

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020

SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS AND SECRETARIAT

1.1 MEMBERSHIP

A total of 379 Associations were registered for affiliation in Season 2019-20

1.2 THE CHAIRMAN

Phil Harding has carried out the duties of Chairman of the English Schools` Football Association with pride, diligence and a tremendous work ethic. In often challenging times, he has led the Association with consistency, confidence and dignity and has represented the ESFA with distinction. Sadly, it has been a season of interruption given the global pandemic we are enduring but that hasn't stopped Phil from using his year as Chairman to ensure the Association continues to move forward and to function effectively and efficiently.

As all who know Phil would expect, he has provided strong and clear leadership from the chair during Council meetings and has maintained his solution focussed approach throughout. A significant area that he has driven this year has been the prominence of rep football in the structural change process: one of Phil's main passions is for District and County representative football and for providing high quality opportunities for as many young people as possible and this has directed his involvement and commitment in this area. He has continued the excellent work in this area by his predecessor, John Martin, and has worked closely with a number of Associations to ensure secure foundations for continued and enhanced activity.

With the commitment to Members to drive a re-invigoration of rep football, Phil has also remained highly committed to the Player Passport scheme following his initiation of such discussions with Council Members in 2018/19. Work had been underway, with Trustees, prior to the pandemic but the deferral of the scheme until season21/22 paused these efforts temporarily.

Also high on Phil's agenda has been the intent to try to re-balance the ESFA's relationship with The FA. His efforts here were delayed but not thwarted by the pandemic and with Mike Spinks, a number of positive meetings with senior personnel have taken place.

Unfortunately, Phil's year as Chairman has not only coincided with Covid-19 but also with the passing of a number of the schools' football family; not least past and present Council Members who themselves have contributed so much over so many years to education and the sport we all love. Phil has represented the ESFA on each extremely sad occasion with great honour and dignity providing fitting words and reflections befitting the individuals and their sustained contributions.

With Council having agreed for Phil to continue as Chairman for a second year, he is looking forward to what will hopefully be a more 'normal' season of schools' football; one in which he will be able to enjoy as many of the events as possible that he would have done this year. More importantly, he will continue to work with energy, determination and drive to fulfil his commitments to rep football, the Player Passport scheme, Association restructure and the positioning of the ESFA for a sustainable and productive season. He can look back on his year as Chairman of the ESFA

as a unique one and one within which he has made significant contributions to securing the future of schools' football in England.

1.3 VICE-CHAIRMAN

Since joining Council in 2014 Mark has been an invaluable member of the group, displaying a willingness to help in any capacity. He has been a hardworking, highly effective and truly supportive Vice-Chairman throughout the season, carrying out his duties with enthusiasm and diligence, deputising, accompanying and assisting at various events and functions. These have included the preparation trip to Eindhoven for the two international squads, and the John Read Trophy match away to the Republic of Ireland. As a member of Trustees, he has helped to steer the Association through challenging times.

During his years on Council, Mark has served the Association with distinction, particularly in his role on the Representative Committee, where he has been heavily involved in the international programme and in overseeing the appointment of the international team management. As Chairman and Football Development Officer of Shropshire Schools & Colleges County SFA, Mark has a wide range experience of schools' football at all levels.

With the full support of his family and his school, Mark is looking forward to another season as Vice-Chairman in 2020-21, hopefully one that will follow a more normal pattern of activities. He will then take up the role of Chairman in 2021-22, which he will approach and fulfil with his usual energy, dedication and efficiency. The Association will be in excellent hands.

1.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Our CEO led the staff team and worked alongside ESFA Council and Trustees very effectively during a challenging 2019-20 season. The value of Andrea's ability to lead the 'business' of the ESFA has been invaluable during this time and the systems and practices she has established have been critical in supporting effective decision making.

Andrea has demonstrated professionalism and business insight in her work and continues to be a hard-working and effective lead professional. The quality of work of the ESFA staff team is a testament to this. We thank Andrea for all she has done and continues to do as our CEO.

1.5 STAFFING

The staff team has faced different challenges to normal this season, with remote working, furlough and online communication featuring in a way which could not have been predicted. Colleagues have responded positively and professionally to these conditions, working collaboratively to cover for each other during furlough and striving to maintain the high standards we set of ourselves. Thanks to them for their resilience, their team spirit and their support for each other.

Our newest team member, Ian Laithwaite, enjoyed a productive first year in post as Commercial Director. Ian satisfied the Trustees' income expectations and as a result, is now a permanent member of the workforce. Congratulations to Ian on his success.

The suspension of football brought a frustrating end to the season for those usually highly focused on reaching and delivering national finals but Darren Alcock, Josh Thornton and Jack Evans have continued to work hard behind the scenes, testing and developing the new portal, cleansing the schools' data so that our communications reach their intended audience, administering discipline cases and even redirecting medal deliveries so that the Danone regional winners received their rewards. Darren has played a key role in supporting "COBRA", the ESFA's emergency committee convened to deal with the impact of Covid-19 on football, and his expertise and experience has been a vital part of their planning and decision making.

