

ASIANS IN FOOTBALL

NEWSLETTER **ISSUE 3**

DEVELOPING ASIAN FOOTBALL





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As the governing body of football, The FA has a duty to make the game more inclusive. Not only that, we have committed through the Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Plan to take steps that will make change happen. The under representation of Asian communities across the whole game has been recognised as a priority area for The FA and through this newsletter, alongside a number of other activities and strategies, we hope to affect change.

Clearly, such change will not happen overnight. Real change will involve all of the game's stakeholders working collectively to continue to break down barriers and make sure football truly is accessible for everyone who wishes to get involved.

Alex Horne, General Secretary The Football Association

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CONTENTS

Development – Asians in Football Talent ID Day	4
Education – Football in the classroom	5-6
Interview – professional player Indy Aujla	7-8
County in focus – Birmingham County FA	9-10
Female football – MWSF Female Futsal Festival	11
Female football – Interview with top referee, Lisa Rashid	12-13
Career opportunities	14
Funding	15



WEMBLEY THE SETTING, TALENT THE FOCUS FOR ASIANS IN FOOTBALL BEST PRACTICE DAY

ASIANS IN FOOTBALL TALENT ID DAY AT WEMBLEY

The second Asians in Football Talent ID Best Practice Day took place at Wembley Stadium on Thursday 30 January.

65 coaches attended the event which was held in Wembley's Learning Zone, with delegates' coaching experience levels ranging from Level 1 up to UEFA A Licence.

The event is part of English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination plan. It hopes to help widen football's talent pool, address the under-representation of Asians in the game at all levels, and bring together male and female, professional and amateur coaches from across the country.

Coaches were provided with guidance on talent identification, assessing players correctly and encouraged to think about how to become more involved in scouting.

Mike Rigg, The FA's Head of Talent Identification and The FA's national manager for Youth Development, Nick Levett

both spoke at the event. UEFA A Licence coach Taff Rahman discussed the skills of identifying exciting prospects at grassroots and youth level and Brendon Batson MBE, who played for Arsenal, Cambridge United and West Bromwich Albion, attended the event to talk about The FA's COACH Bursary Programme. Dr Colin King from The Black and Asian Coaches Association (BACA) delivered a "Factors in Talent ID" workshop and also on hand to support coaches throughout the day.

"It was great to see such a diverse group of people in the same room who are genuinely interested in making a difference," said Balvinder Shekhon, Community Development Manager at MK Dons. "This is an exciting journey for, players, coaches and communities."

For more information on Asians in football please contact Kevin.Coleman@TheFA.com

For more information, visit TheFA.com/news/governance/equality/2014/feb/breakthrough-for-asians-in-football



LOCAL JOURNALIST DELIVERS LITERACY WORKSHOPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LUTON TOWN FC DIRECTOR DAVID BLAKEMAN

FOOTBALL IN THE CLASSROOM

A Luton journalist and the town's football club continue to combine on a number of projects aimed at producing the next generation of fans and sports writers.

Amar Azam, a freelance football journalist, runs literacy and communication skills workshops with primary school pupils in the town, and also works with Luton Town Football Club on workshops to re-engage boys with reading through football.

For the last two years, Unleashing Potential, a charity that Amar works for, and the club have worked on a scheme for which teachers nominate schoolchildren who they feel have shown the biggest improvements in their literacy.

Over 700 children and their parents will attend matches for the next one of these initiatives, which will be running over the course of April.

"The schools are really pleased that this partnership places so much emphasis on rewarding those children that had made significant gains at school," said Amar, who covers Arsenal, and Chelsea for his clients.

"They include children from schools in the Bury Park area, where I grew up. It is where the club's ground is based, and has a large South Asian community. I am hoping that these youngsters form part of the next generation of the club's supporters."

Unleashing Potential is a charity that manages projects aimed at creating leadership within communities. These include mentoring and employability initiatives.

It also runs Project Malawi, an initiative which focuses on facilitating sustainability schemes in Africa. As a part of this, they run an annual book drive with Luton Borough Council, as well as penpal partnerships between local schools, and ones in Malawi.

