



DISABILITY FOOTBALL STRATEGY 2010-2012

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE - A FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY FOOTBALL

Get **into** Football





Lord Triesman

Football is a remarkable sport loved worldwide. The FA has the privilege and responsibility to oversee football in England as a whole in all of its aspects.

The principle aims of The FA are to maximise participation through increased playing opportunities, increasing the quality for all (for players, administrators, officials and coaches) and to give all of the England teams the best chance of competing for honours in international competitions they enter. These aims apply equally across the whole of the football family.

FA Football Development Programme - Disability Football Strategy (2004-2006) provided the first step in integrating disability football into the 'mainstream' football family.

The FA is rightly proud of the successful implementation of this plan which has led to an impressive 200% increase in the number of active participants in the disabled game and the formation of 400 disability teams. Through this work The FA has been recognised by both FIFA and UEFA as the leading Federation in developing disabled football.

Disabled sport needs to be in a position to reap the maximum benefits from the exposure that it will receive from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This strategy aims to put disability football into such a position.

Colin Chaytors

Chairman of the Disability Equality Advisory Group

On behalf of the Disability Equality Advisory Group we are delighted to share our plans and vision for disability football in England.

We believe this strategy will place The FA at the forefront of provision for disabled people, enabling every person to reach their potential either as a player, coach, volunteer, referee or administrator and be involved in this great game of ours.

FOREWORD



Prior to 1999 The Football Association's support for the development of disability football was limited. At this time there was a plethora of organisations that represented disabled people and The FA found it difficult to produce a coherent all-embracing strategy for disabled football.

The creation of the English Federation of Disability Sports (EFDS), the umbrella organisation for the seven National Disability Sports organisations, in 1998 and the establishment by The FA of the Football Development Department a year later led to the development of the first national disability football programme,

The Football Development Strategy's key objective was to increase participation, quality and enjoyment of football using four key strands. One of these was entitled 'Opportunities for all' which committed The FA to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to play, coach, manage, referee and be spectators regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or social status. The first FA Football Development Programme - Disability Football Strategy (2004-2006) was the first step in integrating disability football into the 'mainstream' and a new strategy must be developed to build on its success.

INTRODUCTION

Ability Counts which was launched in 1999. This was seen as the initial step in helping to identify and develop talented footballers, providing quality coaching and increasing participation in the disability game.

In 2001 after a period of extensive consultation with its stakeholders and in response to the various Government policy documents The FA produced its Football Development Strategy which provided a strategic framework for football development in England for 2001-2006.

The development of a clear strategy to ensure the further development of disability football and to build on this success is one of The FA's strategic imperatives and is embedded in both The FA Strategic Vision and the National Game Strategy (both covering 2008-2012).

This new Disability Strategy cannot be achieved successfully without the support of our partners and major stakeholders and has therefore been developed in consultation with them. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics will provide a unique opportunity to enthuse people to take part in sport. The FA and the whole of the sporting family must be ready to take advantage of the opportunities that hosting these two globally important events will present and be prepared to meet the challenges that the huge potential increase in participation that they will produce which will logically follow.

OUR GOALS AND ACTION PROGRAMME

GOAL 1 TRUSTED TO LEAD

- 1.1 Lead with Confidence to Deliver the Strategy
- 1.2 Invest in a Highly Skilled and Diverse Volunteer and Professional Workforce

GOAL 2 ENGLAND TEAMS WINNING

- 2.1 Succeed with our England Disability Teams
- 2.2 Develop Better Players and Coaches working in Disability Football

GOAL 3 NATION'S FAVOURITE GAME

- 3.1 Grow the Game for All
- 3.2 Raise Standards for a Safer, Better Quality Experience
- 3.3 Increase Awareness and Positive Perception of the Game
- 3.4 Improve Facilities through Effective Partnerships



STRATEGY MAJOR MILESTONES

TRUSTED TO LEAD

1. To develop and implement The FA Disability Football Strategy 2010-12, with clear targets and report to key stakeholders annually.
2. A county network of full-time Disability Football Development Officers, funded through partnerships with the County FAs, Football League Trust, Football Foundation and other partners, working to resourced County Strategic Plans by 2012.
3. To continue to influence FIFA/UEFA, and be a member of the UEFA Grassroots Panel, to support disability football and encourage National Football Federations to deliver football for disabled people.
4. To take leadership of the Great Britain Disability Football Association to ensure GB participation in the London 2012 Paralympics football competitions.

