

Disability Football - Factsheet

SPORTSsheet



The "beautiful" game is played around the world from village greens to World Cup finals. For many years, disabled people have been spectators, as others have enjoyed the highs and lows of playing football. But in recent years variations of the sport have been devised to allow virtually any disabled person to play, and to enjoy the thrills of taking part, and winning. Disability football is now available from local clubs to international tournaments and several of the international governing bodies now hold their own World Cup finals, as in the non-disabled game. The purpose of this factsheet

is to give some background information on the sport, its variations and how disabled people in Kent can take part and find out more about the sport.

Variations of the Game

Many disabled people, whether juniors or adults, still play in what are known as pan-disability teams. (Teams comprised of individuals with differing impairments, playing together, regardless of the limitations in play). However, disability football now exists in six main variations. These are for people who are: blind, partially sighted, deaf and/or hearing impaired, those with cerebral palsy, amputees, those with a learning disability, and most recently those who use powered wheelchairs.



Rules

Various changes in the rules can take place to facilitate those who are playing and their impairments, but the intention is always to keep the game as close as possible to the standard, non-disabled sport. Players are usually classified into different categories to enable balance within sides and equality of competition between teams.

For example, in the game for those with affected vision, players will be classified as "blind" or "partially sighted". In the learning disability game, players are eligible if they have an assessed I.Q. within or below the 70-75 range.

In Cerebral Palsy football each half lasts 30 minutes, with seven players a side. The pitch is 60 yards by 40 yards but with regular sized goals. On throw-ins the players have the option to throw or roll the ball in to resume play.

Governing Bodies for Development of Disability Football

The Football Association now shares responsibility for development with National Disability Sports Organisations in the UK, and in 2004 the FA launched their "National Disability Football Strategy 2004 - 2006. Under the FA structure, county FAs have their own development plans, disability football targets and working groups who feed back to the Football Association Disability Working Party, who, in turn, report to the Football Association Development Committee. For further information contact: www.TheFA.com

The Kent Disability Football Partnership can be contacted via:
paul.dolan@kentfa.com

The national disability sport governing bodies also promote the variations of the sport for their particular groups and can be contacted as follows:

- British Blind Sports - www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- British Deaf Sports Council - www.britishdeaffootball.com
- English Sports Association for People with Learning Disabilities - www.esapltd.co.uk
- British Amputee and Les Autres Sports Association - balasoffice@btinternet.com
- Cerebral Palsy Sport - www.cpsport.org
along with English Federation of Disability Sport www.efds.co.uk



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National Teams

England national teams now exist for all but the powered wheelchair variation of the game. They enjoy recognition by the FA and resources to support their participation on the world stage. Currently the England Learning Disability team are World Cup winners, England Cerebral Palsy team are ranked 7th in the world, with other world rankings; England Amputee team 4th, and England Blind team 4th, and England Partially Sighted team 7th. England Deaf team is ranked 3rd in Europe.



Disability Football in Kent

Clubs which currently cater for disability football in Kent are as follows:

Larkfield Youth and Adult Disability Football Club

Mo Sloane

01732 849 188

www.larkfielddisabilityfc.org.uk

Invicta Valiants Junior Football Club

David Ramzan

07860 713 619

linda@craetionworkshop.freemove.co.uk

Parents Consortium team

milnera@parentsconsortium.co.uk

Shepway Wanderers Adult Disability Football Club

Nic Streeter

07751 241 081

nic_streeter@hotmail.com

Channel Adult Disability Football Club

Keith Groombridge

01303 870 133

kgroombridge@aol.com

Phoenix Adult Disability Football Club

Andrew Milbank

01233 732 668

andrewmilbank@yahoo.co.uk

The London and South East Ability Counts league is an adult pan disability football league. For more information contact Glyn Newberry at glyn.newberry@southwark.gov.uk



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The Kent FA run a Mild Learning Difficulty Schools league. The contact for this is Paul Dolan - paul.dolan@kentfa.com

Other useful contacts

The BBC has a comprehensive disability sports website that includes up- to-date information on Disability Football and players. To access this go to: www.bbc.co.uk and follow the links to Sport, Disability Football and Sports Academy.

The Kent Sports Development Unit also holds a host of information on disability football and many other disability sports, at www.kentsport/disability.org

You can also contact Kent Sports Development Manager for Disabled People at: mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk

