



The Scottish Football Association

**Hitting the Target 2006 - 2010
-the future of disability football**

DRAFT COPY 22/09/2006

Foreword

The following document '*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010 – the future of disability football*' outlines the Scottish FA's strategic framework for disability football for the next four years. This framework has been developed in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), the national governing and co-ordinating body for disability sport in Scotland.

The Scottish Football Association was formed in 1873 to regulate the game of football in Scotland. Its existence as the national association for football in Scotland allows separate affiliation to European (UEFA) and world (FIFA) governing bodies for football.

As the governing body for the nation's association football, the Scottish FA supports best practice at all times, encouraging the participation of all, regardless of race, creed, gender or ability, in the nation's most popular sport.

The Scottish FA in partnership with key stakeholders has made a commitment to providing opportunities to those with a disability by creating a full time post for a National Development Officer for Disability Football. This position will allow the Scottish FA to increase its support of disability football in Scotland, and drive forward the aims and objectives outlined within this document.

With a willingness to work together to breakdown barriers and to utilise the existing excellent network of committed and talented individuals it is hoped that football can truly be called a sport for all.

Introduction

In October 2002, the Scottish FA commissioned a review of the structure and development of football in Scotland. Some fifty-five recommendations were made covering issues such as the governance of the sport, to strategies which were designed to encourage participation and improve performance at all levels of the game.

The subsequent findings and recommendations led to the 'Youth Action Plan' which was launched in March, 2004. The plan has provided the basis for an agreement to be reached among the partners, Scottish Executive, **sportscotland** and the Scottish FA. Integral to achieving some of the targets outlined in the 'Youth Action Plan' is the production of the 'National Plan for Football Development'.

One of the key strategic pillars within the 'National Plan for Football Development' is to encourage active participation in our national game, this applies equally to Scotland's disabled population.

Statistics provided by the Scottish Executive have shown there are approximately 800,000 people in Scotland with a disability; this amounts to around 1 in 7 of the nation's population (if mental health is included as a disability within these statistics, as recommend by Capability Scotland, this ratio drops to 1 in 5). This equates to 20% of the overall population and 5 % of the school-aged children having a disability in Scotland. Consequently, a significant number of those with disabilities should be given the opportunity to experience the game of football either as a player, spectator, coach or official. Therefore the Scottish Football Association recognises the importance of providing quality opportunities for those within this demographic group.

The purpose of '*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010*' is to outline the key targets for disability football in Scotland for the next four years. This document has been identified as a priority within the disability section of the Scottish FA's 'National Plan for Football Development'. This plan clearly identifies the need to develop an all-encompassing framework to allow the management and the effective functioning of disability football initiatives.

The Scottish FA has demonstrated commitment to affording those with disabilities the chance to participate and develop within the game by creating, in April 2005, a position for a dedicated development officer with the remit of disability football. The position of National Development Officer for Disability Football was introduced in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport, McDonalds and Sportsmatch, and is funded until April 2007. This post has the remit of ensuring the implementation, co-ordination and evaluating of many of the key objectives outlined within '*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010*'.

Background

Football for players with a disability is available up to international level for the following disability groups:

- **Players with Learning Disabilities**
- **Players with Cerebral Palsy**
- **Players who are Amputees**
- **Players who are Wheelchair Users**
- **Players with Hearing Impairments**
- **Players with Visual Impairments**

The level of disability within these broad categories can vary greatly. Robust classification systems have been developed for each disability group to ensure a standardised and equitable experience for all players.

In Scotland, Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), in partnership with Scottish FA coaches, has been instrumental in providing opportunities for individuals and teams with disabilities to play football over many years. SDS has identified football as a key sport and as such, substantial resources have been dedicated to develop pathways that will allow players to meet their full potential. Consequently the predominance of the work completed prior to April 2005 in the area of disability football has been co-ordinated and funded by SDS.

There are currently opportunities for players with disabilities to participate in football in local areas across Scotland. Football Centres and/or 'Special Educational Need's' coaching blocks are now being delivered in schools throughout the country. This is in addition to the many festivals and school visits delivered by the Scottish FA Community Scheme and Scottish Disability Sport Local Branches.

As well as these school programmes there are disability specific football teams training and playing across Scotland. Six of the aforementioned teams have been invited to participate in a pioneering league initiative that will form a competitive structure across two of the six disability groups. The agenda behind the formation of this league is not only to provide an increased opportunity for competitive football, but also to lead to an enhanced focus in producing youth players within each team's club structure. In addition to this proposed league structure, SDS also co-ordinates annual five and seven/eleven a side competitive opportunities for players with a learning disability at a national level.

A National Centre for Disability Football was established in October 2005 to allow players who have been identified as showing the potential to play at elite level the opportunity to hone their skills and further develop at a state of the art facility. The National Centre is based on campus at the University of Stirling. This facility allows footballers with a disability to access specialised coaching, sports science support and lifestyle management.