Sarah Kearney and our marketing intern, Jacob Blades, probably had the busiest year of their careers as the usual flurry of national competitions and international PR and marketing was supplanted by huge amounts of social media coverage sought by our partners who usually gain coverage from our activities. PlayStation have also been thrilled by our social media response, and this has surely been influential in their decision to continue to support the ESFA, despite the footballing drought. Prior to this, Schools' Football Week saw more than 22,000 children involved in football and the PlayStation event at West Bromwich Albion was a huge success. Jacob returned to University for the final year of his degree, determined to volunteer at the ESFA's 20/21 finals, exams permitting! Both Sarah and Jacob should rightly be very proud of their work this season.

Elsewhere amongst the team, Andy and Kieren's mileage dropped dramatically as Association restructure work moved online. Both have worked with determination and resilience to support Members to progress this critical work and have been grateful to Members for their collaborative approach. Development funded activity, whilst not wholly complete, did support new opportunities for over 8,500 children to play football and the ESFA data capture process recorded 74,000 teams' activity in 19/20, despite the suspension of football. Sadly, this suspension meant that the hugely successful national disability festivals introduced in 18/19 were not able to take place this season: nonetheless, Andy and Kieren have worked tirelessly once again to deliver key ESFA priorities. Well done to them.

Martin and Sarah continue to provide high levels of expert advice on safeguarding matters, preparing us well for the expected publication of an education partners' Safeguarding Operating Standard, now due in 20/21. Sarah's expertise in particular has been vital in guiding the ESFA to a position of preparedness for this. Martin's expertise has been equally valuable, particularly in his ongoing support for complex disciplinary cases and advice to Members.

Lorna has continued to work hard to ensure that customers, Members and colleagues in the office continue to enjoy the high levels of service they have come to expect. Lorna successfully completed her first aid refresher, which has added to the qualification and training she has achieved in recent years. Congratulations to Lorna. Dawn has continued to support the Trustees with detailed financial management and reporting, which has been more important than ever in these challenging economic times. Thanks in particular to Dawn for supporting the CEO throughout the period when most other colleagues were furloughed.

1.6 AUDITORS

The ESFA's Honorary and Professional Auditors continue to provide the Association with advice and an independent, critical eye.

The Honorary Auditors, Neil Pont (Northumberland), Allan Reed (Durham) and Terry Pollard (Humberside) have been unable to conduct their annual visit although they have remained in touch with Council and staff during the period. Their search for a new Independent Council Member continues.

Mark Ashton, of Lancaster & Co, continues to perform his professional duties on behalf of the Association with due diligence. The long-standing relationship with the ESFA is greatly valued.

Council wishes to record its thanks to our Honorary and Professional Auditors for their work on behalf of the Association

SECTION 2 – FINANCE AND SPONSORSHIP

2.1 FINANCE

The disruption to the 2019-20 season caused by the global pandemic has, as you might expect, had a significant impact on ESFA finances.

The original budget for the 19-20 season was expected to be a £6,962 profit and prior to the pandemic this had been revised to a £23,688 loss.

The pandemic had a significant impact on key expected expenditure such as national competition finals and international activity, along with County SFA restructures, all of which halted from March 2020. When finalising the 19-20 financial year accounts, the following expenditure needed to be included, but the funds will be carried forward to spend in the 20-21 season:

- Funding for 2020 national finals of £129,265, the ESFA Council have given a commitment to complete 19-20 competitions where this is possible.
- Funding of some activity and or recognition for 2020 international squads of £12,330.
- Funding of £75,000 for County SFA restructures & £2,868 for development activities that are committed to be completed.

This left a positive balance (profit figure) of just under £118,000 that has been temporarily placed in ESFA reserves. This money will help to offset the projected operating losses of approximately £128,000 that will be accrued during the 2020-21 and the 2021-22 seasons, leaving the Association with an expected loss of £10,000 over a 3 year period 2019- 2022.

The £128,000 projected loss is made up entirely of lost income due to the impact of Covid-19 although this total would have been higher had new income and cost savings elsewhere not been achieved. Loss of revenue income from competition entries and significant cuts in the FA grant to the ESFA of at least 1/3 will have a big impact on our Association. Multi-million pound losses at the FA are public knowledge and it is clear that the ESFA will be affected.

Good quality financial recording and planning from our staff team has enabled Trustees to be well informed when making some challenging decisions about the future of the Association. There is a commitment from Trustees to protect activity as a priority and to attempt to keep the impact on Membership to a minimum.

The ESFA's strong relationship with sponsors has enabled us to retain key sponsors for next season, even at a time when we have been unable to fulfil some of our commitments to them due to the pandemic. Credit must go to our staff team who work hard to service our sponsors and for the creativity they have shown to retain key contracts.

During the 2019-20 financial year the Trustees ensured that the maximum possible financial support was given to member associations:

- Grants to support County Administrators - £137,000
- Cash grants to County Associations - £88,000 (funding for those CSFAs who have yet to complete remains available from the 19/20 budget)
- ESFA Development Funding - £18,250
- Inter County & Inter Association Travel & Accommodation payments - £28,598

The financial systems established over the past 4 years, including the change of a reporting year to match seasonal activity, have been vital in the Trustees' ability to manage a challenging financial period for the ESFA. These systems and strategic financial planning have been led and embedded by key staff. For this the Trustees again wish to place on record thanks to our Chief Executive, Andrea Chilton and the Association's Finance Officer, Dawn Howard, for administering the ESFA's finances with dedication, skill and professionalism.

