

# DELIVERING THE YOUTH STRATEGY

**FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

May 2018



Foundation

*Serving the community through football*

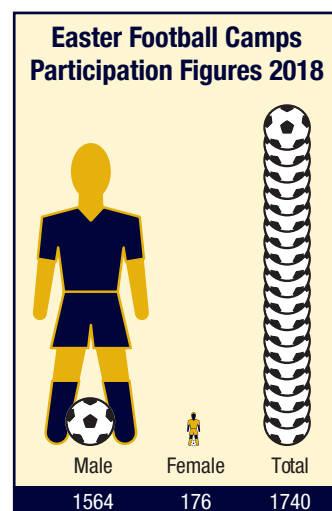


## Grassroots and Youth Development

### Easter Football Camps

#### Hughes Insurance Irish FA Easter Football Camps

Over 1700 children participated in the Hughes Insurance Irish FA Easter Football Camps which took place at 28 locations across Northern Ireland between 28 March and 6 April.



### Club and Volunteer Development

The Club Education Sub-group met on 19 March at the National Football Stadium to discuss the ongoing revamp of club and volunteer development. The aim of the meeting was to redesign the original terms of reference so that it would provide a structure for the group moving forward.

A wide spread of key stakeholders attended, representing the NIBFA, NIFL, Junior and Intermediate committees and the NIWFA. Elaine Junk was announced as Chair of the group and was also representing the Irish FA football committee. Andrew Waterworth was also in attendance in his new role as Club & Community Development Officer.

The group is scheduled to meet in early May to agree on the terms of reference and update on existing programmes. A key action from the meeting is the release of a GDPR information video to increase knowledge for all our clubs and assist with the new laws surrounding data protection.

Other key actions include a nationwide club consultation that will be delivered in September 2018 to help develop resources to support all our clubs and volunteers involved in football throughout Northern Ireland. The use of more video content and innovative training methods is key to assisting with the development of both clubs and volunteers.

### Ahead of the Game

After a lengthy consultation process the UEFA Ahead of the Game programme is set for launch. The programme includes a Mental Health Awareness tool kit that supports our club and volunteers in raising awareness and education on the issues surrounding mental health. The programme is in partnership with Inspire Mental Health, TAMHI and TTBS. Development centres and training nights to assist clubs and volunteers are scheduled regionally with 100 clubs already signed up to the Mental Health Charter.

## Vision and Values Conference

The Irish FA Foundation Vision and Values Conference took place on Friday 20 April at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park. All Foundation staff attended the conference where views were exchanged and future plans discussed.

Foundation staff were joined by Michael O'Neill and heard an entertaining and inspirational talk by Northern Ireland disabled international player, Charlie Fogarty. At the end of the conference, Michael presented Charlie with his international caps.



## McDonald's

This year's Grassroots Football Awards will be hosted at Belfast City Hall on Monday 12 November. An exciting addition to the awards will see the winners invited to the VIP suite at the National Football Stadium for the Nations League fixture versus Austria.

We have confirmed four Showcase Community Football days that will take place on the Saturday and Sunday 28 and 29 July. Called the Big Weekender of McDonald's Football, this weekend will maximise publicity and raise the profile of four clubs across Northern Ireland.

In addition six clubs have been confirmed to host regional football days throughout the summer.

Our McDonald's Grassroots Football awards launch will take place on 3 and 4 May. Pat Jennings and Martin Keown along with Denise Watson and Pete Snodden will be this year's ambassadors to promote different categories; Club, Coach, Volunteer, Young Volunteer, Mum of the Year and Inclusivity.

## Grassroots Coach Education

Two Level One courses were successfully delivered in 2018 from the Club and Volunteer team with a further two courses planned for the coming months.

Figures for Grassroots Introduction to Coaching and Level One Coaching awards are as follows:

GRASSROOTS INTRODUCTION TO COACHING		LEVEL ONE	
No. of Courses:	<b>22</b>	No. of Courses:	<b>22</b>
No. of Participants:	<b>491</b>	No. of Participants:	<b>453</b>

## Girls' and Women's Football

### Girls Regional Excellence

The first set of weekly sessions came to an end at Easter after a very busy month of sessions and games. The Regional Excellence programme continued to develop and grow with the weekly Tuesday night sessions in all four regions. The age-specific development squads selected from the regions had a busy period with games against the Mid Ulster Boys Academy as well as gym and gymnastics sessions to complement their football sessions.

