



English Schools' Football Association

Membership Matters

A message from the Chairman

REMINDERS AND USEFUL DATES

ESFA AGM 9th July

Registration deadline for Associations – Friday 8th July

Entry deadline for school teams – Friday 22nd July

I cannot quite believe that my season as Chair of the English Schools' Football Association is almost at an end. As has always been the case for respective Chairs, it has been an incredibly busy but fulfilling year. I look back with pride at so many achievements for the Association both on and off the field. Personally, there have been far too many highlights to mention, not least attendance at national finals, spending time with our international squads and engaging with colleagues in Membership. The season has not been without its challenges but I would like to place on record my sincere gratitude for the support and contribution of my Council colleagues, ESFA staff and schools' football volunteers from all over the country in helping us to achieve what we have in creating quality experiences and lifelong memories for our young people.

When I wrote my first Membership Matters message back in August 2021 I stated my determination that every decision we would make would hold children and equality of opportunity at their core. I also shared my view that it would be impossible to find agreement on all matters from all stakeholders such are the variances of prior experience, viewpoints and core values amongst other things. That said, it has been crucial that we have sought to move with the times, to grow from strength to strength and to take time with Membership to genuinely listen to and understand your opinions, concerns and ambitions. Sometimes, these aims can be at conflict with one-another but I hope that you will agree this season has been consultative in its approach; this has certainly been the aim.

It seems only correct and fitting for my final thank you be to my family (wife, Vicki and children, Cameron, Bethan and Ella) for supporting me in my year as Chairman and at times accepting that they go days without seeing me either due to meetings or other commitments that have taken me away from them. Also to Nicola Bayliss, my Headteacher at Moreton School and senior leadership colleagues for allowing me the time away from school and for covering my work. Without this small band of crucial people, it would never have been possible for me to assume and subsequently enjoy my year as Chair of this wonderful organisation; thank you!

I look forward to seeing you all online for the AGM in July and to working positively and productively with all in attendance to continue to drive the ESFA forward into 2022-23 and beyond.

Best wishes,
Mark Hignett, ESFA Chair 2021-22



ESFA AGM Reminder

Part 1 of the ESFA AGM will be held virtually via Microsoft teams on Saturday 9th July at 9:30am for a 10:00am. Please RSVP directly to the invitation email distributed by Sarah Kearney by Friday 1st July, in order to register your attendance. All attendees will be sent a link to the virtual meeting approximately one week prior to the meeting date.

ESFA National Competitions – Entries are now open!

Representative football

The window for County and District Associations to register with the ESFA for Season 22-23 is now open.

The deadline for registering teams to participate in the ESFA Inter-Association Cup competitions is Friday 8th July.

Go to www.esfa.co.uk/associations to register your County or District Association teams.

For more information on the structure and scheduling of this season's ESFA Inter-Association Cup competitions please click [here](#).

Schools' Football

The window for schools to register for ESFA Cups for Season 22-23 is now open.

The deadline for registering teams is Friday 22nd July. Make sure to encourage schools' in your area to enter this season's national schools' competitions.

To get involved go to www.esfa.co.uk/schools

Safeguarding Children – Recertification

The FA Safeguarding Children Re-Certification course content has been updated and will form part of the new Safeguarding learning offer from the 7th June.

The online course is free for learners who have previously completed the Safeguarding Children Workshop. The renewal of this qualification will be required after 2 years.

From the 7th June any learners wanting to re-certify should be directed to <https://thebootroom.thefa.com/learning/qualifications/online-safeguarding-children-re-certification>



Dan Smith – Spotlight On

My name is Dan Smith and I am the Football Projects Manager here at the ESFA. I have 2 football mad children, Zak 11 and Lily 9 and a fiancée called Tash who just wishes that football wasn't on the TV every night. I am a proud Liverpool FC supporter and do my best to get to as many matches as possible. I am also going into my 5th year as a coach for my now under 13's team which is incredibly rewarding seeing the lads grow and develop year after year even though they are now nearly all taller than me.

Football has always been a part of my life. I started playing when I was 6 years old and the journey has taken me from grassroots at Wyrley Juniors, to schools' football with Cannock District, County football for Staffordshire County then on to academy football at Coventry City and senior football at non-league Chasetown Football Club. Two FA Cup runs playing Oldham Athletic, Port Vale and Cardiff City, an FA Trophy quarter final against Mansfield Town and so much more.

