

Players with a Learning Disability

Players with a learning disability are classified by age and gender and in Scotland by ability banding. There are large numbers of footballers with a learning disability participating throughout Scotland. Scottish Disability Sport annually offers five and eleven-a-side competitions for branch teams for players with a learning disability. These Scottish championship events are open class events and offer opportunities for women and juniors.

At an international level, competition is organised through INAS-FID the international body for learning disability sport. World and European Championships are organised on a four year cycle and INAS-FID are also the body responsible international classifications.

Opportunities for players with learning disabilities also exist through the Special Olympics movement. Competitions at UK and international level exist for five, seven and eleven a side versions of the game.

Players with Cerebral Palsy

Players with Cerebral Palsy have the opportunity to access international football through the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA). Players with cerebral palsy play a seven-a-side version of the game, outdoors, utilising a smaller playing area and reduced sized goals. This football format is the recognised by the International Paralympic Committee and also allows players to compete at International Level in CP-ISRA World and European Championships. A classification system exists for this section that recognises the variation in functional ability of players with cerebral palsy. With a seven man team there has to be a balance of class representation on the field at any particular time.

In Scotland, a national CP Football squad has been formed and a regular programme of coaching and competition opportunities are now in place.

Players who are Amputees

Amputee players are making a strong play for inclusion in future Paralympic Games. Amputees play a 7 a side version of the game with competition and classification organised by the international body, the World Amputee Football Federation.

The rules of the amputee game dictate that no prosthetic limbs are permitted, with players using elbow crutches to manoeuvre throughout the field of play. Goalkeepers are upper limb amputees only.

At present, there are no opportunities for amputee football at a national level in Scotland.

Players who are Wheelchair Users

Wheelchair users, not to be outdone, have traditionally involved themselves in different forms of the game. More recently, football associations from across the world are working to provide a unified approach to wheelchair football, with the aim of creating increased international opportunities.

The sport can be played by both electric and manual wheelchair users and offers players a unique opportunity to take part in the most popular sport in the world. The game is played, both indoors and outdoors providing it is played on a hard, smooth, level surface for easy maneuverability of the chairs, using a standard size 5 or the larger size 9 ball.

Three types of the game are played, namely Wheelchair-football, Electro-football and Power-ball. Wheelchair-football and Electro-football use specially adapted devices that can collect the ball and can also shoot / pass, whereas Power-ball uses attachments mounted onto power-chairs, to push and maneuver the football.

Development work is taking place to try to provide and develop opportunities for wheelchair football in Scotland.

Players who are Hearing Impaired or Deaf

The national and international programme for deaf players is well established, and Scots play a prominent role.

There is currently a development programme for Deaf footballers in Scotland, which is delivered and managed by the Scottish Deaf Football Association (SDFA). The SDFA have their own league and cup structure that serves the Deaf community in Scotland.

The Scottish FA are working closely with the SDFA and Scottish Disability Sport to form a pioneering league format that will allow players with learning disabilities and the Deaf community to play regular competitive football against one another.

International football is available through the British Deaf Football Association, European Deaf Sport Organisation and Deaflympics. Players who are deaf must have an average hearing loss of 55 decibels or below in their good ear and are not permitted to wear a hearing aid on the field of play.

Coach development initiatives have been established, allowing players with hearing impairments to attend courses using the services of an interpreter and access coach education resources.

Players who are Visually Impaired or Blind

Blind and visually impaired players can now access the Paralympics through a modified five-a-side version of the game. There is also an international route through the British membership of the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA). One of the main differences in this game is the sound adaptation to identify the location of the ball.

Players who take part in Blind Sport are classified according to their level of sight into B1, B2 and B3 categories. Players who are B1 classification are blind, players who are B2 and B3 classifications have visual impairments.

Every team consists of eight football players and two goalkeepers. During the course of a Football Blind 5-a-side match five athletes play for each team: four are athletes of the B1 category with total vision impairment and the fifth athlete is the goalkeeper who is fully sighted. Players participating in the a Visually Impaired football match must be classified as either a B2 or B3 athlete. Each team is allowed to substitute up to five players from a total of five substitutes.