Highlight of the month was the Bob Docherty Schoolgirl Tournament with squads from England, Scotland, ROI and Wales all staying at the Stormont Hotel and playing their games at the Ulster University at Jordanstown. In final preparation for the tournament the 2003 & 2004 squads attended a weekend residential where they had a number of training sessions, played a match and attended a presentation on a new Soccer Mindset programme. As Northern Ireland were hosting the tournament they could enter two squads, giving 36 of our girls in the '03 & '04 development squads an opportunity to play against other top players in their age group.

The tournament was a great success with all of the visiting countries full of praise for the organisation and the quality of the hotel and playing pitches. The Northern Ireland squads did very well with the '03s finishing fourth after an unlucky defeat to England in their opening game and a win in their last match against last year's champions, Wales. The young '04 squad, although losing their games, played excellent football and benefitted a great deal from playing against older sides.

### Women's International Football

The month began with the Senior International squad taking part in the Gold City Cup in Turkey. The camp offered an excellent opportunity to train as well as play four games and was of real benefit to everyone who attended.

The games were all closely fought with the following results:

**Northern Ireland 2 - 0 Kazakhstan**

**Northern Ireland 1 - 1 Romania**

**Northern Ireland 1 - 3 Ukraine**

**Northern Ireland 0 - 1 Kosovo**

The tournament gave new young players an opportunity to be involved in the senior squad with five players making their international debuts.

In April the Senior International squad travelled to the Netherlands to play the European Champions in front of 30,236 spectators. Sadly they lost 7-0 but it was a fantastic experience and a great way to measure themselves against the fittest and best side in Europe. Four days later we hosted the top seed Norway at Shamrock Park in Portadown. After a much improved performance two late goals gave a flattering 0 - 3 scoreline to Norway .

The U16 Development squad hosted a mini tournament. A very young squad including a number of girls who had taken part in the Bob Docherty won their three games beating Kosovo 5-1, Luxembourg 2-0 and Faroe Islands 5-0. Many performances in the games highlighted the good young players coming through the Irish FA pathway.

## Women's Domestic Futsal

Cliftonville Ladies Red turned on the style to win this season's U15 Female Domestic Futsal League for the second year in a row.

The deciding game against Linfield Ladies produced a flurry of goals with the sides tied at 3-3 at the final whistle. The North Belfast outfit were crowned overall Champions thanks to a sudden death penalty shootout.

In the Plate Final, Crusaders Black played an unbeaten Carnmoney Ladies. Carnmoney showed their strength winning 3-1 in the final to be crowned Plate Champions.

In the U17 competition the league was made up of six teams. Cliftonville Ladies Red, Cliftonville Ladies White, Belfast Swifts, Crusaders Strikers, Carnmoney Ladies and Linfield Ladies all playing for the league title. Linfield Ladies never dropped a point, winning the League with 15 points with Cliftonville Ladies Red as runners up.

The Futsal programme is delivered as part of the Irish FA Foundation's Let Them Play youth strategy and the Game Changer futsal strategy. Youth development is a key part of the player pathway to improve tactical and technical ability within the girls' game.

### Junior Girls' Futsal Development Programme

The Irish FA Football Development Department hosted its annual Junior Girls' Futsal Development Programme in January and February at the Shankill Leisure Centre (Belfast) and The Rink, Portadown. Delivered over five Sundays the competition was divided into an U9, U11 and U13 Development section.

Futsal is an important strand of the Irish FA's long term corporate strategy. This event in particular has been organised for seven years and with over 60 teams entering the competition this year the game has grown and become an important event in the women's football club calendar.

Schools and Futsal Development Officer Jackie Blyth commented; "Futsal is a proven way to develop more technical young players. The Irish FA Foundation has been using futsal to improve each player and this development programme gives the players the opportunity to do so. Futsal encourages players to use both feet and develop an instinct to move in reaction to the ball."

Futsal rewards the same basic skills, tactics and knowledge of the game as 11 v 11 outdoor game. Players develop their confidence, touch and co-ordination.