Club director David Blakeman said of the work with Unleashing Potential: "We recognise the value of learning and achievement, and our involvement with these schemes in part reflects our commitment to the development of young people and children in our diverse communities."

Meanwhile, the football club also threw its backing behind an initiative to get more underrepresented groups in through the turnstiles.

About 100 women from the South Asian community attended a game at Kenilworth Road on 22 March, a first for most of them.





HEADSCARVES TO FOOTBALL SCARVES

This was part of the From Headscarves to Football Scarves initiative, the brainchild of Butch Fazal, of the National Asians in Football Forum.

The group of predominantly Muslim women watched Luton Town beat Chester City.

Butch said: “There are a lack of opportunities for South Asian women to participate in football. This community is underrepresented in sport and we’re hoping to address that.”

He put notices about his plans in local football clubs, community centres and mosques, and was praiseworthy of the support from Luton Town Football Club. He added: “They have worked very hard over a number of years to develop a good relationship with the community”.

Some students from Luton Sixth Form College, where he is a student development adviser, also took part.

Nadia Gulfraz, who is training to be a football coach through the Bedfordshire County Football Association, said by taking part she hoped to inspire more women to attend matches.

She said: “The whole point of this was that we could say that we are able to go to these matches, and for it not to be something out of the ordinary.”

To find out more about any of these initiatives, please contact **Amar Azam** at info@unleashing.me or **Butch Fazal** at AMF@LutonSFC.ac.uk





BOSTON UNITED'S INDY AUJLA

We recently spoke to Indy Aujla at The FA's Asians in Football Talent ID Best Practice Day at Wembley. Indy is one of the crop of professional Asian players, who has played in Belgium and in this country, and recently signed for Boston United. Indy was born in Bradford, with family roots in the Punjab in India. From a family of five, he started playing at five years old and – like Ryan Giggs – is a big fan of yoga.

Indy, when did you first play the game?

I began kicking a ball around from five years old. All my family played too so it felt very natural to me and I asked my father to take me for trials for a local Sunday league club at nine years old. My dad said he would only take me if I could do 200 kick-ups, and a week later I'd done it. I signed for that club and captained my school. I represented Bradford and Yorkshire schoolboys, then signed for Bradford City at 14 years old.

Does being one of few professional Asian players have any advantages or disadvantages for you?

There are only advantages. I've had to work twice as hard compared to non-Asian players on and off the field from a very young age to get to where I am today. I believe that work ethic has made it easier to deal with failures and the disappointments all athletes face.

Who is the best player you have ever played with?

My first coach in Belgium, Fiorenzo Serchia, was a great player. Roberto Martinez and Jon Walters were quality at Chester City and Dean Windass was in great form at Bradford City. I've learnt different things from them all.

Have you ever felt your culture or faith has been a barrier to you progressing in the game or ever experienced any racism?

I've experienced racism both verbally and institutionally. However, I've been lucky enough to have the intelligence to understand why people treat you in such a manner. These people have had a lack of education and have been intimidated by honest hard work. Sometimes in football, players or coaches can get away with not having these two qualities in their careers. It's great to see there are programmes in place by The FA to ensure there will be a level playing field one day. Understanding these issues has helped me overcome the adversity and break down the barriers faced.

Do you see yourself moving into coaching when you retire?

Yes, I've had experience already as a player/manager in Belgium and I'm currently working on my UEFA B. At 26 years old I have no plans for it at the moment as I've got my best years ahead playing. I really look after myself too so I'm hoping for at least another 10 good years playing.

As a role model for English, Asian and Sikh players do you feel any extra pressure or responsibility to succeed?

Not at all. I think once players reach a certain experience in life and football they can appreciate survival in this game. It's a tough, ruthless, world especially if you're from an Asian background and you need a lot of luck staying injury-free.

FEATURE INTERVIEW



I received the young player of the year award at Bradford City and was released without much of an explanation. We had 10 players in that year group, seven were offered pro deals and three were released including me.