ENGLAND TEAMS WINNING

1. England's senior impairment-specific teams to be ranked in the top four of Europe, by 2012.
2. To host the IBSA World Blind Football Championship in England in 2010.
3. Development of Under-18 development squads to mirror senior teams by 2012.
4. Ensure participation in the 2012 Paralympics Games football competitions for blind and cerebral palsy GB teams.
5. To develop a disability performance framework that will lead on the development of elite teams and the disability player pathways operating by the end of 2012.
6. Review The FA Centres of Excellence (Disability) programme by 2010 to ensure it reflects the needs of talented disabled players.
7. Support and develop Regional Centres of Excellence (Disability) fixture programmes by the end of season 2009-10.
8. Support and develop talent days with partners to include 49 County Athlete Assessment Development Centres with the Youth Sport Trust and three impairment-specific talent days in conjunction with British Colleges Sport and British Universities and College Sport per year starting in 2010.
9. To support the development of 140 L1/L2 coaches and 30 L3/L4 coaches by 2012 to work in disability football.



NATION'S FAVOURITE GAME

1. Create 140 new and retain 375 male teams and create 150 new female disability teams by 2012.
2. To develop 34 County disability leagues, with ability-banded competition by 2012.
3. Develop and retain five national impairment-specific leagues by the end of season 2009-10.
4. All youth disability teams to have an FA qualified coach and 75% of youth disability teams and all County disability leagues to be Charter Standard by 2012.
5. To gain agreement for the four-year age banding in disability football on a permanent basis by 2012
6. To develop an ability-banding player classification and competition by 2012.
7. To review facility provision with the specific needs of disability football prioritised in partnership with the Football Foundation by 2012.
8. Major marketing campaign aimed at disabled people to increase knowledge and awareness of disability football opportunities by 2010.

CONTEXT



The FA is responsible for nurturing, protecting and representing the interests of the whole game. This requires The FA to address the unique challenges that face the disability game.

The integration of disability football into the infrastructure of The FA has been a remarkable success. The first FA strategy for disability football led to the appointment of its first National Football Development Manager (Disability) responsible for delivering the ambitious targets that the strategy set.

The success of the strategy in developing disability football has been remarkable.

- Through the introduction and implementation of the Disability Football Strategy in 2004, an increase of 200% participation in disability football has been achieved (from 10,000 in 1993 to over 38,000 in 2008)
- 9 Regional Pan-disability Leagues have been established
- 60 Ability Counts teams across England offering playing and coaching
- There are now 400 male teams
- There are now 26 female teams
- 14 County Leagues have been established

- 45 County FA Disability plans are in operation
- £4m provided for disability football from The FA
- Great Britain teams participated at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics
- Development of Coaching Disabled Footballers course with over 5000 participants
- Incorporate inclusion spectrum in FA courses
- The FA's Disability Equality workshop was developed and is available to promote inclusion and address any barriers to participation for disabled people
- Disability Equality seminars have been run with professional clubs to address the clubs' responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, 2004
- The FA established a Disability Equality Advisory Group to The FA Board, to provide expertise and advice on FA policy development.

In addition to this The FA currently supports six national impairment-specific squads and development teams in cerebral palsy and blind that support the senior structure, by providing financial

and human resources that enable each team to compete in the international disability competition framework

The integration of disability football into the grassroots programme has been led through the County Football Associations, by the development of 45 County Disability Football Plans which have helped to drive the game on a local basis. These development plans could not have been realised without the work and support of our partners, in particular many of the Football in the Community schemes who have embraced disability football within their programmes, the hosts of local authority sports development teams, local inclusive clubs and education through schools and county sports partnerships. Prior to the development of the National Game Strategy The FA undertook the “Your Game, Your Say” consultation which showed that The FA faces many challenges in developing the game.

The consultation showed that:

- 141,000 disabled players are involved in the game – anything from organised football to “kick-about with mates”.
- Access to qualified coaches and clubs were high on the agenda for disabled players.
- 60,000 disabled children would like to play the game but cannot find a club.

The underlying aim of this new strategy is to ensure that disabled players, administrators and referees reach their full potential.

Core FA funding together with additional financing provided through the Sport England funded programmes – Club and Coaches, Playground to Podium and the Whole Sport Plan, will ensure that this is achieved on a local, regional and national basis.