2.2 SPONSORSHIP

2019/20 could have been a highly unsatisfactory year for our sponsors, but our support for their work and their commitment to the ESFA resulted in their continued commitment to the Association. PlayStation and Danone both had the option to withdraw their funding: both decided quickly that they wished to continue despite the cessation of football. Their ongoing support of the ESFA is vital and is gratefully received.

On the international programme, the year started well with the appointment of a new sponsor, Utilita, and our long-term partners also continued with their invaluable support. Once again, the pre-season training for both squads, courtesy of Inspire Sport, was a huge success and thoroughly enjoyed by all involved. Pendle continued as our preferred supplier of strip, covering the cost of kitting out both teams, their management teams and relevant ESFA personnel. As with national competitions, our partners did not enjoy the full season of activity they would have expected but remain committed to the ESFA and are grateful for the additional social media coverage received. UCFB, our HE partner, was thrilled with the support from the ESFA, having been able to track the impact of ESFA marketing on student enquiries and open day attendance, both of which increased significantly on previous years. Pass4Soccer, however, were severely affected by Covid-19 and opted for voluntary liquidation in the spring. Our thanks go to them for the long-term partnership with the ESFA and we wish personnel affected by this closure well. The work of the Commercial Director has secured a different US scholarships provider and we look forward to a productive relationship with First Point USA, our new partner.

In the final year of the Association's Associate Charity scheme, Grief Encounter joined the ranks of recognised charities and promoted their services to support bereaved children through the ESFA's schools' network.

Running Imp returned as our official medal supplier and sponsor of the U12 Indoor Football Fives, which culminated in a lively finals day at PlayFootball in Birmingham and Mark Harrod, official goalpost supplier, continued with their in-kind support of our activity.

Like other partners, Panini continued to work with the ESFA in 2019/20, running their primary school "Classroom Challenge" to design a mascot. The winning school received £2000 in cash from Panini, with goodies given to the winning student. Panini finished the season by commissioning a further project from the ESFA in early 20/21.

SECTION 3 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

3.1 REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL

In a largely covid-impacted season, the Representative Football Committee very regrettably does not have a full season of opportunities to report on. Despite this, the Committee Members remained committed throughout to maximising the opportunities provided by all aspects of the representative football offer; similarly, to increasing the fixtures programme for our U15 Girls' national squad following the difficulties in securing suitable fixtures in the previous season.

The season was one of significant change with regards the international squad staff. Having successfully filled all seven vacancies prior to the commencement of the 2019-20 season, the staff of both teams gelled immediately and not only provided the knowledge and expertise required but also the leadership and role modelling befitting the high-profile positions they hold. Council would like to recognise the significant contribution made by Sian Langholm, Adam Jones, David Ebberson, Matthew Roach, Richie Alderson, Luke Hampton, Matt George and Tony Harris throughout this season. Regrettably, due to a new work opportunity, Matt George has had to resign his position of U18 Goalkeeping Coach and the process of securing an appropriate replacement will begin shortly. Matt has made an excellent contribution to the ESFA during his years of volunteering and we wish him every success in his new employment.

The Committee was also able to make two outstanding appointments to the respective positions of Boys' and Girls' International Programme Coordinators. Both Derv Chown (Boys) and Ange Emery (Girls) have proven excellent additions to the ESFA family and have continued the excellent work of their predecessor. Council would again like to place on record our sincere gratitude for all that Derv and Ange have done to enhance the experiences of our international players and the significant contribution they have already made. Organisation, professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm are qualities both have in abundance and we very much look forward to their continued involvement next season.

As reported last season, the decision was made to revert to the previous trials format for footballing reasons. The trials adhered to the strict budget set and delivered two excellent squads whose attitude and performances in the training camp and small number of games played gave every reason to be optimistic about the competitive season ahead. It goes without saying that it has been hugely regrettable for the successful players that they have not been able to enjoy the full international experience, but plans are in place to ensure a fitting final experience for both squads.

All players proved, as expected, to be outstanding role models and ambassadors, representing themselves, their families, their schools, their counties and the ESFA with distinction both on and off the field. Many have fully involved themselves in the wider aspects and responsibilities of being international players. They have had a huge impact within our social media presence and have taken responsibility for increasing our exposure and reputation on a national stage. Many have been proactive in attracting sponsorship and have supported the Association in every way requested of them.

On the field, there was success in the one competitive fixture that was played in March prior to school closures and lockdown. The U15 Girls travelled to Dublin to contest the annual John Read Trophy and came away deserved 2-1 winners following an excellent and hard-fought display. As always, our friends at FAI Schools were superb hosts and helped to ensure a high quality and all-round excellent experience for the girls whose friendship and camaraderie was obvious for all to see. The U18 Boys hosted Australian Schools at Stafford Town FC and a well-fought encounter ended all square. The ESFA is grateful to the club for again supporting schools' international football, and to colleagues at Staffordshire CSFA, so ably led by the late John Appleby, for making the arrangements for this match.

Both international squads travelled together to Eindhoven for a pre-season training camp. Combining both squads on one trip proved to be a hugely successful initiative, with players and staff enjoying being part of the ESFA family and supporting each other. The matches were competitive, the training purposeful, accommodation and facilities at the hotel excellent, and the welcome at PSV Eindhoven warm and friendly. The ESFA would like to thank Inspire Sport for again providing this wonderful experience as part of their sponsorship.