Other areas of disability football do exist but they however work in isolation with reduced support and few competitive opportunities.

To fully demonstrate the varied needs and structures together with indicating the work that has been completed to date within disability football, it is required to use the six groups disability categories mentioned previously.

➤ **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 / Stroke / Acquired Brain Injury**

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, where as 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 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.

Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010 – the future of disability football

Recognising that current or prospective participants with a disability may encounter very specific challenges within a football context in areas such as communication and movement, the Scottish FA have produced this document '*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010*'.

This plan seeks to align itself closely with the aims and objectives contained in the Scottish FA's 'National Plan for Football Development', the Scottish Disability Sports National Strategic Plan – "*Towards London & Beyond: 2006 – 2012*" and the **sportscotland** strategic plan '*Sport 21*'.

'*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010*' has five main strategic objectives that underpin the direction and framework for the development of disability football in Scotland for the next 4 years.

- **To increase the number of footballers with disabilities participating in Scotland.**
- **Develop a programme of training and competition for footballers with Disabilities.**
- **Develop a pathway to allow footballers with disabilities to maximising their potential.**
- **Raise the standard of Football coaching available to players with disabilities by establishing a comprehensive education and mentoring programme for new and existing coaches.**
- **To provide appropriate structures that support the programme both centrally and locally.**

Each of the five main strategic objectives have performance indicators, milestones and outcomes attached to them. This will allow their continuous monitoring and evaluation over the next four years.

The National Development Officer for Disability Football has the role of co-ordinating and monitoring the many initiatives derived from the strategic objectives and overseeing their delivery at a national, regional and local level.

Central to the entire process of development, therefore, is the need to establish an effective national structure that clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of any programmes. This will ensure that appropriate opportunities exist through training, coaching and competition.

Effective co-ordination of the aforementioned initiatives will help to create a coherent pathway for players with a disability, this will in turn lead to an increase in football opportunities. The identification of the most talented players through this structure will also allow individuals to realise their full potential, whilst enjoying participating in a variety of enjoyable settings.

For the plan to be truly successful it will rely on the continued and increased support from the network of volunteers, local authorities, member clubs, NGB's and independent agencies who currently provide opportunities

for those with disabilities to access the game of football.

A working group will be established, with the purpose of reviewing the development plan and overseeing the implementation of the strategic objectives over the next four years. This will comprise of key stakeholders in the development of disability football in Scotland and the implementation of this strategic document.

It is vital to note however, that although the Scottish FA together with other key stakeholders have committed funds to develop football for those in Scotland who have a disability, there is an overriding importance that further funding and resources be identified. Many of the targets and outcomes listed are aspirational, therefore additional funding and resources must be secured to ensure the objectives outlined within '*Hitting the Target 2006 – 2010*' are achieved within the identified timescales.

Objective: To increase the number of footballers with disabilities participating in Scotland.

Outcomes:

- Evidence of working in partnership with 32 Local Authorities and 16 SDS branches
- Link with the Scotland's senior professional clubs to enable them engage with those with disabilities.
- SFA regions deliver one disability festival per year by 2009
- Establish local participation programmes in 6 SFA regions by December 2009
- Establish a database of key stakeholders to form the basis of a distribution list
- Link SFA development officers with SEN schools wanting to participate in football programmes
- Links developed with mainstream clubs through the SFA Quality Mark Programme to ensure an inclusive approach to disability football

Milestones

- Regional disability festivals run on an annual basis
- Database established July 07
- First 2 Regional participation programmes established December 2006
- Football coaching programmes in SEN Schools across Scotland by December 2006
- First senior professional club co-ordinates disability football centre.
- First club achieves SFA Quality Mark to Community Club standard by July 2007

Key Providers and Partners

- National Development Officer For Disability Football
- SFA Football Development Department
- SFA Regional Managers
- Scottish Disability Sport
- Senior Professional Clubs
- Local Authority / SFA Development Officers
- Active School Network
- LA Disability Development Officers
- Local Authorities

Targets:

- To establish partnerships with key personnel in local authorities and local SDS branches.
- To establish links between senior professional clubs and Scotland's disabled population.
- To develop, co-ordinate and promote a network of disability football

festivals in targeted areas.

- To raise awareness of football opportunities through links with schools, health and social care agencies, and key sports development personnel.
- To increase provision for those with disabilities within schools in Scotland.
- To develop, co-ordinate and promote junior and senior football festivals for those with disabilities.
- To ensure inclusive approach within local mainstream football clubs.

Sport21 Target 1 : 80% of primary schoolchildren will be physically active.