I really have to pinch myself sometimes when I think what I managed to achieve in football especially being just a non-league player. In December 2007 I was lucky enough to score the winning goal in the FA Cup Second Round for Chasetown to knock out Port Vale and meant that Chasetown would become the lowest ranked team to play in the 3rd round of the FA Cup. We then went 1-0 up in the 3rd Round against Cardiff City only for a 17 year old Aaron Ramsey to put in a man on the match performance on his debut and the dream ended with a 3-1 defeat. My football career ended at 27 playing for Stafford Rangers when I ruptured my ACL not only once but twice in 2 years but what a crazy journey it was.

In my working career the ultimate aim was to work in sport, ideally football but with there being few opportunities and having two children and a mortgage to pay, I ended up using my knowledge and expertise working in the charitable sector and successfully raised over £10 million for a range of charities from sports to a hospice to a children's charity and more recently a youth charity. Throughout my career I always had one eye on moving back into football. When the football projects manager vacancy came up I knew it was the opportunity I had been waiting for. Coming into post in November 21, I couldn't wait to get started and the team at the ESFA couldn't have been any more welcoming and supportive. In my first few months in post, I met many of our wonderful volunteers from across the membership and it was incredibly refreshing to see how passionate they all are about schools' football and giving every child a chance to play football at the best possible level regardless of their background.

The first 6 months in post have flown by and I couldn't be happier to be part of this team. In April 22 I ruptured my Achilles and the team have been so supportive whilst I recover and I look forward to repaying their support in the future. I can't wait to get going on some exciting projects in the coming months and look forward to working with the staff and all of the fantastic volunteers to ensure every child has the opportunity to begin or continue their own journey in football.

I look forward to making a real difference here at the ESFA.



ESFA Council leavers

With the season coming to an end, we say goodbye to two long serving members of the ESFA Council, Mike Spinks and Owen Aiston. The ESFA would like to thank them both for their hard work and dedication to the ESFA and for their substantial contributions to Schools' football both nationally and locally.



Owen Aiston

As football activities draw to a conclusion, we can all look forward to a well-earned rest, ready to charge our batteries in preparation for next season; many will be preparing for AGMs.

At the end of this season however, following the ESFA AGM and the final Council meeting on 9th July, long serving North Region Council Member Owen Aiston will be leaving Council after 12 years of dedicated service.

Owen joined Council in 2010, bringing with him an outstanding track record within football generally, but particularly in Schools' Football. Owen had worked for NUFC in their Academy in 1997. He had been Team Manager of a very successful Newcastle City Boys' team from 1989 – 2000; was team Manager of Northumberland County under 16 Boys (1995-2009) - winning the National Inter County Trophy in 1995-96 - as well as being a highly respected member of the Northumberland County Schools' FA Executive, being Chair in 2016/17. He had also spent 17 years during his summer breaks, coaching football in North America at Major League Soccer Camps, eventually becoming Director of Coaching from 1992 – 2002. During these years he travelled to over 25 States.

Owen has the UEFA 'B' Coaching Licence, is still a practicing coach and holds the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Advanced Licence (an equivalent to The UEFA 'A' Licence). He continues to be proud of his early coaching experiences with the likes of Shola Ameobi (NUFC); Michael Carrick (West Ham Utd); Robbie Elliott (NUFC); Fraser Forster (NUFC & Tottenham Hotspur); Michael Chopra (NUFC); Steven Taylor (NUFC); Peter Ramage (NUFC) and Jamie Bolam (Bolton Wanderers).

On joining Council, Owen immediately used this extensive experience and in-depth knowledge of the game to positively effect many Council decisions. He became very pro-active as a Council member, being regularly seen at various National events, finals and Internationals. In his time on ESFA Council he has chaired the following Committees – Competitions; PR & Community; International and latterly the Representative Committee.



ESFA Council Leavers (Continued)

Owen's enthusiasm, commitment, diligence, rigorous approach and attention to detail have all resulted, over the years, in him accompanying the u18 Boys' International Team on 7 overseas training camps in Europe, several Girls' Camps, numerous Internationals at home and abroad, countless national finals and 4 *Danone* World Cup events including a highly successful New York final in his year as ESFA Chairman in 2017-18. During his year as Chair, he attended all national finals, travelling over 18000 miles in the process. Following his season as Chair of ESFA he became Chair of SAFIB where he again used his diplomacy, tact, experience and people management skills to compliment his tenure. In 2016 he was introduced to the late Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Phillip, in the Garden of Buckingham Palace. Following the introduction and from observation, The Duke was overheard to remark that it was obviously a while since Owen had played football!