All the experiences over the past 10 years have brought me into a great place right now and I really believe anything is possible and still dream of playing at the highest level.

What do you think is the biggest factor affecting the lack of Asian representation across football?

It's going to be tough to have Asian managers within English football unless we have more Asian players at the top level. I think we are seeing a steady increase in coaches which is great. There have been a lot of initiatives and funds for coaches to get their badges which is good to see. I know of a handful of Asian referees trying to make their way up in the game too. Anything worth becoming takes dedication and sacrifice. However this country still needs Asian role models in all of these positions for the rest of the population to know what's possible.

Too many negative experiences have rubbed off on to the thought process of the younger Asian generation. Society is never going to treat everybody fairly and equally, and football is no different. That just means you have to be thicker-skinned and that only comes with overcoming adversity.

How important do you think it is to have Asian players in the professional leagues as role models? For example would an Amir Khan-type figure in the Premier League or playing for England have a big effect on the Asian game?

Extremely. We need a few role models who can inspire on and off the field. This is bigger than football. It would really unite the country and show how much things have progressed in

society. Unless doors are opened and opportunities given things are always going to be moving at a slower pace. An England cap for an Asian player would definitely open the eyes of the nation proving there is a whirlpool of talent in our communities, towns, cities that just needs to be harnessed and given the chance to shine.

Ted Buxton the ex England Chief Scout, who assisted Terry Venables at Tottenham is one of my references and rates me very highly so I know I'm doing something right and heading in the right direction. He also understands the need for the country to have an Asian Role Model playing at the highest level.

Even though you are still young, you have been in grassroots and professional football for most of your life. Have you seen the issues facing Asians in football change much in that time?

Yes there are now more opportunities for people to act and to be heard. It was always going to be a slow process, but all the Asians who have experienced football at any level must know that they have been pioneers in their own right. Everybody must be united to face the bigger picture in educating the nation against the misconceptions and stereotypes of British Asians in sport and society.

@indy_aujla



BIRMINGHAM FA JUST PLAY MANAGER MOHAMMED JUNED AT THEIR RECENT COMMUNITY ROADSHOW

COUNTY FA IN FOCUS – BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) has over 4,000 affiliated teams, and are well known for their equality and inclusion work in football, being based in one of the most diverse cities in the world.

Birmingham's population is close to 90% British and 40% of that population is from a BAME background and over 20% are Asian. They are also one of the first County FAs to have their own Race Equality Advisory Group, which now operates alongside the county Inclusion Advisory Group which cover all areas of inclusion.

Birmingham has good long-term relationships with local communities and large diverse local clubs meaning that their football development work has inclusion embedded within it. We asked Just Play team manager Mohammed Juned what he thought was the secret of their success. He said: "I'm a local boy from an Asian heritage so I know how football is sometimes perceived by people who aren't involved. Listening to local needs and constant dialogue are the keys to getting it right, it's not rocket science but that's what makes football so accessible. Football has something for everyone".

Birmingham FA were one of the first County FAs to host an FA Community roadshow, to engage diverse local stakeholders. To see a short video of that event, click [here](#).

Being on the doorstep of The National Football Centre at St George's Park and two Premier League clubs bring with it special opportunities, but at a grassroots level we asked Birmingham Chief Executive Officer Mike Pennick what he felt was the key to engaging meaningfully with local Asian communities. He said: "At Birmingham County FA equality, diversity and social inclusion are embedded into our core business principles. Our demographics clearly suggest that we have one of the most ethnically diverse footballing communities in the country and it is in our best interests that we have a clear strategy that engages with as many people as possible. Over the last few years, through our county plan, we feel that we have made a statement of intent as we have had a systematic operational review with regards to equality".

A perfect example of how the county delivers joined up work is their current football development administrator and



BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITIES LEAGUE CHAMPIONS SALTLEY STALLIONS FC

REAG Administrator (Race Equality Advisory Group) Ravinder Bhandal. Until last year Ravi was a student looking for work when he noticed that Kick It Out were holding a Raise Your Game mentoring event at Wolverhampton College with ex-Wolves players Joe Jackson and goalkeeper Matt Murray. Ravi met Birmingham's Just Play manager Mohammed Juned and coach education manager Jasbir Batt. The County FA offered Ravi a placement at the county offices and when a full time position that was advertised, Ravi applied and after interview was successful in gaining a full-time administration position.