Outside of International activity, the Committee continued to provide oversight of rep football competitions and the development of the Player Passport. Having been mandated by Members at the AGM to introduce new age groups and a champions-league format for rep football, it was disappointing, although appropriate, to defer these plans for a year.

3.2 COMPETITIONS

A total of 6,688 teams registered to participate in the ESFA National Secondary Schools' Cup programme during Season 2019-20 - this represented an increase of 128 teams on the previous season's total. A record number of girls' teams registered to compete in the tournaments, with 1,685 recorded across the age groups overall (an increase of 60 teams compared to the previous season).

Disappointingly, a large proportion of ESFA activity was curtailed prematurely due to the Covid 19 pandemic as detailed within this report.

This season saw the introduction of the new ESFA Under 18 Super League, a competition which is designed to cater for those schools, colleges and private providers which offer a football academy / development programme at sixth form level. Demand exceeded expectation in the tournament's inaugural season as 120 boys' teams and 38 girls' teams registered to take part in the competition. Teams were collated into groups for a league section which allowed for the winners and runners-up of each group to progress to a knockout phase after Christmas. The new format was well received

by participating teams as it offered a guarantee of more competition fixtures compared to the previous knockout format.

The ESFA declined the opportunity to continue with The FA / ESFA Futsal Schools' Cup partnership due to the announcement of a three-year sponsorship by The FA which conflicted with the contractual obligations to one of ESFA's existing sponsors.

The three Deaf Schools' Cup tournaments, hosted with support from staff at the Derby Royal School for the Deaf, were hosted on Tuesday 11th February 2020, at the Derby Powerleague. 10 girls' teams and 17 boys' teams were involved on the day in what proved to be an incredibly successful occasion.

Over a month later, on Monday 16th March, the ESFA returned to PlayFootball Birmingham (previously the National Futsal Centre) for a fourth successive season, for the National Finals of the ESFA U12 'Running Imp' Football Fives. Reported participation figures showed a large increase for this format of the game as 740 teams registered for the boys' competition (compared to 542 last season) and 496 for the girls' category (compared to 370 in the previous season). The boys' and girls' finalists were originally invited to participate in a showcase event as part of the Euro 2020 launch party outside of Wembley Stadium in June, but this event was cancelled in light of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The U11 Danone Nations Cup progressed through the District Rounds and County Finals before being abandoned at the Regional Finals phase in mid-March. Teams that had qualified for the Regional Finals were presented with a County Champion pennant and a set of Regional Finals' players participation medals as recognition of their achievement.

The Danone Nations World Cup celebrated its 20th anniversary and was hosted in Barcelona in October 2019. England was represented in the 2018 tournament by Newham SFA (boys' competition) and Ponteland Academy (girls' competition) and in the 2019 tournament by Nottingham SFA (boys' competition) and Easington Academy (girls' competition). Although the four England teams did not fare well from a footballing perspective, all four teams managed to win the Fair Play Award in their respective competitions and in doing so proved to be incredible ambassadors for their country and schools' football. Qualifying matches were hosted at the Salou Football Complex with the final round of matches being played at the RCDE Stadium, home to Espanyol FC. The ESFA wishes to place on record its thanks to Sophie Smith, the Head of PR and Events at Danone UK, for her commitment and support throughout the season.

The entire ESFA National Schools' Cup programme for secondary schools was suspended at the Semi-Final / Final phase at all age groups. At the conclusion of the school year, the ESFA remained committed to establishing a strategy to complete the season once the schools had returned after the 2020 summer holidays. The ESFA wishes to place on record its thanks to Jess Benson, Gareth Lush and Sarah Moffatt at Sony PlayStation UK for their support, commitment and vision shown throughout the 19-20 season. The introduction of the 'Next Level' was hugely successful campaign which culminated with a showcase 'Next Level Live' event that was hosted at West Bromwich Albion Football Club on Monday 3rd February.

The ESFA would also like to place on record its thanks to Garry Griffiths of 353 Photography; Samantha Banks, Hannah Cornell and Charlotte Doughty for providing their services as a qualified

physiotherapist and the army of referees that have helped officiate at all ESFA fixtures and National Finals throughout the season.

3.3. ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT

The Association Development Committee has continued to drive change and assist the staff in the areas of governance and development to support our Members and partners. The Committee was delighted to welcome new ESFA Council Members Ray Ashley and Tony James to its ranks at the start of the season.

County reform has been at the forefront of the work programme for the ESFA development team working with our 44 County Schools' Associations. This process is the most notable change to the structure of schools' football in recent history. At the time of writing 13 Counties had completed the process in full. The effect of Covid-19 curtailed several counties from being able to hold consultation events. With several county schools administrators being placed on furlough within their employers, the ability to complete the reform within the original timescales was impossible to achieve.

The Committee would like to thank all the Districts and Counties for their demanding work to complete their restructure exercise. The Committee appreciate the complex decisions that had to be made. The rationale for restructure was to ensure sustainability, improve consistency of the Counties' offer and make it simpler for colleagues to be involved. Although there has been a good deal of red tape to work through, the models adopted by Counties are proving beneficial.

