - Nominator



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POSITIVE FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT AWARD

WINNER

MIKE STYLIANOU - SOUTH YORKSHIRE ABILITY
COUNTS LEAGUE

Mike perfectly fits the description of a volunteer who creates a positive football environment for everyone. He is a fantastic ambassador for local football and for young and open age footballers living with disabilities, providing the best possible football experience for all. He is popular and highly regarded by everyone associated with the SYACL and fully deserve this recognition.

"Mike's impact on younger and open-aged disability footballers has been immense. He has an uncompromising approach to providing the best possible footballing experience for disadvantaged participants."

Colin M - Nominator

HIGHLY COMMENDED

JAN MILNER - DONCASTER ROVERS WALKING
FOOTBALL CLUB

Jan has loved football all her life and created a club virtually on her own in Doncaster in 2015. The club welcomes men and women from across the region because they enjoy the football and feel safe. Thanks to Jan, footballers of all ages and abilities around Doncaster have now got the chance to continue playing the game.

"For me what, stands out is Jan's passion for helping others and most definitely her love of football. She turns up every week and is still out there encouraging others to play football."

Kathryn S - Nominator

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THE GELDART AWARD

The Geldart Award was donated to the Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA in 2018 by David Geldart in memory of his parents, who did so much to establish and develop youth football in the Worksop area in the 1970s and 80s.

WINNER

STEVEN BECKITT - SWINTON SPARTANS

We're honoured to award Steven Beckitt with the Geldart Award for his incredible commitment to junior football.

Steven, who also received Highly Commended in the Grassroots Coach of the Year - male pathway category, was a coach at Swinton Spartans.

Even during his illness, Steven continued to support the team and his impact is immeasurable. He truly was a grassroots hero.

Steven's family will be presented with the Geldart Award by brothers David and Brian Geldart.





THANK YOU

Everybody at the Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA would like to say thank you to the thousands of volunteers involved in the game across our county.

Volunteers are the backbone of grassroots football, giving up their time every week to help ensure that their clubs and leagues can continue to offer the opportunity for people to play the beautiful game. Without them, the game as we know it wouldn't exist.

Congratulations to all our award winners and highly commended and a huge thank you to the many grassroots heroes across our region whose amazing efforts make football happen – so many of you are worthy of recognition.



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