GOAL 1: TRUSTED TO LEAD



1.1 Lead with Confidence to Deliver the Strategy

The FA is responsible at all times for nurturing, protecting and representing the interests of the whole of the game. This responsibility requires The FA to address challenges presented by the disability game and we will continue to engage with all of our stakeholders in order to understand their views and address any areas of concern.

The FA will review our internal structures, and the funding and governance of the game so that we can successfully deliver the strategy. We must be able to demonstrate the commitment throughout the whole FA structure, whether at Council, Board, Executive, Professional Game, National Game and the Disability Equality Advisory Group level, to the development of disability football. The FA will convey and ensure implementation of best practice, legislation and guidance in relation to the Disability

Discrimination Act and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The FA will continue its successful partnership with FIFA and UEFA to support disability football and to encourage other National Federations to deliver football for disabled people and continue to provide advice to the UEFA Grassroots Football Panel.

The FA will continue to work with the Asian Football Confederation to develop the AFC Coaching Disabled Footballers Course and to continue to train their elite tutors to enable the course to be delivered throughout Asia.

The FA will continue to work with all of the international disability organisations to ensure their continued development in the current difficult economic climate.

The FA will host the IBSA 2010 World Blind Football Championship in Hereford and develop a competition legacy programme which leaves a lasting impact on visually-impaired football in the West Midlands region and respective County Football Associations.

Domestically The FA will continue to work with the British Paralympic Association, UK Sport and the home nation Football Associations to lead the Great Britain Disability Football Association to ensure our participation in the London 2012 Paralympic Games football competitions.

The FA is working with the England 2018 bid team to ensure that the bidding process and document will be inclusive to ensure any legacy will have a long-lasting benefit to disabled football provision.

1.2

Invest in a Highly Skilled and Diverse Volunteer and Professional Workforce

Central to both the FA Strategic Vision and the National Game Strategy is the commitment to invest in a highly skilled and diverse professional and volunteer workforce at the national, regional and county level.

The FA will utilise the 'Get into Football' Campaign to signpost people for playing, coaching, refereeing and volunteering opportunities specifically in disability football.

The FA intends to develop a network of full time County Disability Football Officers that will be funded through partnerships with the County Football Associations, The Football League Trust, the Football Foundation and other partners working to specific County plans. These officers will have the responsibility of developing disability football, with their main focus being on increasing local adult and youth

participation, raising coaching and playing standards, developing local clubs and competitions and supporting the workforce and talent development programmes.

The FA will build on the success of its Leadership and Volunteering programme by working with County Sports Partnerships, School Sports Partnerships and the County Football Associations to deliver a comprehensive programme that will:

- Ensure that there are sufficient PE teachers that have attended The FA Beginners Guide to Disability Football
- Train and place disabled leaders into local clubs and community programmes
- Provide an FA Young National Leadership Camp where 10% of the participants have an impairment
- Provide FA County/Regional Young Leadership Camps where 10% of the participants have an impairment

- Ensure that 10% of young people selected for the FA Young Coach Scholars Programme have an impairment.

One of the major problems in grassroots football is the recruitment and retention of referees. This is no different in the disability game. The FA has consulted our key partners to look at ways to encourage existing referees to actively engage in disability football and to encourage those with a disability to become referees albeit to operate in defined areas of football depending on their individual needs and capabilities.

To achieve this aim The FA has developed and delivered a disability module to existing referees. This will allow them to understand the differences between the games and to identify the specific needs of each area of disability and to successfully operate as match officials in disability competitions.

The FA will support and create new opportunities for those with a disability to become referees and actively signpost them to areas where they can officiate within their capabilities. Through an initiative with the Football Foundation to access small grants, we hope to train 25 disabled referees in year one and the same in year two and retain 70% of these new referees going into year 2/3 respectively. Once we have reviewed and evaluated the success of the initiative we will widen participation nationally.

The FA will implement the required elements of disability legislation ensuring implementation of the requirements of the vetting and Barring Scheme which has resulted from the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006.



GOAL 2: ENGLAND TEAMS WINNING

2.1 Succeed with our England Disability Teams

The FA has supported seven senior impairment-specific squads to attend World and European competitions and has had great success since support was first given to these teams.

It is a critical time for disability sport in this country as the 2012 London Paralympics will provide a huge opportunity to showcase the national disability teams. It was of paramount importance that The FA completed a review of the elite disability teams and structure. This would enable the FA to assess the level of support given to each team and if the structure of disability football has changed in the last 10 years to reflect the needs of elite players with a disability. The FA must ensure these teams have the most talented players and the right competition framework to produce the best elite players possible.