## Performance Academy

Throughout April and May our female players in the Irish FA Girls' & Women's Performance Academy have been continuing to work hard with weekly pitch and gym sessions at Ulster University. In a busy time of the year for the girls, both academically and athletically, the girls have made fantastic progress for the Ulster University Women's Football team by finishing runners up in the all-Ireland WSCAI Premier Section League, narrowly losing to IT Carlow in the final. They finished runners up in the Premier Section for the first time in their history and had been playing in Division One only last season. Furthermore, they finished third overall in the all-Ireland Senior Intervarsity Cup which completed a season of 11 games played, winning nine and only losing two. As a result the Ulster University Women's Football team have been nominated for Team of the Year at this year's UUSU Sports Colours Awards on 5 May at the Titanic Building in Belfast.

Irish FA Academy players Niamh Connolly and Emma McMaster have been nominated for individual recognition of the Club Service Award and Fresher of the Year respectively. It has been well documented that the partnership between the Irish FA and Ulster University has had a direct impact on women's football. The academy has attracted our best players to study at the university and also allowed them to continue to play football at a high level.

## Education & Employability Programme

This month marks the end of our Educations & Employability Programme in school/colleges. Our Education Officers Gareth Allen and Diarmuid McNeice organised a graduation event at the National Stadium to highlight the fantastic work carried out by all those involved in the programme. Four schools/colleges were in attendance including 50 students and 10 staff, all of whom took part in a stadium tour followed by a short presentation from Football For All manager Keith Gibson. Also attending the event was videographer Chris Heath who is making a short video highlighting the success of the programme's first year.

South Eastern Regional College recently completed their Level One coaching award as part of the Education & Employability Programme. Everyone on the course passed and we look forward to working with the college next year in greater capacity.

Our education officers are now in the process of finalising what will be a very busy second year timetable and hope to have this finalised by the end of the year.



**Graduation Day at the National Football Stadium**

## Disability Football

A trial day was hosted at Hanwood Centre on 4 February. Three new players joined programme. Seniors confirmed entry into 2018 European Championships, Holland 22 July to 6 August.

### Disability league

16 Clubs play in the monthly league hosted at Valley LC, Newtownabbey in 3 ability bands. This five-a-side league is for males and females aged 15+ with a learning and/or physical and/or sensory impairment. Over 100 players enjoyed playing competitive football.

### International U19 Learning Disability

We successfully hosted the 2018 Learning Disability Home Nations Championships in Belfast from 2-6 April:

#### Results

Northern Ireland 1 – 0 Republic of Ireland

Scotland 4 – 1 Wales

Northern Ireland 0 – 2 Wales

Scotland 5 – 0 Republic of Ireland

Northern Ireland 2 – 2 Scotland

Republic of Ireland 1 – 2 Wales

#### Standings

Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland

Republic of Ireland

All competing nations had a tour of the National Football Stadium and Education & Heritage Centre as well as a competition meal in the Pat Jennings Suite.



**Northern Ireland U19 Learning Disability Squad enjoy National Football Stadium tour**

## Mental Health

Mental Health workshops were delivered in partnership with AchieveNI to U16, U18 & U20 squads at Cliftonville and Crusaders to over 80 players. This project will be extended in 2018 to include Linfield and Glentoran.

## Coach Education

Three Irish FA Level One Coaching Disabled Footballers Award was delivered to over 60 coaches in Belfast, Coleraine and Ballymena. Two new Tutors trained in Gareth Allen and Diarmuid McNeice, the Irish FA Foundation Education Officers.

Alan Crooks wrote and delivered a disability awareness coaching course in Kiev, Ukraine in partnership with Scort Foundation to 36 Coaches.



## Deaf Football

Open Deaf Coaching Day at Lisburn Leisureplex on 4 February. 20 young deaf children, male and female attended.

Belfast Deaf UTD beat Brighton & Hove Albion 8-2 in 3rd round of British Deaf Plate. They will play Birmingham City in Belfast in the quarter final in March.

## Walking Football

We took 50 players from four groups in Northern Ireland to Dublin on 20.02.18 to play four groups from ROI. We are currently working with 14 groups within Northern Ireland and growing the strand of football across UK and Ireland.

