

FAW | REGULATIONS FOR DISABILITY FOOTBALL IN WALES

Introduction

The FAW are committed to making football accessible, enjoyable and safe for everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, background or ability. Our vision is that football is for everyone from the park to the World stage. We are aiming to create a flexible and appealing offer, clear and effective pathways for progression, and a diverse, skilled and engaged football family.

The FAW vision for disabled players in football is as follows:

- Appropriate competition should be made available to all people whatever their level of ability.
- Players with a disability should be playing in mainstream football competition, however, we realise that some players may be better provided for in structures such as 'PAN Disability', 'Unified', 'Blended' or 'Impairment Specific' football on a temporary or permanent basis.
- The FAW also aims to provide player development pathways to elite level for various impairments such as Deaf and Learning Disability.

Classification is needed to ensure that disability football is fair, and that people compete against others with recognised impairments. Clubs are expected to work towards creating a level playing field in all matches (e.g. balance teams to match the level of the opposition). Clubs also have a responsibility to work cooperatively with match officials, and this may additionally include for example substituting a player if so requested, to help maintain an accessible, enjoyable and safe environment.

These regulations aim to outline which impairment groups are eligible to play within a PAN Disability Grassroots Football setting. It also outlines some simple forms of evidence that can be requested in order to prove an individual's eligibility. As such, all involved within grassroots PAN disability football activity are encouraged to adopt the guidance offered in this document.

It is acknowledged that due to the broad disability spectrum that exists, individual cases may arise that are not covered within the guidance. In these instances, a club and/or individual can request further guidance from the FAW.

Impairment specific provision is necessary for certain impairment groups such as blind and wheelchair users; therefore, no reference is made to these impairment groups throughout the document.

In some instances, the eligibility criteria within this document differs from that required to be eligible to participate in international competition as it is intended to allow a wide participation base. If a player progresses to international events or is on an elite pathway, they are likely to require further testing to determine eligibility.



Impairment	Grassroots PAN Disability Criteria	Proof of Eligibility
Amputee	<p>According to the World Amputee Football Federation an amputee is someone who is 'abbreviated' at or above (proximal) to the wrist or ankle.</p> <p>Any person with an amputation, congenital deficiency, or other limb affecting disorder will be eligible to participate. The use of aluminium, titanium or carbon fibre elbow crutches in FAW sanctioned competitions is only permitted on 3rd Generation Artificial Turf Pitches or Sand Based Artificial Turf Pitches.</p> <p>Players from this impairment group can play in any position within pan-disability football.</p>	<p>Amputee footballers who use a prosthesis must provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written proof that their prosthesis has been approved by a specialist consultant.
Partially Sighted	<p>An individual must be categorised as one of the following:</p> <p>B2 From the ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to a visual acuity of 2/60 and/or a field of 5 degrees or less.</p> <p>B3 From a visual acuity above 2/60 up to 6/60 and/or a visual field of more than 5 degrees and less than 20 degrees.</p> <p>B4 This class is determined purely by acuity and ranges from the top of B3 to an acuity of 6/24 Snellen. An individual with an acuity of 6/24 would be able to read the three top lines on a Snellen chart at six metres.</p>	<p>Partially sighted footballers should provide ONE of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) B2/B3 permanent medical status documentation (IPMS) • IBSA B2/B3 review medical status (IRMS) • IBSA B2/B3 new medical status (INMS) • Written confirmation of the footballers British Blind Sport B2, B3 or B4 classification • Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI)
Cerebral Palsy	<p>Players competing in CP Football have Ataxia, Hypertonia or Athetosis - three impairment types that are most commonly associated with individuals having neurological impairment, with a motor control impairment of a cerebral nature, causing a permanent and verifiable Activity Limitation.</p> <p>Hypertonia is a condition marked by an abnormal increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch.</p> <p>Ataxia is a neurological sign and symptom that consists of a lack of co-ordination of muscle movements.</p> <p>Athetosis is generally characterized by unbalanced, involuntary movements due to constant changes in muscle tone and a difficulty maintaining a symmetrical posture.</p> <p>CP Football includes 3 classes, called FT1, FT2, and FT3. Further information about classification can be found at: https://www.ifcpf.com/about-classification</p>	<p>Players should provide ONE of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPISRA or IFCPF membership identification • Letter from a GP or a specialist consultant stating that the player has a neurological impairment with a motor control power impairment of a cerebral nature causing a permanent and verifiable activity limitation. • Medical Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modified Ashworth Scale ○ DIS (Dyskinesia Impairment Scale) ○ SARA (Scale for Assessment and Rating of Ataxia) ○ Cerebral MRI or CT scan
Deaf	<p>The term deaf covers a wide range of different levels and types of hearing loss. It can refer to people who are</p>	<p>Deaf players should provide ONE of the following:</p>