At the heart of this review is the need for The FA to have the over-arching aim to allow disabled players to reach their potential and play at the highest level, however an England disability team should be run where the disability prevents the footballer from reaching this goal within mainstream football. Criteria and a framework was applied to each impairment group to ensure it was fit for purpose both within England and have an active, recognised international organisation. From this review the following impairment groups were identified for FA support:

- Amputee
- Blind
- Cerebral Palsy
- Deaf
- Learning Disability (through an Under 18 development team)
- Partially Sighted

The FA is committed to supporting senior disability teams to achieve our goal to be ranked in the top four in Europe, as published by the international disability-specific organisation, in each impairment group. We will work with each national disability sports organisation to ensure the environment is set to enable participation in the international fixture programme. We will also work to have an Under-18 development squad within each impairment group that will underpin the senior squad structure and provide an impairment-specific player pathway and talent identification programme.

We will develop a dedicated disability performance framework to develop and monitor our International Teams by 2010. This performance framework will also identify how The FA can best support participation in the London 2012 Paralympics. The games will have a blind and cerebral palsy football competition and The FA will ensure that the best players and staff are selected. The FA will achieve this objective through partnerships with the Great Britain Disability Football Association, the home country national disability organisations, the British Paralympic Association and UK Sport through the development of an agreed selection protocol by the end of season 2009-10.

The new performance framework will set out how The FA will develop all aspects of the disability player pathway and the talent development programmes. It will also oversee an in-service training and development programme for all coaches and associated support staff, in both the elite and the FA Centres of Excellence (Disability).

The FA will finalise the plans for the development of a National Football Centre at Burton which will act as the preparation base for all the national representative impairment-specific teams, a hub from where best practice can be shared, and where the highest standard of medical facilities and sports science will be housed to support all our representative teams.

2.2

Develop Better Players and Coaches working in disability football

The FA has embarked upon a full review of all its coach education and philosophy in consultation with its stakeholders. This is detailed in The FA Strategic Vision, The National Game Strategy and The FA Coaching Framework Strategy. The FA will ensure that the review of coaching courses and resources will meet the needs of disabled players and coaches.

The FA will increase the quality of support to all coaches. A clear coaching pathway will be developed in all football, with an emphasis on technical development and age-specific qualifications. This is fundamental to delivering winning England teams and the long term health of the game.

The FA is committed to support every player to reach their potential and in particular to develop better skills at a younger age. This is particularly beneficial to disabled children. The 5 - 11 age group is absolutely crucial in developing skills, enhancing enjoyment of the game, developing healthy lifestyles and creating a new generation of talented players. We will ensure that all skill tests are inclusive and 15 disability skills centres are delivered through The FA Tesco Skills Programme by 2010 and then annually for the life of the programme.

The recent review of the Coaching Disabled Footballers course has ensured that it is relevant for all coaches. The FA will develop impairment-specific courses to enable coaches to develop their knowledge and awareness when working with players with sensory, physical or learning disabilities.

The FA will support 140 people to gain their Level 1 or Level 2, 27 coaches to Level 3 and 4 coaches to Level 4 FA Coaching Certificates. The FA will place particular emphasis on providing opportunities for coaches with a disability to progress towards the highest levels of coaching excellence and the opportunity to expand and further develop their knowledge. These coaches will become role models of the future.

The FA will undertake a complete review of the Centre of Excellence Programme (Disability), to ensure the programme meets the needs for the best young, disabled players. Through elements of the Sport England funded programmes - Club and Coach Initiative, Playground to Podium and from core FA funding, we will have a FA Centres of Excellence (Disability) programme that will be resourced from existing funds.

The Centres will be seen as beacon performance environments where they are situated. We will review these centres on an annual basis to ensure the delivery of quality coaching environments for our most talented players. We will also have regional Centres of Excellence fixture programmes that enable the best players to be challenged and compete on a regular basis, so forming a pathway for talent identification into national squads.

The Playground to Podium initiative will see The FA become involved in 49 County Athlete Assessment Development Days by 2012. This will help with the talent identification of young disabled people in special or mainstream schools. In addition, a relationship will be developed with British Colleges and Universities to hold talent days for students with disabilities in further and higher education.