## Castleareagh Glentoran Supports Club Ulster Disability Footballer of the Year

This Award was won by Northern Ireland Cerebral Palsy Footballer Charlie Fogarty. Charlie was awarded an MBE in the Queens Honours List for his work in Disability Football and his motivational speech 'Never Give Up'. Charlie was presented with the Award at Titanic Hotel Belfast.

## International Cerebral Palsy

Northern Ireland enjoyed two victories over the Republic of Ireland on 29 April in Dublin. The U15s won 5-4 in an exciting game and the Seniors won 3-1 in another close encounter.



**Senior Northern Ireland Cerebral Palsy Squad  
before Republic of Ireland Game**



## Peace Programme

The Irish FA have organised a 10 week programme with Syrian Refugees as part of the *Sport Uniting Communities* initiative. The 10 week programme will consist of coaching sessions provided by Irish FA, GAA and Ulster Rugby. The outcome of the programme will encourage social integration with a particular emphasis in building capacity for our clubs and volunteers to encourage more 'inclusive' clubs.

As part of the *Getting To Know The Irish FA* strand of the PEACE IV programme we have delivered seven tours of our Education and Heritage Centre to school and community groups from across Northern Ireland. So far 217 young people have taken part in this programme and learnt about the history, values and ethos of the Irish Football Association.

### PEACE IV *Sport Uniting Communities*

#### Club Development Sport for Peace Day

On Friday 9 February 2018, PEACE IV *Sport Uniting Communities* Community Sports Development Officers from the Irish FA, Ulster GAA and Ulster Rugby ran a Club Development Sport for Peace Day at Hillsborough Boys Junior Football Club. 47 Year 8 pupils from Laurehill Community College (controlled school) and St. Patrick's Academy (maintained school) attended the event.

The purpose of the event was to deliver in partnership with Hillsborough Boys JFC a peace and reconciliation event in the area. The aims of the event were to:

- Promote positive values
- Provide opportunities for social contact with people from different backgrounds
- Promote mutual understanding
- Promote peace in divided communities
- Develop sport specific skills and knowledge



Participants were mixed with others from different backgrounds and received coaching in the three sports. The idea was to teach the pupils skills from the three sports but also teach positive values that lay foundations for enhanced community relations using the Football 4 Peace model. The sessions were designed not only to develop sport-specific knowledge but also to adopt, practice and endorse principles such as fair play, respect for other participants and inclusion.

After a short break, the pupils were mixed into teams and participated in a football festival. This festival was non-competitive with no referees. The day was a great success and enjoyed by all.

## Sport Uniting Communities Launch

On the 21 March 2018 we officially launched The PEACE IV Sport Uniting Communities project. The collaboration project between the three bodies hopes to reach 17,000 people of differing backgrounds, particularly across the political divide with the aim of changing perceptions and building sustained relationships. The launch, at Queen's University's Dub playing fields, was attended by Northern Ireland football manager Michael O'Neill, Northern Ireland's Jonny Evans and Women's captain Marissa Callaghan who were joined by GAA All Ireland winning Manager Pete McGrath, Monaghan GAA's Conor McManus and Down GAA's Jessica Foy along with Ulster Rugby's Operations Director Bryn Cunningham, Ulster and Ireland International Darren Cave and Ulster's Eliza Downey.



On the day, players from the Northern Ireland Under 19 women's team, Ulster Ladies Gaelic Football Colleges All-Star team, Ulster Rugby Team, players from the Dungannon Club NI Performance School and participants from our BME Participation programme had the opportunity to participate in a range of 'Have a Go' activities in each of the three sports. These activities were delivered by Community Sport Development Officers from the three governing bodies whose responsibility it will be to deliver the programme across the province. Elite players from football, GAA and Rugby passed on their expertise and shared stories of their involvement in other codes.

## Events

Sport Uniting Communities have held a number of various different events across the region including Club Development Sport for Peace Days; Game of 3 Halves; Have a Go Days; Inclusive Clubs Workshops; Club Educational Visits and School Visits to the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park. Reports so far have shown that participants feel more comfortable socialising and engaging with people from different backgrounds after our events. Participants are also more willing to be involved in future events with people from across the religious divide.