Special thanks should go to former Association Development Committee Chairman John Martin who led the working group that put forward the final restructuring proposals. Without his commitment and belief in change this project would not have been achieved.

To further improve our governance of the game the Committee has led and implemented new guidance on the "sanctioning of activity" and "permission to play" alongside reviewing and updating the ESFA insurance policies. This work began prior to lockdown, however the enforced pause in football allowed us to concentrate on this area of work. Following several "Microsoft Teams" online meetings, clear guidance was provided for Members, partners, and external organisations, and hopefully this process will be simpler and clearer for everyone involved.

Since starting in his new role as an ESFA staff member, Josh Thornton has provided the Committee with regular discipline reports whilst also working with The FA. With the support from Staffordshire FA's Discipline Officer Vicky Collins Josh has greatly improved the way we deal with discipline in the school football sector and thanks are offered to both.

The Committee oversaw a Development Fund which supported 46 projects investing £21,310 around the country. This has resulted in 792 new teams and 8,522 new participants. Some projects did not start due to Covid-19, but additional time has been given for them to be completed. 88% of the projects from the 2018-2019 season Development Fund continued their activity (with over 55% seeing an increase in participation from the initial activity).

Sadly, the planned Regional Disability Festivals towards the end of the season had to be cancelled. However, the ESFA was to be able to support the finals day of the Association of Muslim Schools.

These finals took place at Market Harborough Town Football Club on 11th March 2020, were very successful, and much enjoyed by all the participants.

Thanks are extended to the Members of the Association Development Committee but in particular to Andy Weston and Kieren Laverick for their energy, professionalism, and commitment to the many facets of their work.

SECTION 4 – LIAISON

4.1 FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mike Spinks has continued to be the ESFA's representative on The FA Council and serves on the Disability Committee, the Futsal Committee and the Youth Participation & Football Development Committee. He is also a Member of the FA Women's Ambassadorial Panel. During the Season he travelled with England Ladies Youth Teams playing in UEFA tournaments and was the Head of Delegation when the England Lionesses attended the "She Believes" Cup in the United States of America in March 2020. Matches were played in Orlando (lost 0-2 v USA), New York (won 1-0 v Japan) and Dallas (lost 0-1 v Spain).

4.1.1 The National Game Board

Members of The FA Council from the National Game decided, at a meeting in December 2019, to remove the automatic place for an education representative on the National Game Board (NGB). This meant that Mike Spinks had to apply for one of the six vacancies on the NGB from the start of Season 2020-2021. Following the robust interviewing of 10 FA Council Members, Mike was eventually selected as being one of the six best candidates. He was elected for a 2-year term of office. He continued to have regular termly meetings with the ISFA Chief Executive, Mark Dickson, during the 2019-2020 season as he also represents the ISFA on the NGB. The National Game Board has decided to invoke an Education Review during the Autumn of 2020 and the ESFA will be actively engaged with this. Because of Covid-19, grants from The FA have been severely reduced and the ESFA in particular has had to take a big financial hit.

4.1.2 FA Disability Committee

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 season Mike Spinks was elected as the Committee's Vice-Chairman and represented The FA at the World Partially sighted Championships in Turkey in December 2019 where the England team lost in the final to Ukraine. Over the years the Disability Committee has taken an increasing interest in the Deaf Schools Festival which the ESFA has been very successfully staging in Derby for some time. The winners of our girls' competition (held annually in February) however, are no longer invited to the FA Disability Cup Finals Day at St George's Park in June each year. There are travel difficulties at weekends for the winning teams which appear not to be able to be resolved.

4.1.3 FA Futsal Committee

Mike Spinks serves on the FA Futsal Committee season as the schools' representative. A tournament involving both club and school teams took place during the season, organised in the main by County Football Associations. He attended the Home Nations Championships for Futsal at St George's Park, an event that England won. Futsal is now in a delicate position, with funding significantly reduced.

4.1.4 FA Youth Participation and Football Development Committee

From the start of the 2018-2019 season the Youth Committee and the Football Development Committee were combined to form the Youth Participation and Football Development Committee. Mike Spinks was due to be Head of Delegation for the Annual Montagu Festival for Under 16 Men's International Teams in France, but this event was subsequently cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.1.5 FA Women's Ambassadorial Panel

Mike Spinks has continued to speak on behalf of education when girls' schools and youth football are being discussed. During the season, several meetings took place involving the ESFA Chief Executive and Mike with senior FA staff member Sharon Brownlie concerning women's and girls' football, principally to discuss our Under 14 and Under 16 Inter-County Girls football leagues and cups. These will continue to be played on the 2nd Saturday of each month in Season 2020-2021. Mike inspects Regional Talent Centres around the country on behalf of The FA and is one of a team of delegates to Women's Super League matches.

4.2 SCHOOLS' ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL INTERNATIONAL BOARD

The Schools Association Football International Board (more commonly referred to as SAFIB) is an organisation of affiliated countries from around the world who have an interest in promoting schools' football. As well as representation from the United Kingdom and Ireland, many of the European countries are Members, as well as Australia and New Zealand. Mike Spinks is currently the SAFIB Secretary and Dave Woollaston the Assistant Secretary. During the 2019-2020 season the SAFIB Annual General Meeting was held at the Celtic Manor Hotel in Newport, hosted by the Football Association of Wales, and the Winter Meeting took place in Holland. The latter event was sponsored by Inspiresport and hosted by the PSV Eindhoven Football Club.