Owen's organisational skills, recording and attention to detail are legendary. Examples of this can be borne out by those who have worked alongside him, particularly during the recent England v Scotland International at Spennymoor Town FC, Durham and the hugely successful Home Nations International Bob Docherty Tournament for U15 Girls at Cochrane Park, Newcastle.

Owen's resignation from Council leaves a huge void; nevertheless, his approach also leaves behind the 'standard' as a blue print for future Council Members to aspire to. Equally, his recommendations to Trustees from his extensive experience, prior to his resignation, have resulted in a more pragmatic approach to the International Programme.

Although Owen is stepping aside from ESFA Council, he has already committed to assisting with future events within the North Region, planning his involvement around the next chapter in his football life.

Owen will be working next season, within the North of England, as a Football Scout Consultant/Advisor with Crystal Palace FC, working alongside his son, field-testing a revolutionary, electronic based, analytical programme which will enable 'on-field' data to be instantly transmitted via scout's tablets and lap-tops. He also hopes to complete his Level 2 Talent Identification.

Owen will receive Life Membership of ESFA at the forthcoming AGM as thoroughly deserved recognition for his enormous contribution to Schools' Football nationally. Council colleagues will be holding a farewell dinner for him and other colleagues who leave Council this season, following the AGM.

We wish Owen every success in his new role, thank him for his years of dedicated service and look forward to meeting and working with him once again in the future.

Written by Alan Johnston (ESFA Council Member, Durham)

ESFA Council Leavers (Continued)

Mike Spinks

To most of us Mike Spinks has been around for many years and has been totally committed to the service of schools' sport. He has travelled the world watching football, cricket, rugby and no doubt international tiddlywinks – if there is sport to watch, Mike is there often with his wife, Heather, in tow. She's an angel!



For many years Mike served the schoolchildren of Essex as a teacher and head teacher as well as being heavily involved in the sporting communities. He has held numerous roles but in the football sphere he served Essex as Vice Chair from 1996 until 2006 when he took over the Chair until 2014. In the meantime he had served as a Council Member of the ESFA 1998-2003 when he became an employee of the ESFA as the Competitions Manager, an important role as the ESFA portfolio was expanding exponentially. Mike 'retired' from this post in 2013 and returned to his position as a Council Member representing the SE area. In 2014 he took over the Chair of the ESFA and remained in post for two years whilst the search for a new CEO was in place. During this time he was also invited to the Danone World Championships which happened to be held in Brazil – surprise, surprise he was able to add another world famous ground, the Maracana, to his tally (which includes all EFL and PL teams).

Now having more time on his hands he also took on the roles of ESFA representative on the FA Council, where he has served with aplomb and earned the respect of many in the game, and also the secretarial role with the schools international board, SAFIB, where he has been instrumental in ensuring the countries of the British Isles and the Republic of Ireland have developed their international programmes for boys and girls and introduced a new competition for U14 girls at Lilleshall in October.

The ESFA has had its voice well heard at FA headquarters as Mike has been a member of the National Game Board, the Youth Participation Committee and also Vice Chair of the Disability Football Committee. Again he has been able to use his skills to ensure fair play for the many people so often seen as unrepresented at Wembley.

As you can imagine his skills and knowledge are wide and varied and he has been a tremendous servant and ambassador to schools football throughout his career. Those who have attended the South East 5 a side finals he has organised at Norwich over the years will understand the impeccable attention to detail in which Mike excels. A mention of Norwich (City FC) hints at Mike's approach to football – it is for fun and enjoyment for all even though the outcomes are not always as he would have desired!

I am sure that Mike will enjoy his retirement though I am also unsure if he will be able to break away completely especially after accepting the role as Chair of Norfolk County Schools last year! Good luck to Heather in trying to tie him down – she'll need chains!
Working with Mike has been a real pleasure.

Written by- Dave Woollaston (ESFA Council Member and Trustee)

ESFA National Finals

ESFA Primary Finals

Friday 6th May saw the start of the National Final season for the ESFA with the Primary School Finals, hosted at the CBS Arena in Coventry. Teams from across the country, who had been successful in the previous District, County and Regional rounds played for the chance to be crowned National Champions.

A roundup of the event can be viewed [here](#) on our website and a highlights video from the day can be viewed on our YouTube Channel [here](#).



Stoke City FC

Stoke City FC set the stage for 22 ESFA National Finals from the 8th - 14th May 2022, with hundreds of players, supporters and their families heading to the stadium to witness some outstanding footballing performances - as 44 teams took centre stage in a bid to become National Champions in 2022.

