



Irish Football Association

Football Development Department

Delivering the Youth Strategy

Headlines

Participation and Football For All	<p>Record Numbers of over 600 at the pre match Fanzone for Slovenia Senior International Men's game.</p> <p>De La Salle beat St Malachys 3-1 in the St. Patricks Day Final</p> <p>Conversations ongoing to play next years final at National Stadium</p> <p>NI Schools Cup Semi Finals completed and finals day will be 27th April</p> <p>FIFA Street Feet Programme with Sion Swifts and Trojans FC launched</p> <p>Regional Schools Futsal heats were held at Lisburn LeisurePlex, Craiga-von Leisure Centre, Omagh Leisure Centre, Shankill Leisure Centre and The Foyle Arena.</p> <p>International Women's Day was celebrated on Tuesday 8th March, as part of the celebrations the girl's regional excellence squad were kindly invited by organisers to showcase their talents at Stormont Buildings</p>
Club and Volunteer Development	<p>Volunteer Recognition Dinner on 13th April</p> <p>20 Volunteers helping at Senior Men's International</p> <p>5 New Match Monitors recruited</p>
Youth Football Coach Education	<p>Delivery of 2 Futsal Introductory Awards to over 40 candidates</p> <p>Ongoing delivery of Grassroots Introduction to Coaching Awards and Level One in March</p> <p>Grassroots Fundamental Awards being delivered to Primary School teachers through the Curriculum Sports Programme</p>
Elite Player Pathways	<p>Senior Women's Istra Cup Slovakia 0 – 1, Croatia 1 – 0 and Hungary 0 – 2</p> <p>Girls U18 Denmark 0 – 4 , Spain 0 – 5 and Ukraine 0 – 0</p> <p>U18 boys played England (1-2) and ROI (0--0) in the Centenary Shield</p>
Refereeing	<p>Meeting held with Premier League Managers discussing upcoming changes to the Laws of the Game and interpretation of laws.</p> <p>The National Development Group met for the first time at the national stadium to complete this year's programme.</p> <p>Practical Beginner Referee Workshop now launched.</p>

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Girls Domestic Football

The National Football Stadium was the host venue for a UEFA visit on Saturday 5th March. A delegation comprised of Emily Shaw (UEFA), Ebru Koksal (UEFA), and Emma Martin (FAI) administered a course for 2 representatives from each of the top 8 women's clubs who will be competing in the inaugural NIFL Women's Premier League. They offered their specialist advice and guidance regarding progressing each of the clubs forward, discussing topics such as club licensing, coaching qualifications and how to create a better club/league structure.

International Women's Day was celebrated on Tuesday 8th March, as part of the celebrations the girl's regional excellence squad were kindly invited by organisers to showcase their talents at Stormont Buildings, where they exhibited various skills on an inflatable pitch situated at the bottom of the steps at Stormont. This event was run in conjunction with the NIWFA's 40th Anniversary celebrations.

On Friday 11th and 18th March the women's department partnered TBUC and hosted an official ball girl course at the newly built Girdwood Community Hub. Some topics from the night included Field of play, Respect the Referee, Offside and the Roles & Responsibilities of a ball girl. Over 40 girls have now completed the course.

The second 'Super Sunday' since the Christmas break took place on Sunday 20th March; Carnmoney A, Carnmoney B, Cliftonville and St. Marys entered, relishing the opportunity for their u13's to experience 11 aside football; Each team showed positive signs of improvement since the previous 'Super Sunday' held in February.



Official Ball Girl Course



International Women's Day



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Football For All Schools Programme

Spring into Futsal

The Irish FA new initiative Spring into Futsal was rolled out over the past few weeks across the country for Primary Schools boys and girls in P6/7. Regional heats were held at Lisburn LeisurePlex, Craigavon Leisure Centre, Omagh Leisure Centre, Shankill Leisure Centre and The Foyle Arena where players got to experience the benefits of Futsal for the first time.



The competition was a great chance for your teams to experience the game whilst also participating in an Irish FA competition structure.



The winners and runners up teams will progress through to the National Finals which will be held after Easter.



Heat	Winner Boys	Runner Up Boys	Winner Girls	Runner Up Girls
Craigavon	Howard PS	Bleary PS	Howard PS	Bleary PS
Foyle Arena	Long Tower PS	Oakgrove Int PS	Drumahoe PS	Long Tower PS
Shankill	Cregagh PS	Dundonald P S	Dundonald P S	Donegall Road PS
Omagh	Omagh Integrated	Denamona PS	Cooley PS	McClintock PS
Lisburn	St Bernard's PS	Holy Child PS	Christ The Redeemer PS	Ballymacash PS



Spring into Futsal at the Foyle Arena

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NI Schools FA

Schools Cup

The Northern Ireland Schools Cup semi-finals have been completed and the preparation for finals day on the 27th April under way. Two of the stand out ties from the 10 games on the day will be St Columb's College Derry who face St Josephs Derry in the Senior Under 16 cup final and Clounagh Junior High School against Boys Model in the Intermediate U14 Cup final.