Each season the ESFA National Competitions Department nominates a boys' school team to go to the Allen McKinstry Under 14 Cup Tournament and a girls' team from the same age group to attend the Rod Houston Cup for girls' school teams. These tournaments effectively create the British Isles Champions. In normal circumstances the ESFA will nominate, via the ESFA National Competitions Manager, its Champions from one of their Under 13 PlayStation Cup tournaments.

4.2.1 SAFIB Centenary Shield

The Under 18 Boys Centenary Shield is played as a league by national selects from schools and colleges in England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Each season the countries are due to complete two home and two away fixtures. In January, a friendly fixture between the ESFA and the touring Australia Schools side was played at Stafford Town FC, finishing in a 1-1 draw. The ESFA U18 lads then prepared for the Centenary Shield with some half-term training, arranged by "Inspiresport" in Holland. Sadly only two matches were completed in the 2020 Centenary Shield before the lockdown. Both involved Northern Ireland, who drew 1-1 away to Scotland and then played at home against Wales and beat them 1-0.

4.2.2 SAFIB Victory Shield

The Under 16 Victory Shield for boys' national teams has continued (since the withdrawal of England in 2015) to be competed for by Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Over the October half-term week in 2019, the Football Association was responsible for organising and administering the 2019 Victory Shield competition at their new North Wales

Soccer Centre in Wrexham. Scotland and Wales finished top of the league and shared the trophy.

4.2.3 SAFIB Under 15 Bob Docherty Cup for Girls National Teams

This tournament is for the Girls Under 15 International Teams from Great Britain and Ireland – England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Following the event in Spain in April 2019, organised by Dave Woollaston and Owen Aiston, it was the turn on rotation of the ESFA to host the tournament in 2020. The travel company “Inspiresport” again supported the ESFA squad by arranging a half-term training week abroad in Holland. The ESFA Under 15 team then played for the John Read Trophy in Dublin and beat the Republic of Ireland 2-1. Not long after, the Covid lockdown meant the inevitable cancellation of the 2020 Bob Docherty Cup Tournament. Whenever the next event can be staged it remains the ESFA’s responsibility to organise.

4.2.4 SAFIB Under 14 Allen McKinstry Cup for Boys Schools Teams

This tournament is for boys’ school teams from Great Britain and Ireland – the Champions from England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The event in May 2020 was due to be staged by the Football Association of Ireland Schools in Dublin. The ESFA nomination for the tournament was Whitgift School from Croydon. Sadly, because of the lockdown no teams were able to travel to Dublin. The event remains postponed with the possibility that it could still be played in May 2021 with the same playing squads.

4.2.5 SAFIB Under 14 Rod Houston Cup for Girls School Teams

This tournament, open to the Girls Champion School Teams from the United Kingdom and Ireland, took place at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire just before the half-term break in October 2019. Mike Spinks and Dave Woollaston were responsible for the organisation and administration of the competition. England with two teams, the Republic of Ireland and Wales competed. The ESFA was represented by the girls from Shenfield High School in Essex and Crompton House C of E School from Oldham. The winners of the tournament were Carndonagh Community School from County Donegal with Shenfield finishing as runners-up. The ESFA is grateful to Mark Warren, ESFA Council Member, for making the appointment of the match officials. Once again Carol Brown, Nigel’s wife, attended the last day of the competition to make the presentation of the Nigel Brown Memorial Award to the outstanding player at the tournament.

4.3 SARA

In normal times the Sports and Recreation Alliance meets in London twice a year to discuss matters of interest and concern from a wide variety of sports, not just football. It also arranges an Annual Conference in September with a topical issue being discussed in the morning prior to the afternoon Annual General Meeting. Prince Edward chairs the AGM. As from April 2020 meetings have been held online every fortnight to update Members on the latest issues for sport resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.4 CHILD WELFARE

The ESFA National Welfare Officers continue to work closely with Associations to ensure compliance with ESFA safeguarding policies and our legal obligations. ESFA affiliation policy states

that every Association running representative teams must have an FA qualified Welfare Officer with an in date (within the last 3 years) FA Criminal Record Check (DBS) and every manager or coach with an Association representative team must also have an accepted FA DBS every 3 years. Those who are not practising teachers must also complete the FA Safeguarding training every 3 years.

The FA Safeguarding Workshop can now be re-certified free online, and this has proved popular with Associations, with an increase in compliance at affiliation.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, The FA took the decision to extend the expiry date of FA DBS checks which were due to expire between 1st March 2020 and 1st October 2020 by 12 months.

All FA face to face courses were suspended in March 2020 so new Welfare Officers are unable to attend the required workshops, however there will be online training offered by The FA in the autumn of 2020 for those new to the role. The NWOs will keep Associations updated with any changes to training.

Some Associations were suspended for non-compliance at the start of 2019/2020, but the National Welfare officers worked with Associations to ensure they fulfilled their legal obligations and were able to play.