All of the National Finals were streamed live via the ESFA's YouTube Channel, [ESFA TV](#) and the fixtures have, so far, received over 90,000 views - providing a lasting memory for those teams that took part. Take a look below for a rundown of the results in each of the competitions -

A round-up of the finals can be viewed on our website [here](#).



ESFA National Finals (Continued)

PlayStation F.C. Schools' Cup Finals

The 9th ESFA PlayStation F.C. Schools' Cup National Finals took place from the 23rd - 26th May at West Bromwich Albion FC, crowning 20 National Champions across the four days.

A full round-up of the PlayStation Schools' Cup Finals can be viewed on our website [here](#) and you can watch all the matches in full on our YouTube Channel [here](#).



Honorary Archivist

Just prior to the pandemic, Council invited expressions of interest from Members to become the ESFA's Honorary Archivist.

Now that normal business operations are resuming, the Trustees have appointed Allan Reed, (Durham CSFA) to the role. We thank Allan for helping to ensure that the rich history of the ESFA is well ordered and maintained.

FA Emerging Talent Centres (ETCs):

The FA is changing the structure of its talent pathway for the female game, replacing RTCs with ETCs and Professional Game Academies (PGAs).

These changes will be phased in over the coming year for introduction in 2023/24, when RTCs will cease to exist in their current format. ETCs will operate as coaching/development centres for those aged U10 - U16 and will be permitted to no more than 6 fixtures per year, none of which can take place at weekends. The guidance for ETCs can be found [here](#) which also clearly prioritises schools' football on the second Saturday (page 21). ETCs will be supplemented with PGAs in due course, which will provide competitive football for those aged 14-21 and further details will follow when released.



Standard Code of Rules for Youth Football (SCORY)

Thanks to those of you who have raised queries on the schools-specific SCORY.

A reminder that the SCORY we are using has been created from the FA's Standard Code by a working group of ESFA Members and the intent is that the Code should be relevant for the schools' game and sufficiently flexible for us to implement successfully. The FAQs below, derived from your queries, illustrate how we hope to continue to flex, within the parameters of the rules, to enable that implementation. We thought it would be helpful to share these with you, in case they occur in your discussions.

Member questions:

1. Protests and appeals (rule 3): this rule requires a Headteacher/Principal to sign any appeal paperwork. How does that work if the protest or appeal relates to a rep football match?

This is written as if it is for schools only. There is the flexibility for competition organisers to substitute "school" with "Association" and "headteacher" with "Association Secretary" without changing the meaning of the rule, merely contextualising it appropriately. You are free to make this change

2. Dissolution of competitions (rule 6): this rule states that any competition shall be dissolved by a general meeting, in accordance with the constitution of the competition. Does this stop the cessation of competitions because there are insufficient entries to make it viable?

One of the challenges in SCORY in our context is that it is created for leagues rather than for organisations which are already a constitutional entity. If decisions about competition viability are taken by committee in your constitution, then this must prevail. As long as the means by which a competition is dissolved is agreed and clear, then the intent of this rule is met.

3. Entry fee deadlines: the cup competition rules specify 1st September as the last date by which entry fees have to be paid. This is too late. Also, our fees are set by the competitions committee, not the AGM.

The rules specify "on or before 1st September" to allow for flexibility. However, entrance fee deadlines should be set to meet the operational needs of the Association. Changing the date again does not mean changing the meaning of the rule, so change is acceptable. Fee setting should be done in accordance with your constitution, so this can be changed, for the same reason as outlined in the response to rule 6, noted above.

4. Can the competition authority determine that a trophy can be shared in the event of a final being drawn?

For the coming season, that is possible. However, it may not be possible in future seasons: this is one of the specific flexibilities upon which we are seeking clarity from the FA.

(Continued)



Standard Code of Rules for Youth Football (SCORY) (Continued)

5. **Match official fees:** the cup competition rules state that match officials' fees shall be shared between competing teams in finals. Our Association/competition authority bears that cost. Can that continue?

The purpose of this rule is clarity for all involved. If your competition authority does something different to this, again, please adapt the rule accordingly

6. **U11 football:** in the table in rule 9 which describes match duration, playing time and competition structure, it states that for U11/year 6 football, the competition can have any structure including season-long leagues. However, in the rule about reporting results (rule 10) it states that results should not be published for those age groups up to and including U11. This is inconsistent with rule 9.

Thank you for highlighting this. Under 11s should be excluded from the rule which prohibits publication of results

Please continue to raise any queries by contacting Lloyd.Wilson@schoolsfa.com. If queries recur, we will add them to these FAQs.



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