International

The Northern Ireland U18 Schoolboys have had a busy March playing England and Republic of Ireland in the Centenary Shield. The NI team hosted England on Friday 4th March at Comber Rec FC, the sides contested a very entertaining game with England scoring a late penalty to win the game 2-1. The U18's next game was away to the Republic of Ireland on St Patrick's day. Although the NI team was the better of the two sides and dominated the game they could not get a goal to win the game and ended with a 0-0 draw.

Belfast Cup Final

Northern Ireland Schools FA had their Belfast Senior Cup final at New Grosvenor on St Patrick's day. De La Salle and St Malachy's contested a very entertaining game with De La Salle finishing the game 3-1 winners.



NI Schools Team



Schools Cup

NIBFA

The main focus for NIBFA in this quarter will be bringing all the NIBFA Cup competitions to a conclusion, preparation of programmes for finals day festivals and the conclusion of the National League and Cup programme.

There is a considerable amount of daily activity now with the start of midweek games, it is our target to have all semi-finals concluded by Wed 20th April and the league programme by 21st May.

The NIBFA Cup Finals will be held at The Meadowbank Sports Arena in Magherafelt on Monday 2nd May, games will commence at 10.30am. The National League Cup & Plate Finals will be held at Cookstown Sports Arena on Friday 13th & Saturday 14th May.

NIBFA TV are continuing to produce their weekly shows which are well received given the amount of views per show, and have an ever increasing circle of social media contacts.

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Education and Outreach Projects

The Football for All Family Fan Zone saw record crowds ahead of the NI v Slovenia match on Easter Monday. Upwards of 600 young people and their families enjoyed free football activities.

The Football for All Youth Forum enjoyed a team building day at Todd's Leap Activity Centre, ahead of a series of discussions regarding issues facing the Irish FA, hearing the opinion of young people from a variety of backgrounds in NI.

The Outreach Project Officer and Recruitment and Retention Officer will travel to Leicester FC in continued development of the work with Reducing Offending in Partnership.

The Education Project Officer and Outreach Project Officer will begin delivery of the FIFA Street Feet Programme with Sion Swifts and Trojans FC for 6 weeks, developing young leaders in sport.

Show Racism the Red Card and Nutrition in Sport workshop delivery is ongoing with clubs, schools and youth groups across NI.



Futsal NI

Two Futsal Introductory Awards were delivered in March to youth participants from community groups across Belfast. In total over 40 participants successfully completed the awards which were delivered at Girdwood Community Centre and Girls Model School.

The Schools and Futsal Manager has completed the Irish FA Futsal Strategy entitled 'Game Changer' and this has been sent to UEFA for review and recommendation.

Progress has been made in partnership with Futsal Focus to host an International Club Futsal competition and coaching conference in July 2016. Club teams from the UK, Ireland and Europe have expressed an interest in participating in the event which will also include the winner of the inaugural Northern Ireland Male Domestic Futsal Championship which will begin in May. The coaching conference will take place on the same weekend, welcoming coaching expertise from across Europe. This conference will be open to coaches from Northern Ireland who wish to expand their futsal knowledge.



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Club and Volunteer Development

2 volunteers achieved Volunteer Recognition level awards in March.

A Series of informal interviews were held with volunteers. 5 new Irish FA Match Monitors have been recruited.

20 volunteers (pictured below) supported the Senior International vs Slovenia including the Family Fan zone, data capture and stadium ingress.

Volunteers supported the delivery of Nutty Krust Easter Camps.

Irish FA Club and Volunteer Recognition Dinner is organised for 13/04/2016



The Irish FA Club and Community Development Officer (CCDO) has continued to work the Club & Volunteer Let Them Play strategy. This work included the roll out of the Club Excellence scheme to clubs throughout the country with a number of clubs submitting folders for assessment in March. The CCDO has set clear targets to be achieved in 2016 across all levels of the game.

The CCDO worked closely with the VDPO and the Irish FA Outreach Project Officer in the design and delivery of the International Football Family Fan Zone.

The CCDO was on the interview panel for the appointment of 8 Youth Development Co-Ordinators which will be working closely with NIFL clubs on a part time basis.

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Women's International Programme

Girls Regional Excellence Programme

The four Regional Excellence centres have now completed their Talent appraisals and have recruited a number of new players at all age levels. The centres run each Tuesday night from 6.00pm – 9.00pm with the 01/02 Development squad getting an extra session each Wednesday at the UUJ and 03/04 on a Wednesday at the Dub. Soccer Genius testing's also took place for each of the regions highlighting a series of improved scores.

Easter camps were also held in each region with a total of 124 girls taking part, some of the regions played games v boys teams.

The U15 Development squad had a weekend residential to prepare for the upcoming Bob Docherty Tournament playing a game on the Sunday against the U17's which was a very competitive and quality game. They also had an Easter camp again playing against a local boys team.