GOAL 3: NATION'S FAVOURITE GAME

3.1 Grow the Game for All

The FA is fully committed to ensuring all disabled participants have the opportunity to reach their potential either as a player, official, administrator or coach. For the organisation to succeed we must ensure that opportunities are available at all levels of the player and coach pathway. Without a strong and robust local level of support the base of the pathway cannot be strong. The FA will ensure all County Football Associations' plans are equitable and inclusive.

We will support the creation of 34 new Disability County League competitions by 2012, ensuring that these are developed in ability-banding competition to meet the needs of all players. We will also work with educational establishments and the English Federation of Disability Sport to develop a research project that can identify an appropriate classification model that can be used in ability banding to ensure a level playing field in participation.

The National Game Strategy identified the creation of 135 male and 100 new female teams as imperative targets for the disabled game. However since the strategy has been published the FA have secured additional funding from Sport England (through the club and coach initiative) which has led to the development of new targets which are the additional creation of 140 new male and 50 new female disability teams by 2012.

We will support and create new flexible competitions and formats by engaging schools, clubs and the leagues. We will work with our partner the Football Foundation to access small grants to support new teams, coaches and volunteers.

A strategic aim of our partner, the English Schools FA, is to increase the number of Special School Leagues and to enable disabled young people in the mainstream to access meaningful local and national competitions. This will be delivered through the development of 44 County Competition plans. These plans will work in partnership with the Competition Manager infrastructure that is being put in place through The PE & Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) and County Football Associations.

The PE & Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) launched in January 2008 expresses the Government's commitment to improving the quality and quantity of PE and sport undertaken by all young people

aged 5-19 in England. The Strategy is the joint overall responsibility of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The FA will play a key role in supporting the delivery of this strategy. The FA Club Links programme will create links between schools and Charter Standard clubs to support an increase in the number of disabled children aged 5-16 who are participating in football.

The FA will continue to work with British Colleges Sport (BCS) and British Universities and Colleges Sport to develop playing opportunities for disabled students. Both organisations will develop a regional playing structure for these players by 2012.

3.2 Raise Standards for a Safer, Better Quality Experience

3.3 Increase Awareness and Positive Perception of the Game

3.4 Accessible and Improved Facilities through Effective Partnerships

The FA is committed to football being inclusive and providing a positive experience for everyone involved in the game. The National Game Strategy identifies the methods that we can use to create a fun and safe environment for everyone involved in football. These include raising standards of behaviour of both players and spectators through a national Respect programme, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and ensuring that The FA Charter Standard Programme is recognised as a measure of quality across all of grassroots football.

The FA intends to ensure that all County Disability Leagues will gain the FA Charter Standard League status by 2011. That all youth disability teams will have a qualified coach and 75% of clubs will attain the FA Charter Standard Club award. The FA believes Welfare Officers within Disability Football are essential to supporting the leagues and clubs to fulfil their moral and legal requirements.

Marketing and communications will support the objective of ensuring all people with a disability have easy access to finding information on how to play, excel or volunteer within football.

The strategy for achieving this will be to ensure that disability football is integral within the marketing and communications support plans for The FA National Game Strategy. It will be integral to the new commercial programme 2010-14 through every National Game sponsor partnering disability football. This will widen the opportunity for The FA and its partners to communicate opportunities to 'Get into Football'.