	<p>born deaf through to elderly people who have become deafened through old age.</p> <p>Players eligible must have, as a minimum, moderate deafness.</p> <p>Definition of degrees of hearing loss eligible for Grassroots PAN Disability football are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate: between 41 and 55 dB Hearing Loss • Moderately severe: between 56 and 70 dB Hearing Loss • Severe: between 71 and 90 dB Hearing Loss • Profound: 91 dB Hearing Loss or greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of their membership of UK Deaf Sport or Welsh Deaf Sports Association • Athlete ID number issued by International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (ICSD) • Letter from an audiologist, GP or a specialist consultant stating that the athlete has a hearing loss of 41 dB or more.
Learning Disability	<p>Players must meet UK Sports Association (UKSA) National Eligibility criteria which is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant impairment in intellectual functioning - this is defined as 2 standard deviations below the mean, i.e. a Full Scale IQ score of 75 or lower • Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills • Intellectual disability must be evident during the developmental period, which is from conception to 18 years of age 	<p>Players with a learning disability should provide written confirmation from one of the specialists listed below, stating that in the specialist's opinion, the player meets all UK Sports Association National Eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSA • GP • Specialist Consultant • Educational Psychologist <p>Please note that a letter from a teacher or teaching assistant will NOT meet the necessary criteria.</p>
Learning impairment which impacts on their football performance	<p>The FAW uses the term 'learning impairment' as an umbrella term to cover any condition or impairment which reduces the brain's ability to obtain, process and understand information. This can result in a reduced ability to concentrate, or to read, process, learn, memorise or retain information. It includes conditions such as poor attention and concentration, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome/Autism spectrum, dyslexia, dyspraxia and learning disabilities. Someone with a learning impairment might go to a special school or receive special education within a mainstream school. They may have a statement of education need or similar.</p> <p>A learning impairment does not always affect someone's performance in football. An example of this type of learning impairment would be Dyslexia.</p> <p>In order to be eligible a player's learning impairment <u>must affect their football performance.</u></p>	<p>Players who have a learning impairment which impacts on their football performance should provide a letter from one of the following individuals stating why the player's learning impairment will disadvantage them as far as competing in mainstream (non-disability) football is concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP • Specialist Consultant • Educational Psychologist <p>Please note that a letter from a teacher or teaching assistant will NOT meet the necessary criteria</p>
Mental Health	<p>Grassroots PAN Disability football structures should be open to all individuals who have experienced <u>acute or enduring</u> mental health problems and are living in the community or a hospital setting.</p>	<p>People with mental health issues must provide a letter stating that the player has substantial mental health problems which have been present over the last 12 months or</p>



		<p>more from one of the following individuals / organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP • Community Mental Health Services • Day Hospitals • Hostels • Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) or self-referral as part of their Care Plan Approach (CPA) • Specialist consultant • Occupational health
Dwarf (Restricted Growth Conditions)	Grassroots PAN Disability football structures should be open to all individuals with a recognised restricted growth condition.	<p>People with a restricted growth condition must provide ONE of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Dwarf Sports Association (DSA) membership • Letter from a GP or a specialist consultant stating that the athlete has a restricted growth condition.
Other impairments or a medical condition which impact on someone's sporting performance temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer, arthritis	Grassroots PAN Disability football structures should be open to players with an impairment or a medical condition which <u>impacts on their football performance</u> temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer or arthritis	<p>People with an impairment or a medical condition which impacts on their sporting performance temporarily or permanently e.g. cancer or arthritis must provide a letter from one of the following individuals, stating why the player's impairment will disadvantage them as far as competing in mainstream (non-disability) football is concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP • Specialist Consultant

Data Protection

All must ensure they comply with applicable Data Protection and Health & Safety legislation in England and Wales.

Grassroots PAN Disability Football Structure

1. Age Grouping

1.1. Players must be over the age of 8 years on the 1st September in any playing season in order to be eligible to participate within a PAN Disability Football Structure in Wales.

1.2. These structures can operate the following age groupings:

- Under 12 (school years 4, 5, 6 & 7)
- Under 16 (school years 8, 9, 10 & 11)
- Post 16



1.3. If it is felt that based on a player's ability or physicality, he or she should be playing up or down one age grouping, permission to play must be gained annually in accordance with FAW Rule 88.

