

# Football for Disabled People in Scotland



This fact sheet provides an overview of football for disabled people in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to develop your skills and start to play, volunteer or coach disabled people in football.

## The Development of Football

Perhaps the world's best loved sport, football is played by millions across the globe, whether just in the local park or a national stadium.

Football is a team sport that offers excellent opportunities for people with a disability to enjoy physical exercise, social interaction and develop individual skills within a safe and exciting environment.

The Scottish Disability Programme is an important part of Scottish Disability Sport and the Scottish FA's commitment to encouraging those with physical, sensory or learning disability, or a mix of all three, to participate in football.



It is important to note that no matter a person's ability or disability they can access the game across Scotland. Programmes are being further developed to ensure that "barriers" to disability participation can be overcome.

Cerebral palsy 7-a-side football was introduced at the 1984 New York Paralympic Games and blind 5-a-side football was introduced to the 2004 Games in Athens. Great Britain (GB) entered teams for the first time in Beijing 2008 in both events.

Scotland has a strong tradition of players being selected by GB at Paralympic Games. In London 2012 four Scottish players were selected and three were selected for Rio 2016.

Players with cerebral palsy, stroke or acquired brain injury who are ambulant play a 7-a-side format of the game.

A Powerchair Football League is well established with teams competing across Scotland. Structures for deaf and frame football are have also been established and sessions for Visually Impaired and Blind Footballers are being developed.

The Scottish FA employs a National Disability Development Officer and also Football Development Officers in 27 Scottish local authorities who have a remit to promote and develop disability football. A significant number of clubs have been awarded the Scottish FA Disability Club Award and the Disability Inclusive Club Award.

SDS is represented on the Board of the GB Disability Football Association. All Scottish players selected for ParalympicsGB come through SDS / Scottish FA structures.

Scotland has direct entry into European and World Championships through membership of the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF). At the IFCPF European Championships in 2014 and World Championships in 2015 the Scottish team finished 5th and 9th respectively and Scotland has qualified for the 2017 World Championships in San Luis, Argentina.

The Scottish FA and SDS wish to continue the development of disability football in Scotland, offering greater opportunities for players to reach their full potential.

## The Classifications

Disability football includes pathways for a number of levels from grass roots through to international representation.

Players with cerebral palsy, stroke or acquired brain injury who are ambulant play a 7-a-side format of the game.

Sport class FT5-FT8 (lower number indicates

a higher level of impairment): In order to ensure fairness between teams, each team of seven players must have two FT5 or FT6 players on the field at all times and is not allowed to have more than one FT8 player on the field.

Players with a visual impairment play a 5-aside version of the game.

Sport class B1 (totally or almost totally blind athletes): Matches are played between two teams, each with four athletes who have a B1 level of visual impairment and one goalkeeper who can be sighted or visually impaired (plus five substitutes).



## Learning Disability Football

The Scottish FA in partnership with SDS organises friendlies and national 5's, 7's and 11-a-side football competitions annually. An Under 19 National squad is also in place to ensure competition and progression and this team are the current Home Nation Champions. For further information on these opportunities, please contact the SDS head office on phone number 0131 317 1130 or email [admin@scottishdisabilitysport.com](mailto:admin@scottishdisabilitysport.com).

## Wheelchair Football

In conjunction with the Wheelchair Football Association, the Scottish FA has established opportunities for wheelchair footballers.

For further information on the Wheelchair Football Association please follow the link: [www.thewfa.org.uk/index.php](http://www.thewfa.org.uk/index.php)

## Sensory Impairment Football

The Scottish Deaf Football Association organises league and competitive fixtures for teams and players who are deaf within Scotland.

In conjunction with a number of regional partners, the Scottish FA is currently setting up opportunities for visually impaired and blind footballers. To register an interest or enquire about these sessions please email [opportunities@scottishfa.co.uk](mailto:opportunities@scottishfa.co.uk).

## Coach Education

Coaching Footballers with a Disability (6 hours) allows coaches a better understanding of the needs for a disabled footballer to develop skills and allow these players to reach their full potential.

Disability Football Awareness course (3 hours) gives coaches from a mainstream environment the opportunity to better understand how the coach can include a disabled player within a mainstream football environment.

To access the Scottish FA Coach Education brochure and course application process contact: [coaching@scottishfa.co.uk](mailto:coaching@scottishfa.co.uk).

A major development will see the inclusion of three hours of disability content within the UEFA B Licence.

## Helpful Resources

Scottish FA - Disability Football Opportunities

A detailed explanation of the various disability classifications.

## Some Facts & Figures

- There are clubs offering distinct disability activity – 28 being disability inclusive.
- 50 teams took part in the 2016/17 National Championships.
- Scotland are currently ranked 9th in the world within Cerebral Palsy Football (2017).
- The Learning Disability Squad has won the last three Home Nations Championships.

## Leading Performers

Jonathan Paterson (Motherwell), Martin Hickman (Glasgow) and David Porcher (Edinburgh) competed for the ParalympicsGB 7-a-side football team at the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

## Competitions

Scottish FA Regional Schools League has extended to include the North Region, now covering six regions in total.

SDS and the Scottish FA run an extensive national events programme which includes the following:

- National 5-a-side championships
- National 7-a-side championships
- National Schools League for players with a learning disability



## Key Contacts

David McArdle  
Scottish FA National Disability Manager  
E: [david.mcardle@scottishfa.co.uk](mailto:david.mcardle@scottishfa.co.uk)  
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### Head Office

The Scottish Football Association  
6th Floor, Hampden Park  
Glasgow G42 9AY  
T: 0141 616 6077

## Key Websites

The Scottish Football Association  
[www.scottishfa.co.uk](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk)

Scottish Disability Sport  
[www.scottishdisabilitysport.com](http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com)

International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football  
[www.ifcpf.com](http://www.ifcpf.com)

British Paralympic Association  
[www.paralympics.org.uk](http://www.paralympics.org.uk)

International Paralympic Committee  
[www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)