

Greetings all,

I am Oliver - General Secretary of England Deaf Football. I am putting out a statement on behalf of EDF to update everyone on the recent meeting with UKDS which took place on 3rd August at Birmingham.

I wanted to outline the fundamental of this meeting was to clarify and outline the governance of Deaf football within England and allow UKDS and other football parties to identify and agree on clear structure. What this mean in basic summary - is how such communication from international and domestic organisations and any potential funding can be diverted to the right channel within shortest time possible and with clear accountability. For a while now this has been unclear and had led to numbers of confusions.

This meeting was not just about discussing or pulling down Deaf football opportunities or to blame anything on anyone - it is important that Deaf football has clear path providing football opportunities and competitions for Deaf community.

UK Deaf Sports has released a video statement and transcript on the meeting, and it is available on our website to view.

We welcome England FA commitment to continue funding England and GB international teams (11-a-side) for next 3 years including Deaflympics. This is largely welcomed and although we are disappointed FA cannot commit to fund Futsal - as Para-Football section has grown massively over the last few years and despite FA securing increase in funding - they are challenged to cover as many para-football as possible including partially-sighted football, blind football, learning disability football, powerchair football, amputee football and cerebral palsy/frame football.

If England FA were to continue funding both Deaf Football and Futsal - they would have to remove or reduce funding for another para-football - perhaps learning disability football. This isn't fair and at end of day - we are fortunate England FA have committed to fund England 11-a-side men and women for next 3 years. Obviously at the end of current funding cycle - FA will review and assert the position on Para-football including Deaf football.

Now I want to talk about sanction and international clearance/transfer processes - our clubs are clear on these - some people are still not clear or understand these so I will explain them.

All clubs become affiliated with their County FA each season - this allows them to participate in football leagues/cup. Your club does this at beginning of every seasons and we support them with any help required.

EDF are affiliated to National FA each season and are sanction to run leagues. This has been the case every season and this approves our insurance for our leagues/cup and for clubs playing in our competitions.

Sanction means FA approves our rules, confirms clubs participating in our EDF competitions and insurance are in place. The Whole Game System and Match Day are established on the FA registration.

Referees will be able to officiate in our leagues/cup matches knowing they are protected in event of assaults, fights or attacks. Referees can report players, clubs or individuals to FA who then take disciplinary actions.

Sanction for leagues allows maximum of 2 countries in one league, so for example England clubs and Scotland clubs can participate in a league - as long as the Scottish clubs are affiliated to England FA and plays football under England FA competitions and not touch ball for Scotland FA competitions.

Now - international clearance is important part of affiliation and sanction process for league and clubs themselves. Each player can ONLY play football competitions under ONE County FA. If a player is registered under London FC, and plays competitions under England FA, that is fine - and the player cannot play for another team who play football competitions under different country FA - an example - Cardiff FC, or for Glasgow FC.

Why is this? It is simple - to prevent any player from being suspended under London FC and banned for perhaps 2 months, to avoid ban and continue to play football under different country. This is same as any player coming from abroad who don't live in England, and they must have international clearance to play football competitions under England FA. This is FIFA regulation which all FAs must comply with - and currently there is no exceptions and applies to all Para-Football as well as youth football.

International clearance has been in place since 2013/14 but recently became mandatory requirement which all leagues/clubs must comply, including EDF.

International Transfer can happen anytime throughout season where perhaps a player playing football competitions under Scotland FA decides he no longer want to play for Club under Scotland FA and wish to move to play football for a club under England FA. Transfer takes place using form and clearance obtained between Scotland and England FA before player is eligible to play for Club under England FA. During the transfer process - both FAs will check there are no outstanding suspensions or disciplinary in place, before the transfer is completed.

Both international clearance and international transfer is not related to International football - these applies to domestic football competitions. Although to play football for International teams - player still need to be eligible to play country through birth/passport/parents/grandparents.

Now - I want to end this video on encouraging positivity through Deaf Football. For a while now - we see negatives, criticisms and name pulling across Deaf football. We are here to provide football league/cup opportunities for Deaf vs Deaf, increase opportunities for any young Deaf footballers and encourage positive mental health and wellbeing for Deaf community. Football matches are fantastic opportunities to engage with others across Deaf community - whether we win, lose or draw - we shake our hands and congratulate ourselves on great sportsmanship/sportswomanship and if opportunity of social allows after games - enjoy sensibility. After all - we all need to support ourselves within wonderful community we can be proud of. Every one of us play part in this together.

Take care and keep eye out on those around us.

From all at England Deaf Football