Ravi said of his experience at BCFA: "In my opinion Birmingham FA doesn't do anything different or spectacular, they just do it right. It's a local County FA catering for local people and the results speak for themselves. The CFA are often the voice of local football rather than battling against it"

Other factors the county considers as important in its community engagement are:

- **A Local Football Anti-Discrimination Panel** – A disciplinary panel made up of diverse people with relevant experience of adjudicating in discrimination cases
- Maintaining the **Race Equality Action Group** to consult on race issues and the formation of an **Inclusion Advisory Group** to cover wider equality issues and representation within football. The Inclusion Advisory Group will support the County FA with its strategy to promote inclusion throughout its County Plans and the delivery of local football, so that the

game meets the needs of its diverse communities. These needs could include flexible formats or venues, different channels of communication links into educational or religious establishments

- **The Equality Standard** – BCFA has already achieved Sport Englands Foundation Level of Equality Standard for Sport and is in the process of applying for the Preliminary Level
- Local projects like the **Birmingham Communities League** bringing together 18 teams from new and emerging communities, a successful coaching bursary scheme and community sport

For more information contact
Mohammed.Juned@BirminghamFA.com

FEMALE FOOTBALL



ST. GEORGE'S PARK HOSTS THE 2014 MUSLIM WOMEN SPORT FOUNDATION (MWSF) FUTSAL FESTIVAL

On 1-2 March The Muslim Womens Sports Foundation delivered their annual Female Futsal Festival at St George's Park with 16 teams and over 140 diverse women and girls from across the UK.

Commenting on the tournament, The FA's National Women's Development Manager, Rachel Pavlou, said: "We are delighted to again support the MWSF at their 2014 Futsal Festival. As well as this being the first event of its kind to be held at St. George's Park, this is a huge event for us given our work across inclusion and diversity. The Football Association's National Game Strategy 2011–2015 and Women's Football Strategy 2013–2018 recognise raising participation as our biggest goal, across all communities. England internationals Jess Clarke, Fern Whelan and Sarah Winckless attended the event as special guests.

The Futsal Festival was a celebration of diversity, showcasing the MWSF's partnership with the FA and the pioneering work being carried out to make football more inclusive. In addition to the main tournament, the MWSF hosted three seminars to encourage more inclusion across all areas of sport, including a women in sport panel and Kick It Out's Mentoring and Leadership programme seminar.

Chair of the MWSF, Rimla Akhtar, added: "The 2014 Futsal Festival took place over two days for the first time in its six year history with 14 teams and women and girls from across the UK all coming together around a common love of football. This event aims high and shows what can be achieved when Governing Bodies support our organisation. The impact of our previous Futsal Festivals is clear to see and we expect the legacy of this event to continue to reach women from

diverse communities, thereby contributing significantly to our attempts to make sport truly inclusive."

St. George's Park and Derby City Council Director Frank McArdle was so impressed with the event he hopes to make it an annual fixture at the National Football Centre.

The Muslim Womens Sports Foundation, founded in 2001, is a voluntary organisation set up to enable and encourage women, particularly but not exclusively diverse women to participate in sport. They organise training sessions, leagues, tournaments and courses in Futsal, Basketball and Badminton and now have clubs established in London, Essex, Birmingham and Manchester. They also train the British Muslim Women's Squad to the International Women's Islamic Games

Linking into the ethos behind the MWSF tournament, Football's world governing body, FIFA, has now officially sanctioned the wearing of religious headscarves. The announcement made at the Annual General Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) in Zurich, Switzerland follows a successful trial period which began in July 2012. "The IFAB approved the modification to the interpretation of 'Law 4 – The Players' Equipment' specifying the provisions by which male and female players can now wear head covers," read a statement on FIFA's website on Saturday. "After a two-year pilot, The IFAB agreed that there was no indication as to why the wearing of head covers should be prohibited..."