Sport21 Target 3 : “85% of those aged 13-17 to be taking part in sport, in addition to the school curriculum, more than once a week

<p>Objective: Develop a national programme of training and competition for footballers with Disabilities.</p>
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An enhanced national championships for the five and seven/eleven a side game • National Club Development League introduced by December 2006 • 6 regional training squads established by 2010 • Senior professional clubs providing training a competitive opportunities for those with disabilities March 2007. • National Development Day established by December 2007 • National player register scheme established 06/07 season
<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National five and seven/eleven a side championships run annually • Competitive fixtures introduced across disability groups October 2006 • First regional squads established May 2006 • Talent ID process in place February 2007
<p>Key Providers and Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Development Officer For Disability Football ▪ SFA Football Development Department ▪ SFA Regional Managers ▪ Scottish Disability Sport ▪ Scotland senior professional clubs. ▪ SFA Community Development Officers ▪ Local Authorities
<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and increase competitive opportunities within the national programme. • To enable senior professional clubs provide disability specific competitive opportunities. • To implement and extend development squads. • To create clear player pathways up to international level. • To develop a national player registration scheme.
<p>Sport21 Target 1 : 80% of primary schoolchildren will be physically active. Sport21 Target 3 : “85% of those aged 13-17 to be taking part in sport, in addition to the school curriculum, more than once a week. Sport21 Target 9 : “Over one million Scots will play sport in membership of clubs”</p>

Objective: Develop a pathway to allow footballers with disabilities to compete at the highest level.

Outcomes:

- Sports Science and physiotherapy support for all squads supported by Scottish Institute network and Scottish Universities
- National disability football centre established by June 2006
- SFA licence holders appointed as Head Coach to all national squads
- National squad selection policy developed and implemented
- Two international friendly matches arranged each year
- CP Squad established by March 06
- LD Squad established by February 07
- Scottish squads attending appropriate milestone events
- Disability national squad players training with 'mainstream' clubs / development squads November 2006
- All elite players classified at international level

Milestones:

- CP international friendly match May 2006
- CP Europeans 2006
- LD Home Nations 2007
- CP Worlds 2007
- LD Europeans 2008
- CP Home Nations 2008

Key Providers and Partners:

- National Development Officer For Disability Football
- SFA Football Development Department
- SFA Regional Managers
- Scottish Disability Sport
- SFA Accredited Coaches
- Scottish Institute Network
- Scottish Universities
- Local Authority / SFA Development Officers
- International Governing Bodies of Disability Football

Targets:

- Establish national disability specific squads
- Establish a national centre for disability football
- To facilitating a programme of sports science and physiotherapy support for national squads
- To link national squad players with 'mainstream' clubs and development squads where appropriate.
- To provide opportunities for experienced mainstream SFA coaches to attend and support national squad sessions
- To develop a clear national squad selection policy
- To identify and participate in friendly international matches
- To be represented at international tournaments organised by the international disability sport organisations
- To ensure that all elite players have been classified by the appropriate international body

<p>Objective: Raise the standard of Football coaching available to players with disabilities by establishing a comprehensive education programme for new and existing coaches</p>
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching Footballers with Disabilities Certificate (CFWD) introduced by June 2006 • A minimum of 240 new and qualified disability football coaches by December 2010 • Ensure appropriate education & training for SFA Community Coaches, Development Officers and volunteers involved with footballers with disabilities at all levels. • National coach database established • Co-ordinate one course per year for specific disability groups.
<p>Milestone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFWD certificate piloted April 2006 • 2 courses delivered by December 2006 (1st course May 06 and 2nd course November 06) • 2 course delivered annually thereafter
<p>Key Providers and Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Development Officer For Disability Football ▪ SFA Football Development Department ▪ SFA Regional Managers ▪ Scottish Disability Sport ▪ Local Authority / SFA Development Officers ▪ Local Authorities
<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce a Coaching Footballers with Disabilities Certificate • To offer CFDC courses for all SFA Community Coaches • To develop a national coaches database • To increase opportunities for volunteers to participate in SFA Coaching Courses. • To increase the opportunities for those with disabilities to obtain coaching qualifications
<p>Sport21 Target 10: ‘Scotland will sustain 150,000 volunteers who are contributing to the development and delivery of Scottish sport.’</p>

Objective : To provide appropriate structures that supports the programme both centrally and locally.

Outcomes:

- Formation of a National Disability Football Working Group by June 2006
- Funding secured to support the disability football development programme
- Establish a disability football page on the SFA website by May 2006
- Communicate relevant information to key stakeholders every 6 months
- Increased coverage within local and national media
- National disability football development officer post secured until 2010

Milestones:

- National disability football development officer post continues after April 2007
- Disability football website page established 2006
- Formation of National Disability Football Working Group January 2007.

Key Providers and Partners

- National Development Officer For Disability Football
- SFA Regional Managers
- Scottish Disability Sport
- Active Schools Network
- Local and National Media
- Local Authorities
- External Source of Funding (numerous)

Targets:

- To secure additional funding partners to support all aspects of the disability football programme
- To secure funding for the continued employment of a National Development Officer for Disability Football for a further 3 years
- To communicate effectively with key stakeholders in disability football
- To increase the profile of disability football in local and national media