1.4 A player must be within the relevant age grouping as of the 1st September, this being the beginning of the playing season, in order to qualify for that age grouping.

1.5 Under 12 age group will be considered as Small-Sided Football.

1.6 Under 16 age group will be considered as Junior Football.

1.7. Post 16 age grouping will be considered as Senior Football.

2. Mixed Gender

2.1. Mixed gender matches are permitted at all ages in accordance with FAW Rule 137.

3. Football Ability Bands

3.1. All grassroots PAN Disability structures must adopt the principle of 'ability banding' the festivals, competitions, divisions and cups where there are enough participating teams and clear differences in the ability level of players.

3.2. The FAW &/or 'Player Assessor' have the authority to move teams &/or players into different ability bands if they feel they have wrongly been placed.

3.3 A 'Player Assessor' can be appointed by the FAW or affiliated disability structure, must be neutral to the teams at the event and hold a minimum of a FAW UEFA B Coaching Qualification (or equivalent), or be an FAW member of staff.

3.4 Ability bands:

Ability Band	Criteria
Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players participating at this level have limited mobility, spatial awareness, and fitness
Premier League	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players participating at this level are mobile, have spatial and tactical awareness, knowledge of the Laws of the Game and have a good level of fitness.
Champions League	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players participating at this level are able to cope physically, have good levels of spatial awareness, excellent ability to understand tactics and good levels of physical strength and fitness.

4. Clubs

4.1 All clubs must be affiliated to 'FAW Disability Football' on COMET to be able to participate in any Disability Football Activity, meeting the standard level of the FAW Club Accreditation Scheme.

4.2 All clubs must advise the FAW and Area Association when there is a change to any detail in the Affiliation documentation. The Associations have the right to object the name of a club if it considers it to be too similar to another member club or if it is considered to be offensive.



5. Player Registration

5.1 All players must be registered through the FAW Comet System in line with the FAW COMET Regulations.

5.2 The registration of players shall be dealt with in accordance with Section H of FAW Rules plus the following:

5.2.1 Players with a disability are allowed to register for multiple clubs in order to participate in an additional format e.g. Impairment Specific, Mainstream Football, or 11v11 Pan-Disability League. The FAW Disability Football Festival Series of an additional (2nd) Region is not permitted as an additional format, even if the intention was for a player to compete at a different ability banding.

5.3 In order for a player to be eligible for a fixture or event, the registration must be submitted before 5pm on the day before the game / event.

6. Organisation

6.1. Season Structure

6.1.1. A calendar of festivals / competitions that may commence from 1st August and conclude no later than June 30th.

6.1.2. All friendlies and festivals / competitions must be approved by the FAW. The Area Associations acknowledge that the FAW will approve all disability football friendlies on their behalf providing that all necessary affiliation and player registration has taken place.

6.1.3 The 'FAW Disability Football Festival Series' will take precedence over any other Disability Football activity which may take place.

6.1.4. A winter break or an alternative football offer such as Futsal can be introduced.

6.2. Playing Surface

6.2.1 Pitches must be specifically laid out on any suitable open spaces or conventional grass or synthetic surface.

6.2.2. There must be no debris or dangerous hazards either on the field of play or in the immediate surrounding area.

6.2.3. Markings must be laid out with the use of conventional lines, marker discs or small cones.

6.3. Playing Equipment

6.3.1 All players must wear footwear suitable to the surface being played on.

6.3.2. All players must wear suitable shin guards, these must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection and covered by the socks. The FAW does not advocate the use of 'mini shin pads' as these do not provide suitable protection.

6.3.3. All jewellery must be removed.

6.3.4. Adaptive equipment used, such as a prosthesis, must be approved for use within football by a specialist consultant.

6.3.5. Opposing teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other – either football shirts or bibs can be utilised. Each goalkeeper must wear colours that are distinguishable from the other players. There is no requirement for shirts or bibs to carry numbers for 'non-competitive' matches.



6.3.6 Wearing glasses in football - The FAW recommend that players who need prescription lenses wear Polycarbonate lenses when playing football, although we recognise that this may not be possible for all children and Match Officials should be more lenient with younger players. It is important to note as stated in the Laws of the Game “A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous”. It is the Match Officials duty to ensure the safety of all participants. As such, if they feel the glasses/frame pose a risk to other players and/or the wearer, they may not allow the glasses to be worn. Match Officials should ensure that if a request has been made to wear glasses or goggles, that as per the Laws of the Game they should be checked and must not be a danger to the wearer or any other player.