Read more at TheFA.com/news/governance/equality/2014/mar/muslim-women-football-tournament#dSYcjg20upDPKG1C.99

FEMALE FOOTBALL



LISA RASHID IN ACTION

INTERVIEW WITH TOP REFEREE, LISA RASHID

In line with a national push by The FA to diversify in the refereeing workforce, we caught up with top female referee Lisa Rashid to find out more about her take on the game. Lisa is Birmingham-born and bred and grew up with her English parents and Bangladeshi grandfather. She has two sisters and both parents worked for Aston Villa, where she visited regularly as a child.

Lisa, when did you get into football?

As a child my main sport was athletics, particularly cross-country. However at the age of 14 I gave this up, when I started refereeing and football took over. I have worked in sport for a number of years, starting out as a coach, and am currently a physical activity development officer for Sandwell Leisure Trust.

When did you first referee?

I started refereeing at the age of 14, initially as a part-time job. I loved football, but there were no opportunities for females to play in my local area at the time I was growing up. My friends did paper rounds every day, but I could earn more from one game than they did all week. I asked my parents and grandparents about refereeing one weekend, and by coincidence my local county FA were running a female-only course the following weekend, so I signed up.

Does being one of the only Asian female referees have its advantages or disadvantages for you? Or has it never been an issue?

I would say it's never really been an issue. Some people do ask where the name comes from, but most people are more shocked to see a female referee rather than an Asian one.

Does The FA or any clubs you might have refereed with recognise any cultural or religious needs you might have? And if yes, does this motivate you more as a referee?

I don't really have any cultural or religious needs. I have been brought up very westernized and am a Christian. Most people just see you as a referee regardless of culture.

What is the biggest game you have refereed? And what kind of games do you enjoy refereeing the most?

My biggest game was probably being an assistant referee on The Women's FA Cup Final. There were over 17,000 in the crowd, and it was live on telly so if I made a mistake everyone would see! I enjoy refereeing any game of football. In the men's game I am currently an Level 3 referee operating on the Contributory Leagues, and a Conference Premier Assistant. In the womens game I referee on the Womens Super League and am a FIFA international assistant. But I still enjoy refereeing youth football and school football.

Have you ever felt your ethnicity, culture or gender has been a barrier to you progressing in the game or experienced racism at any level in the game?

I have never experienced any racism, which I am pleased to say, as there is no place or need for this in football. I used to sit on the race equality working group for my County FA and the Referee Diversity Action Group at The FA so am aware of issues that do occur in the game, but I am glad I have never experienced this first hand. In terms of gender, this was a barrier when I first started refereeing, over 12 years ago, as some of the older generation do not feel football has a place for females;. However, this is now becoming less of a barrier. With more female officials nationally I hope females are now being accepted in the game.

FEMALE FOOTBALL



What are your ambitions as a referee? Do you have any long-term goals?

I would like to continue to develop and gain experience in every match I do. I would also like to work my way to be operating within the professional game.

As a role model for English, Asian and female referees do you feel any extra pressure or responsibility to succeed?

Yes, sometimes when you have had a bad day you do sometimes ask if it is all worth it. But I look back at how hard I have worked and know it is not worth giving up. I enjoy what I do, and as a role model support and encourage others into refereeing. There are always people who will be watching and waiting for you to not succeed, but knowing you are helping pave the way for others makes me even more determined.

What do you think is the biggest factor affecting the lack of Asian inclusion across refereeing and football?

Every aspect of the game. I think football is changing, and it needs to, to become more flexible. Traditionally as young people, a lot of Asians have to go to temple or mosque on a weekend, which is when football is played. Therefore if you don't start at a young age it is hard to have the skills you need later in life to make it as a footballer. Again most referees start refereeing either youth or adult football on a Sunday, so for some Asians this is difficult due to their religion.

Also particularly for females within refereeing, allowances have to be made for the 'kit' or 'uniform' as some Asian females don't want to show their legs or hair etc.