Sport is a massive tool that we can use to bring people from different backgrounds together. Our events help promote positive values such as respect, tolerance, trust, responsibility and fair play. Our programmes also give people from marginalised groups an opportunity to participate in sport such as those from a BME background or from socially deprived areas.



## Schools' Football

### Primary Schools' Five-a-side

The Northern Ireland Primary Schools five-a-side finals were held at the Lisburn LeisurePlex on Thursday 19 April. The nine region tournament winners were joined by last year's winners Kings Park to vie for the five-a-side tournament. It took penalty kicks in both semi finals to advance Mullavilly and Ballymacash to the final at the expense of Millburn and Holy Child. Local side Ballymacash defeated the Portadown side to win the tournament.



Five-a-side winners, Ballymacash

### Northern Ireland U18 Schoolboys

The Northern Ireland U18 Schoolboys had a very successful Centenary Shield in their campaign to retain the trophy. The team were undefeated drawing three games home to Wales, away to Scotland and eventual winners Republic of Ireland. They also defeated England impressively 3-1 at Queens Belfast. The schoolboy team have now only lost one game in the last two years of the Centenary Shield competition.

Minor U12 Cup winners,  
Lurgan Junior High



### Northern Ireland Schools' Cup

The Northern Ireland Schools' Cup competitions have provided some excellent entertainment this year with schools across Northern Ireland achieving success in many different age groups. The Schools' Cup Finals day in Ballymena Showgrounds hosted seven games with the Danske Bank U18 Schools cup final being played at Seaview on 19 March and the U14 Cup final being the first schools game hosted at the new Brandywell stadium on Monday 23 April.

The St Columb's College winning teams



### Schools' Cup 2018 Roll of Honour

Youth U18 Cup: St. Columb's College

Youth U18 Plate: Regent House

Senior U16 Cup: St Columb's College

Senior U16 Plate: St Pius X (Magherafelt)

Small Schools Cup (U15): St. Patricks (Lisburn)

Intermediate U14 Cup: Our Lady and St Patrick's College Knock

Invitational Cup U13: St Columb's College

Small Schools Cup (U13): St. Patrick's (Lisburn)

Minor U12 Cup: Lurgan Junior High School

## Futsal

### A Focus on Futsal within the Player Development Programme

The School District Player Development Programme continues to be delivered across twelve areas in Northern Ireland. Players born in 2008 participated in an eight week block of Futsal delivery during January and February which concluded with areas playing against each other in festival matches.

One such event took place at Shankill Leisure Centre on Wednesday 14 February with the Lisburn and Castlereagh region playing against the region from South and East Belfast. The players participated in entertaining Futsal matches and the coaches we offered opportunities to enhance the players' tactical understanding of the game. The festival was delivered during half term and proved to be a great success for the players and their parents who were in attendance.

The School District Player Development Programme offers over 280 children across Northern Ireland the opportunity to receive twenty-four weeks of coaching provided by the Primary School coaching team. The programme is organised into three x eight-week blocks of football in the autumn period, Futsal in the Winter and another football block in the Spring. The programme will conclude with a National Festival in which players will be observed by Irish FA Elite Performance staff with the aim to recruit talent for the Club NI programme.



## Futsal Coach Education

A number of Futsal Coach Education courses have been delivered over the last couple of months. In partnership with Belfast City Council via the Stadium Community Benefits Initiative the Irish FA Foundation have delivered a Futsal Introductory Award to twenty participants and a Futsal Level One Award to sixteen participants. These courses were fully funded and were open to participants who either lived in the council area or worked within clubs based in the city.

A further Futsal Introductory Award was delivered at Ulster University, Jordanstown to a group of Sports Studies students. Over 20 candidates took part in the course delivered by Football for All Schools Development Officer Mal Donaghy.



**Candidates participating on the Futsal Level One Award at Shankill Leisure Centre**

## Curriculum Sports Programme

The Irish FA Foundation received word from the Department for Education NI in March that they would be extending the funding for the Curriculum Sports Programme until 31st October 2018. The Schools and Futsal Manager has been working with the Department to find a long-term solution to this current funding situation and will be pursuing a Peace IV application under the area of Shared Education.