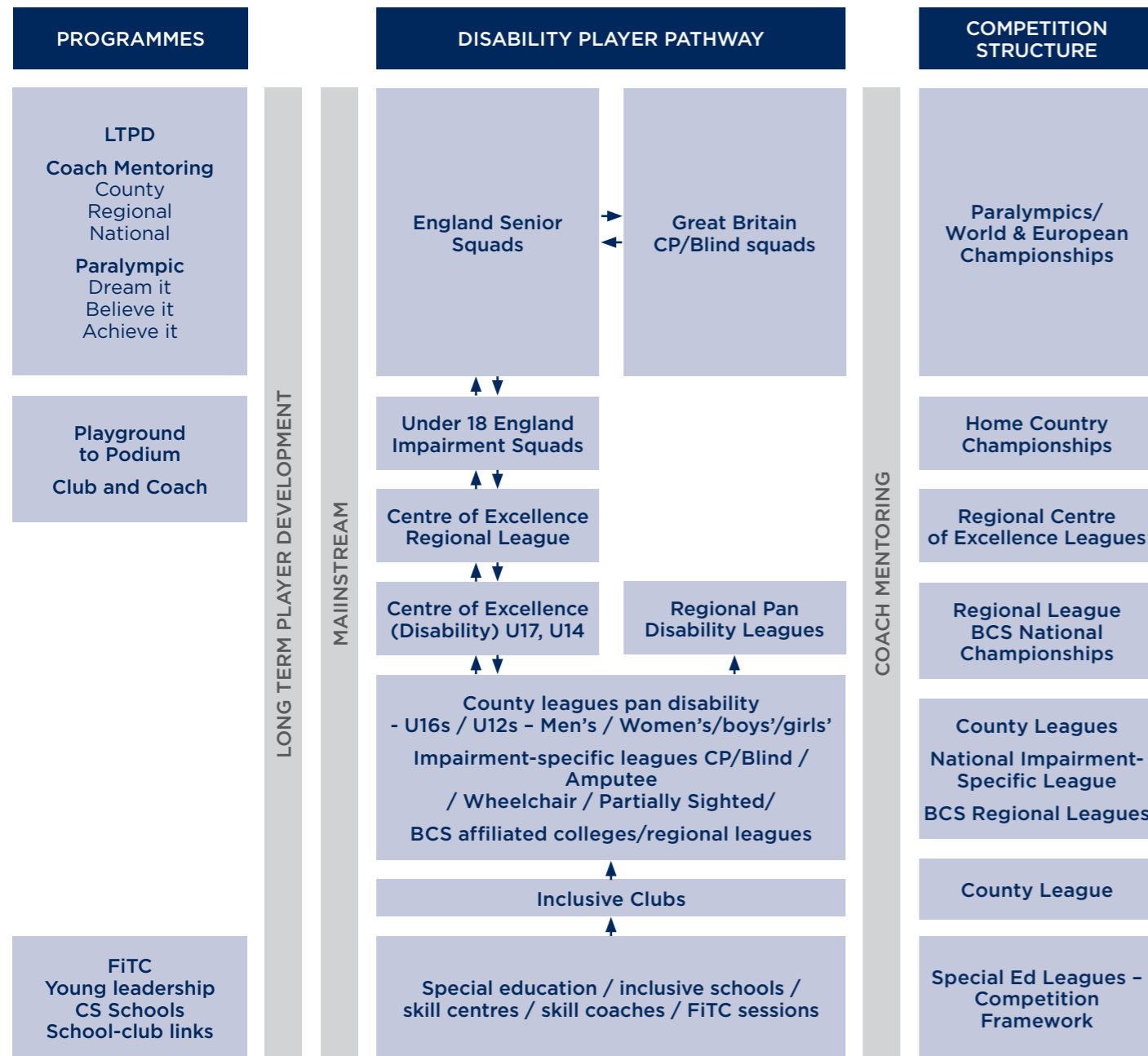
Communication on finding teams or playing opportunities at every age group, the player pathway and opportunities to coach, volunteer or referee will be a constant part of all digital platforms (eg TheFA.com, Skills website, FULL-TIME). The FA will also work with partners (eg County FAs) and third parties (eg disability bodies) to ensure maximum reach.

Specific local marketing and PR will take place around major events such as the IBSA World Blind Football Championship in England in 2010 and 2012 Paralympics, using players as inspiring role models to showcase opportunities to play and excel.

The National Game Strategy outlines the facilities that are required to sustain and increase participation and the need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in the schools, clubs and on local authority sites to deliver the challenging targets set out in it. The FA will invest, along with the Football Foundation and other partners, £300m into new and improved facilities that disability football can benefit from.

In the light of the current economic environment, it is unlikely that specific disability facilities will be developed outside of mainstream projects. We will work with the Football Foundation to review the planned projects to see if any disability cross-over exists. Where Building Schools for the Future projects exist, further investigation should be sought to examine if these can be developed externally with little or no funding from The Football Association.

DISABILITY PLAYER PATHWAY



GLOSSARY

- BCS British Colleges Sport
- BUCS British Universities and College Sport
- EFDS English Federation for Disability Sport
- FIFA Federation Internationale de Football Association
- UEFA Union des Associations Europeennes de Football
- YST Youth Sport Trust
- AFC Asian Football Confederation
- IBSA International Blind Sports Association
- BPA British Paralympic Association
- GBDFA Great Britain Disability Football Association

IN PARTNERSHIP

The FA wishes to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this strategy. In particular, we would like to extend our gratitude to our major

funding partners Sport England, the Football Foundation and The FA's partners whose investment has been pivotal to the development of disability football in England.



The FA is committed to meeting your needs. Therefore this publication may be available in Braille, Large Print and Audio.

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