How important do you think it is to have Asian Role Models in the game? For example would an Amir Khan-type figure refereeing in the premier league have a big effect on the game?

I think it is important, as there is someone you can aim to be like. When you ask most young referees who they want to be like they say Howard Webb. I think if there was an Asian referee on the Premier League this would raise the profile of refereeing within the Asian community.

Even though you are still young, you have been in football for most of your life. Have you seen the issues facing Asians in football change much in that time?

I think slowly there are Asian players breaking through into professional football, so these are acting as role models for Asians within football as a whole.

English football's inclusion and anti-discrimination plan has a target of 10% of all referees to be from a BAME (Black and Asian Minority Ethnic) background by 2017. For more information on how this is being addressed contact **Kevin Coleman@TheFA.com**

JOBS IN FOOTBALL



Job details	URL link	Deadline
P/T Football Coach, Bushey, Herts	http://www.uksport.gov.uk/jobs/football-coach-tfa-bushey-job24817	30/04/14
The Football Association Club Mentors	http://www.uksport.gov.uk/jobs/football-coach-pits-football-job25226	02/05/14
P/T Football Coach, Bacons College, London	http://facc.thefa.com/jobs/the-football-association-club-mentors	31/05/14
Leisure Leagues managers and referees	http://www.uksport.gov.uk/jobs/football-league-managers--referees-leisure-leagues-job24375	31/12/14
Area Co-ordinators for Small Sided operator – UK fives Ltd	uksport.gov.uk/jobs/area-co-ordinators-required-for-small-sided-football-operator-ukfives-ltd-job24521	N/A
5-a-side league referee – Football Invasion	uksport.gov.uk/jobs/Football-Invasion-Football-Referee-120511	N/A

THE FA & UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL BAME FUND

UEFA & THE FA FUND BAME FEMALE PROJECTS

The FA has announced that in partnership with UEFA it will be funding a number of projects which all have the objective of developing BAME women's football.

The fund of €100,000, provided by UEFA and delivered by The FA, is to increase participation from BAME women and girls across the game, a group that is significantly under-represented. Open to application from December 2013 to January 2014, the fund received applications from new projects totalling over £300,000 for a pot of money valued at £85,000, so competition was fierce.

Looking for factors such as value for money, sustainability and working in partnership, the funding panel, which included representation from The FAs National Womens Committee, decided on the 11 successful projects below from across the country. These projects, which have significant Asian female representation will be delivered between February and September 2014 and will work in partnership with their local County Football Associations as well as some with local professional clubs and community groups. Below are the successful projects:

Arches School Sport Partnership – A schools project based in the Sheffield area

Aston FC – participation-based project targeting Muslim females in the Aston area of Birmingham

Derbyshire CFA in partnership with Derby County FC – A project using taster sessions leading to new BAME female teams and linking in to local BAME clubs as exit routes

Slough LFP in partnership with Berks & Bucks FA – Working in the diverse town of Slough and using coaching programmes and festivals

Tower Hamlets Borough Council in partnership with London FA – A BAME coach recruitment and education programme in one of the country's most diverse boroughs

Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality in partnership with Suffolk FA – A multi-partner coach and referee development programme lead by a steering group

Zest – A community-driven football development project in the Netherthorpe area of Sheffield