6.3.7 Wearing hearing aids in football - Players are permitted to wear hearing technology during football matches provided they are comfortable and securely fitted. The decision on whether to wear a hearing aid during a match is up to the player, not the game leader or referee. However, the game leader or referee has a responsibility under Law 4 of the Laws of the Game that if a device of this nature becomes loose when playing they will have to request that the player leave the field of play in order for it to be made secure.

6.4. For the under 12 age group, games are played in a festival/round robin format where there are a minimum of three teams playing at a venue. The event organising committee and coaches should ensure suitable breaks are provided between games. No league or cup competitive competitions must be organised (or will be sanctioned) involving players in the under 12 age group. Results of festival/round robin matches at this age group should not be published due to the non-competitive nature of small-sided football.

6.5. For the under 16 and senior age group, competitive competition may be introduced, and games can either be played in a festival/round robin format where there are a minimum of three teams that attend or played on a home and away basis involving two teams.

6.6. All festivals and competition structures must, in the first instance, be sanctioned by the FAW, in collaboration with the relevant Area Association in accordance with FAW Rule 92.

6.7. In the case of any additional leagues and/or competitions to run simultaneously to the ‘FAW Disability Football Festival Series’, the sanction must be renewed annually, and such applications shall be lodged with the Association &/or Area Association in which the league or competition is situated, in accordance with FAW Rule 96. The Area Association shall forward the application to the FAW for their acceptance or rejection. The FAW shall have absolute discretion to accept or reject an application for sanctioning of a league or competition. Upon being sanctioned, the league or competition must provide the relevant Area Association & Association with the proposed dates of the fixtures / festivals. The details of the participants in the competition must be forwarded to the relevant Area Association & Association in advance of the fixture dates and must comply with the FAW’s Affiliation and Player Registration processes.

6.8. As part of the FAW’s Disability Football programme additional ‘impairment specific’ divisions e.g. wheelchair football or mental health divisions may be co-ordinated.

6.9. The FAW, as part of their, Disability Football programme may also co-ordinate a ‘Unified games’ programme that would involve senior players only. Clubs can participate in an 11v11 fixture where players with a disability and those without a disability form teams to play likeminded teams. There should be a minimum of 50% of those on the field of play with a disability. Fixtures are ‘not official matches’ and must be ‘non-competitive’. Although not an official match, sanction must still be gained from the relevant Area Association. All participating players must be registered with the FAW and clubs must be affiliated to the Association & relevant Area Association.

7. Competition Rules

7.1. Under 12:

7.1.1. FAW Small Sided Football Regulations must be adhered to.



7.1.2. Any of the following Small Sided formats can be adopted: 4v4 (No GK), 5v5, or 7v7.

7.1.3. A size 4 football should be used.

7.1.4. Game duration should not exceed 10 minutes and there is no half time. The maximum playing duration within a 24-hour period is 50 minutes. For example, teams could organise 5 x 10-minute games or 4 x 12-minute games in accordance with the maximum playing duration of 50 minutes.

7.2. Under 16:

7.2.1. FAW Small Sided Football Regulations must be adhered to with the following exceptions:

- a.) Throw Ins are Introduced from U13 age group (i.e. within the Pan-Disability U16 Festival Structure)
- b.) A goalkeeper can pick the ball up (in the goal area) if it has been passed to him/her by a teammate
- c.) At a deficit of 5 goals, the losing team will be allowed to field an extra player. If they do not have an extra player, the winning team will remove a player. This player will be removed/rejoin if the deficit is reduced to 4 goals.
- d.) If a team does not have a full complement of players to start a match, the opposing team will remove player(s) to match the number they have. If a team is missing more than 3 players then they will forfeit that match and the opposition awarded a walkover victory
- e.) No retreat line will apply i.e. players can position themselves for Goal Kicks according to the FIFA laws of the game

7.2.2 Any of the following Small Sided formats can be adopted: 4v4 (No GK), 5v5 7v7 or 9v9.

7.2.3. Either a size 4 or 5 football should be used.

7.2.4. Game duration should not exceed 20 minutes. A half time interval should be taken if exceeding 15 minutes of play. The duration of half time should not exceed 5 minutes. The maximum playing duration within a 24-hour period is 60 minutes. For example, teams could organise 3 x 20-minute games or 4 x 15-minute games in accordance with the maximum playing duration of 60 minutes.