Council strongly asks Local and County Associations with representative teams to ensure their personnel records on the portal are kept up to date throughout the season and delete staff no longer involved with their representative teams in line with our GDPR obligations. Associations placed under suspension are listed on the ESFA website and Associations should check this information regularly to ensure their team and opposition teams are compliant to play. The portal is currently undergoing changes which Council hope will make the registration of CWOs and staff easier for Associations when affiliating and updating their safeguarding requirements.

There have been several serious safeguarding concerns and poor practice incidents, which have been managed by the National Welfare Officers working closely with Association Welfare Officers, the FA Management team and Statutory Agencies where appropriate. On occasion FA Suspensions have been issued, with supervision or additional training required for some coaches.

There is full access to many policy documents and guidelines on the ESFA website – these are reviewed annually.

Associations should note that they must apply for sanctions if they are playing games against unaffiliated opposition and foreign opposition (this includes participation in tournaments). A risk assessment must also be completed and submitted with the Sanction Request.

Priorities for the 20-21 season will include continued support for Associations to ensure all their representative team staff comply with ESFA affiliation requirements and adhere to ESFA/FA safeguarding policies and to continue to work with the FA to ensure that all referees appointed to representative matches are FA qualified and registered.

Council are grateful to our NCWOs for their expertise, their commitment and their determination to help us to make sure children are safe when playing under our auspices

4.5 NCSS 2019/20

The ESFA continues to support the work of the National Council for Schools Sport and the ISF.

4.7 MARKETING AND PR

Throughout the 2019 - 20 season, the ESFA has continued to make improvements through the organisation's PR and Communications strategy, with the workload being shared by the addition of an intern, helping to sustain the work driven by the improving reach of the ESFA's profile. The social media profile of the Association, which has increased year on year, with the addition of new channels to help diversify their offering, has seen significant growth thanks to the ongoing efforts of the team. The considered, strategic and continual use of social media becomes increasingly important each season when communicating with schools, sponsors and the general public. The ESFA has continued to see several improvements to existing initiatives as well as some exciting new developments throughout 2019/20. The importance of good quality communications has been proven to be more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic and it has been crucial for the ESFA to find and create content to remain relevant and at the forefront of support for schools' footballers.

4.7.1 Twitter - Followers have increased once again from 19,434 to 21,506 and in the last three months, despite the fact there has been no football 'activity' as such, the ESFA has still earned over 500,000 impressions with an engagement rate of 2.2%, which shows that they are consistently creating content that our audience find engaging. Twitter continues to be an integral part of both the ESFA's public image and communication strategy and has become hugely effective in advertising/promoting events, sharing successes and interacting with schools. Using Twitter to share activities, campaigns and messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic has been very successful and the situation forced the team to be more creative and focus more attention on the type of content being created, it has also prompted similar actions from sponsors and partners and the PlayStation F.C. Schools' Cup content, for example, has been hugely popular and successful during this time.

4.7.2 Facebook – Whilst Facebook still is not a priority channel for the ESFA to share information across, posts are routinely scheduled for publishing via this medium. Follower numbers have increased from 2,609 to 3,275 and posts that are shared appear to be well received by followers. Engagement and reach have increased significantly since these routine posts have been added to the comms plan and content will continue to be shared in this way.

4.7.3 Instagram – The ESFA Instagram account has seen an increase in followers from 2,323 to 3,705 with positive reactions to posts and interest in the content provided for the audience. Instagram provides a fantastic, visual platform to share the ESFA's news and successes. The high-quality content provided by ESFA photographer, 353 Photography, makes it easy to populate Instagram posts and Instagram will continue as a priority focus for content for the Association.

4.7.4 YouTube – International sponsors Utilita also sponsor the ESFA's YouTube channel content, providing viewing targets to the ESFA with the possibility to therefore

secure additional funding through the channel. ESFA TV has received over 68,000 views in the last 12 months with 4,262 subscribers. The ESFA has only been able to stream one live match (England U18 Schoolboys v Australia) in January, but this match alone reached over 6,500 viewers. This season has seen an increase in content specifically for YouTube to help create a more consistent stream of activity, rather than only showing live events. Work will continue with this strategy in coming seasons.

4.7.5 Website – The current website is still serving the Association until the new site and software is implemented in the 20/21 season. Despite the distinct lack of football activity to report from the tail end of this season, there have still been thousands of visits to the website each month and content has been well received.

4.7.6 International Squads – The International squad coverage continues to be a priority for the Association and continues to be successful across social channels. There has been more of a focus on ensuring the girls receive equal, if not more coverage than the boys, due to the fact that they play a fewer number of fixtures. This season saw the opportunity to create some good quality pieces based around the players' kit presentations and during lockdown, the ESFA were able to produce some well received video content thanks to contributions from boys' and girls' squad members. Both 19/20 England squads had a mock up Panini football sticker spread created of them and shared via social channels, providing players with a lasting reminder of their time within their squads for this season.

4.7.7 Schools' Football Week – February 2020 saw the ESFA create their first 'official' Schools Football Week campaign. The week of activity ran from 3–7 February and kicked off with the PlayStation F.C. Schools' Cup Next Level Live event. The campaign encouraged over 22,000 school pupils from 2,704 teams to take part in footballing activity during the week. Nigel Adams, former Minister for Sport also heavily supported the campaign and visited one of the schools that had registered their activity, during which he closely linked the benefits to mental health that schools' football can provide.