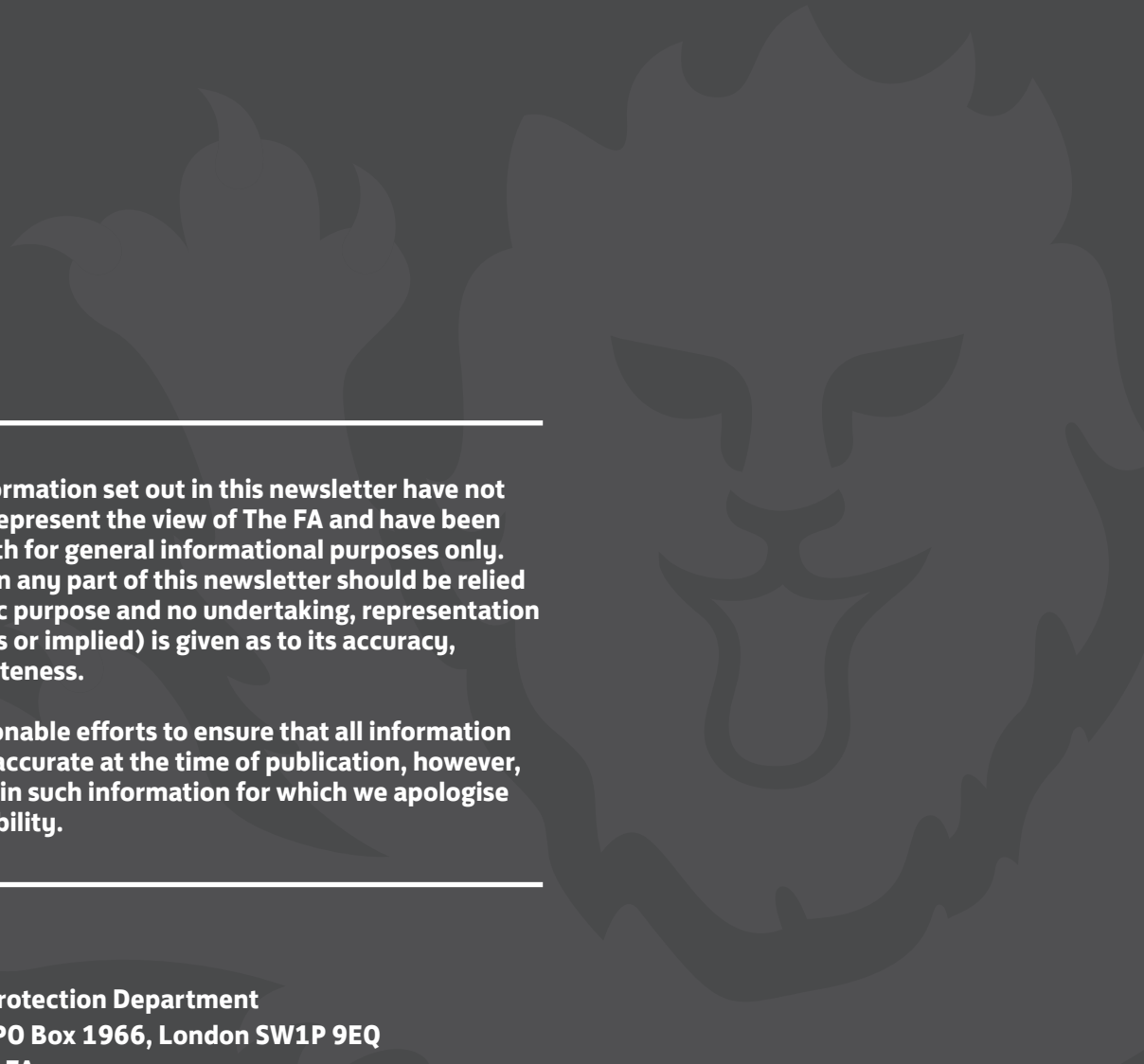
Muslim Women's Sports Foundation, West London Somaliland & Harrow Council in partnership with Middlesex FA – A school, community and league project linked to coach and referee education and mentoring

Brighton & Hove Community Partners in partnership with Sussex FA – A Brighton-based multi-partner project using festivals for coach and referee development

Middlesbrough BME Network and Middlesbrough FC in partnership with North Riding FA – A Middlesbrough-based female participation project between a County FA, professional club and communities

Centre-West (The Hat-Trick Project), Newcastle Upon Tyne – Asian innovative female-focused project linking community, football and mothers groups in Newcastle's West End.

For more information on these projects please email Kevin.coleman@thefa.com



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We have made reasonable efforts to ensure that all information in the newsletter is accurate at the time of publication, however, there may be errors in such information for which we apologise but shall have no liability.

Contact

Equality and Child Protection Department
Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ
Kevin.Coleman@TheFA.com