7.3. Senior:

7.3.1. Any of the FAW Small Sided Football formats (4v4 – No GK, 5v5 7v7, 9v9) can be adopted, or the full sided 11v11 version of the game can be played. If playing the 11v11 format, the FIFA laws of the game must be adhered to (<https://www.theifab.com/laws>). If playing Small Sided Formats, FAW Small Sided Regulations must be adhered to with the following exceptions:

- a.) A goalkeeper can pick the ball up (in the goal area) if it has been passed to him/her by a teammate
- b.) At a deficit of 5 goals, the losing team will be allowed to field an extra player. If they do not have an extra player, the winning team will remove a player. This player will be removed/rejoin if the deficit is reduced to 4 goals.
- c.) If a team does not have a full complement of players to start a match, the opposing team will remove player(s) to match the number they have. If a team is missing more than 3 players then they will forfeit that match and the opposition awarded a walkover victory
- d.) No retreat line will apply i.e. players can position themselves for Goal Kicks according to the FIFA laws of the game
- e.) Free kicks adhere to the FIFA laws of the game (i.e. the offence determines if they are indirect or direct): <https://www.theifab.com/laws>

7.3.2. A size 5 football should be used.

7.3.3. If playing Small-sided Football formats, game duration should not exceed 20 minutes. A half time interval should be taken if exceeding 15 minutes of play. The duration of half time should not exceed 5 minutes. For example, teams could organise 4 x 20-minute games or 6 x 15-minute games in accordance with the maximum playing duration of 90 minutes.



7.3.4. If playing the 11v11 format, a game must be a maximum of 90 minutes, which can be split into two halves of 45 minutes or three 30 minute periods. The duration between periods should not exceed 15 minutes. Leagues can opt to run shorter games for example 60 minutes, which can be split into two halves of 30 minutes or three 20 minute periods.

7.4. Substitutions

7.4.1. For all age groups, any number of substitutes may be used at any time (Rolling substitutes).

7.4.2. Players may re-enter the game.

7.4.3. For the under 12 age group no substitute should be waiting longer than 5 minutes before they are involved in the game.

7.4.4. For the under 16 and senior age group no substitute should be waiting longer than 10 minutes before they are involved in the game.

FAW Small Sided Regulations (4v4, 5v5, 7v7 & 9v9) can be found at: <https://faw.cymru/handbook/>

8. Positive Match Day Culture

8.1. The FAW want to improve the match day culture and off-pitch behaviour of parents, coaches and guardians. As part of the campaign, the following practices must be introduced:

8.1.1. Smoking and vaping are banned from the side-line.

8.1.2. Supportive side-lines where spectators are encouraged to applaud and praise both teams' efforts but not shout, call out in a negative way or coach.

8.1.3. Coaches may support players through questions that prompt them to think for themselves but must not continually shout instructions during matches.

8.1.4. All players in the squad should have a minimum of 50% playing time when participating in matches.

8.1.5. To help provide adequate playing opportunities and to grow the game, clubs are encouraged to field more than one team if practically possible. Teams should not be made up of more than double the playing numbers for their respective age groups (for example, the under 8 age group that play the 5v5 format should have a maximum of 10 players per team).

8.1.6. All squad members to benefit from the experience of playing in all positions, including goalkeeper

8.1.7. In non-competitive matches, if teams are low on players and cannot field the correct number, then the other team should provide the additional player(s) or withdraw players to make the numbers even

8.1.8. 'Behind the Line, Behind the Team'. Clubs must:

- Create a 'Buffer zone' that runs parallel to the pitch, ideally 2 metres from both touchlines, a smaller buffer zone can be used where space does not allow 2 metres.
- Buffer zone should be marked by portable crowd barriers, cones or an additional marked line.
- Only players, designated coaches, team helpers and 1st Aiders are allowed within zone.
- All other spectators must watch from behind the buffer zone lines.
- NO spectators are allowed to stand on the goal line or behind the goal.

9. Grassroots PAN Disability Football Boundaries

9.1. As part of the FAW's Disability Football programme, two regional structures have been created to cover Wales – North and South.

9.2. North - Clubs eligible for membership of the North structure are domiciled within the following Welsh Local Authorities: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, and Wrexham

9.3. South - Clubs eligible for membership of the South structure are domiciled within the following Welsh Local Authorities: Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea, Torfaen, and Vale of Glamorgan .



9.4 Clubs in Powys and Ceredigion can play in either the North or South structures based on geographic factors and provision available.

9.5 Each club will be allocated to a regional structure by the FAW that is the most geographically appropriate and/or based on provision available which takes precedence over regulations 9.2 – 9.4.

9.6. Within each regional structure, further regional structures can operate based on geographical factors (ie. South East & South West).

10. Club Accreditation

10.1 To participate in The FAW Disability Football Festival Series, clubs must achieve a minimum of Bronze Level within The FAW Club Accreditation Programme (new clubs will be given up to 12 months to achieve this).