4.7.8 Brand Identity – The ESFA continue to work with Rich from 33 Creative to create all digital and print publications. Rich's support of the ESFA's work has been great and his skills have allowed the Association to have consistently on-brand products designed, including the new interview back boards for use in International matches and National Finals. The ESFA brand continues to become more recognisable in terms of logos, colours and fonts used across promotional materials.

4.7.9 15 Benefits of Schools' Football – The ESFA created the "15 Benefits" brochure, in 18/19 to accompany the Headteacher Toolkit that was sent out to competing schools during the last 2 seasons. During lockdown, a campaign was created based around these benefits and received feedback from over 200 pupils and 20 teachers, explaining how they had personally experienced the benefits of playing schools' football. The campaign was successful across all social media channels and provided some great insight into the importance of schools' football in England.

4.7.10 Public Affairs Strategy – The ESFA have continued to work on their Public Affairs campaign, focussing specifically on trying to gain MP support for players within the

Association's England squads and as a result of this, a number of this season's players received letters of congratulations from local MPs. The ESFA are continuing to work on their presence amongst MPs and this will continue into the coming seasons.

4.7.11 Sponsors & Partners – The ESFA has continued to strengthen its relationships with various sponsors and partners and has once again secured continued contracts with organisations for the coming season. Relationships with major ESFA sponsors, PlayStation and Danone are at an all-time high and the Association is also able to provide a lot of discounted products and services to schools and Associations through various other partnership deals. There have been a number of new additions to the list of ESFA sponsors and partners for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons.

2019/20 saw the PlayStation F.C. Schools' Cup partnership receive a complete rebrand and refresh, with a completely new campaign for engaging with the PSFC audience. One element of this included the addition of the 'Next Level Live' event, which kicked off 'Schools' Football Week' in February 2020. The live event, which was held at West Bromwich Albion's Hawthorn's Stadium, provided the opportunity for over 300 pupils from across England to attend workshops provided by the University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) and take part in exceptional activity, provided by PlayStation. The event was a huge success with 100% positive feedback from all participants. PlayStation and the ESFA hope to run similar 'Next Level Live' events in coming seasons, dependant on COVID-19 updates, guidelines and procedures.

SECTION 5 – COMPETITION RESULTS

U12 Boys' Indoor Football Fives Cup Final

Sponsored by Running Imp

Monday 16 March 2020

PlayFootball Centre, Birmingham

Cardinal Newman Catholic (Luton SFA)

4 (after extra time)

Acland Burghley School (Islington & Camden SFA)

3

U12 Girls' Indoor Football Fives Cup Final

Sponsored by Running Imp

Monday 16 March 2020

PlayFootball Centre, Birmingham

St Benedict's RC High School (Copeland SFA)

2

Shenfield High School (Chelmsford & Mid Essex SFA)

1

ESFA Deaf Schools' Senior Boys' 5-a-side Cup

Tuesday 11 February 2020

Royal School for the Deaf (Derby)

2

Knightsfield School (Welwyn Garden City)

0

ESFA Deaf Schools' Junior Boys' 5-a-side Cup

Tuesday 11 February 2020

Powerleague, Derby	
Heathlands School for the Deaf (St Albans)	1 (won 4-3 on pens)
Royal School for the Deaf (Derby)	1

ESFA Deaf Schools' Junior Girls' 5-a-side Cup

Tuesday 11 February 2020

Powerleague, Derby

Royal School for the Deaf (Derby)	2
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Heathlands School for the Deaf (St Albans)	0
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*All other ESFA National Cup activity was suspended or cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

SAFIB UNDER 18 CENTENARY SHIELD RESULTS 2019

Scotland 1 – 1 Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland 1 – 0 Wales

SECTION 6

HONORARY AUDITORS' REPORT 2019/20

Covid-19

It is normal practice for the Honorary Auditors to visit ESFA Headquarters for a day to carry out interviews with staff and attend meetings with Officers and Trustees. The restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic meant that this was not possible.

Monitoring and other activities

The Honorary Auditors received copies of Trustees minutes and, in addition, received minutes of the 'COBRA' committee that was set up to deal specifically with issues around Covid 19.

They made representation to Officers regarding delaying the Player Passport scheme and delaying alterations to the re-organisation of representative team competitions.

They gave advice on Council Members' home office allowance.

They received applications for the post of Independent Council Member and recommended that the post be re-advertised. They will be involved in the appointment of this post in due course.

The Honorary Auditors were represented at regional Danone Under 11 finals and at the trials for ESFA international teams.

Terry Pollard

Terry resigned from his post as Honorary Auditor in July 2020. His colleagues wish to thank him for his valued input and his many years of service to schools' football.

Summary

The Honorary Auditors wish to reiterate that they are happy to act as a sounding board for Membership if they have concerns they wish to raise.

They acknowledge that the pandemic has brought a unique set of testing circumstances for staff, Officers, Trustees and Council and thank them for the way that they have met these challenges. The ESFA website and social media outlets carry clear and comprehensive guidance, with supporting documentation, to help Associations make decisions about how they will approach their activities in the coming season. Members can be assured that this support will continue as we move forward together into uncharted waters.

Neil Pont
Allan Reed

September 2020