Women's International

The month began with the Senior women's International team travelling to Croatia to take part in the Istra Cup. The squad played three games winning one and losing two but putting together three very good performances Slovakia 0 – 1, Croatia 1 – 0 and Hungary 0 – 2. The squad included several new players from outside N.Ireland and a number of the U19 squad who all did very well.

The U17's and U19's had a weekend residential which was part of both of their preparations for the Elite tournaments. The U17's hosted over the Easter break the U17 UEFA Elite tournament playing Denmark 0 – 4, Spain 0 – 5 and Ukraine despite dominating 0 – 0. This tournament will have been of great benefit to the U17 girls many of which will be part of the U19 squad for the UEFA U19 Finals in 2017.

Disability Football

Nutty Krust Easter camp at Loughside Leisure Centre, Shore Road, Belfast. 10 children participated in the camp.

NI junior cerebral palsy squad drew 4-4 with ROI and senior cerebral palsy squad beat Denmark 10-0 on 2 April in Dublin.

Under 19 LD squad are currently playing in the Home Nations Championships in Glasgow, Scotland.

6 disability sections to mainstream clubs are now operational across NI with over 100 children with disabilities enjoying the weekly coaching sessions. This project was kindly supported by DCAL.

A record 72 teams have entered the 2016 George Best community cup. This will take place on 23 & 24 June at Billy Neill complex. 5-a-side disability fc cup competition with 4 ability bands.



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Grassroots

Foundation Club Mark

The first round (10) of Clubs who have achieved the McDonalds Irish FA Foundation Clubmark accreditation will be receiving their certificates and equipment over the next 3 weeks and we hope to maximise publicity by creating a show reel of the presentations to Clubs, volunteers and coaches.

The Adidas Free Kits scheme 2016 is at 50% redemption rate and we are confident that all clubs will redeem by closing at the end of April.

Community Awards

We stand with 35 nominations to date and nominations appear to spike after events such as coach education courses and focussed communications to GDC teams. However we hoped to be slightly further toward our target of 214 nominations and over the coming month we will distribute “postcards” to volunteers, parents and coaches in order to boost the numbers. We would encourage all staff to consider nominating volunteers and to continue to circulate our nomination messages via their networks.

‘Back in the Game’

Our National Festival has been confirmed, and will be hosted at the Valley Leisure Centre, Newtownabbey on Saturday 28th May 2016 K.O. 12Noon with special guest **Gerry Armstrong**. We expect this to have some 40+ teams taking part for men, 35 +, 45+ and a 30+ section for women. In addition we have coordinated the event alongside a fun run which we hope will appeal to family and friends of the veteran players.

Nutty Krust Easter Football Camps

A record number of 1908 children attended the 28 Nutty Krust Football Camps in Northern Ireland over the Easter holidays.

This is an increase of nearly 20.6 % on last year’s figures of 1589 In addition three camps at the MUSA (Cookstown), the Valley (Newtownabbey) and Lakeland Forum (Enniskillen) recorded attendances of over **100 children**.

The three-day camps, in partnership with Portadown based Irwin’s Bakery, were staged in 30 locations across the country and gave boys and girls aged 5-13 the chance to develop their football skills while exercising, having fun and making new friends.

Finally credit should be given to all 40 staff from Football Development and 70 part-time coaches who delivered 3 days of coaching in a well organised and very professional way.



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Curriculum Sports Programme

The Schools and Futsal manager received confirmation from the Department of Education Northern Ireland that funding for the Curriculum Sports Programme will be extended for a further year up to March 31st 2017. This news was extremely pleasing as it highlights that DENI continue to value the programme and that delivery can continue within 191 schools and to 18,500 pupils each week.

A number of Grassroots Fundamentals Awards have been to Primary School teachers in March as part of their annual training and development programme. This award provides teachers with a strong understanding of the benefits of Fundamental Movement Skills and Physical Literacy along with practical examples of activities and games that they can use in a curriculum or after school context.

March also saw a number of staff members coming together to deliver charity festival events with a multisport focus. The staff also assisted the RGDOs in the delivery of the Nutty Krust Easter Holiday Camps.

Referee Development

A meeting was held with Premier League Managers discussing upcoming changes to the Laws of the Game and interpretation of laws such as off-side. It is going to vital over the next few months to educate officials, players, managers and media regarding the biggest overhaul the Laws of the Game has seen since its creation. The meeting was really constructive and we are keen to complete further sessions with teams at all levels.

The National Development Group met for the first time at the national stadium to complete this year's programme. Topics focused on Game Management, Teamwork, Advantage and Working with Feedback. With over 40 referees completing the programme, that is a record number....one that we hope to double next year.

The Grassroots Observers also met on the same evening looking at challenges, Laws of the Game & Video tests and recording of key match incidents. The work they do at grassroots level in terms of development and talent ID is key to the success of the referee strategy.

On 7th April we run our first Practical Beginners Workshop. Although we have completed practical work at previous workshops this will be the first time candidates will have completed the course online and completed the practical module following passing the theory. The course will be delivered by 6 new Referee Tutors on the evening who will be assessed in their delivery.

Curriculum Sports Programme

