

Nobody Offside!

A GUIDE TO DISABLED FOOTBALL
VERSION 1.0





COLOPHON

Contents

The contents of this brochure have been produced in collaboration with our partners: Ligue Handisport Francophone, G-sport Vlaanderen, Parantee – Psylos, S-Sport // Recreas and Special Olympics Belgium.

Authors

An De Kock and Florence Hock

Layout

Sorryklaas;)

Translation

UEFA language services

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FOREWORD BY ROBERTO MARTÍNEZ

I am a great supporter of disabled football. In October 2016, our Red Devils played a special 'unified match' against seven disabled footballers. That game was a wonderful experience for our players and our opponents alike, and the joy on everyone's faces was clear to see, both on and off the pitch. Those players' purity and zest for life were so captivating that we could not help but smile.

I am therefore proud to introduce this guide aimed at helping clubs to establish disabled football activities. It is crucial that football clubs invest in good support for our disabled players, so that they have the best possible environment in which to develop. Those boys and girls deserve to have qualified coaches and play the game in a setting which is tailored to their needs.

As with preparations for one of the Red Devils' matches, the establishment of a disabled football section needs to be planned well. You also need to identify the right strategy and find the best players for the various positions on the pitch. The step-by-step plan in this guide offers a practical overview, helping your club to devise the ideal strategy and make a real success of disabled football.

I wish you all the very best and sincerely hope that your club and its members will join me in becoming great supporters of disabled football.

Sporting greetings,

Roberto Martinez,
head coach of the Belgian national team



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INTRODUCTION



With 'Nobody Offside!' representing a key objective of both the Royal Belgian Football Association and the Association of Francophone Football Clubs (ACFF), we are committed, in the context of UEFA's HatTrick social responsibility programme, to fostering the best possible football activities for people with disabilities.

We are convinced of the added value that disabled football can provide, and we are keen to highlight the extent to which activities of this kind can benefit your club.

First of all, disabled football activities will allow your club to meet the sporting needs of disabled people, who currently do less sport than people without a disability. It is clear, therefore, that there are plenty of opportunities out there when it comes to organising sporting activities for disabled people, with clubs able to add real value within society by offering disabled football.

A disabled football section will also create various opportunities for a club, allowing it to recruit additional members from that new target group. In addition, the parents of such children will often play an active role within the club and be willing to get involved as volunteers. Wallonia's towns and villages have made a real commitment to disabled sport, which has the potential to strengthen cooperation in this area. Ultimately, offering disabled football will also allow your club to differentiate itself from other clubs in the local area.

Disabled football also offers numerous benefits for participants. Not only does it help them to become more active and improve their physical fitness, it is also important from a social perspective. Disabled football can also help disabled people to become more independent and autonomous.

This guide seeks to furnish clubs with the practical information they need to set up their own disabled football sections. There will be certain specific things that you need to bear in mind, depending on the type of disability that players in your target group have, but if you are well informed and prepare as well as you can, your disabled football section will get off to a smooth start.

We cooperate closely with a number of key partners in this area: the Belgian First League, the Francophone Disabled Sports Association (LHF), the Adapted Sports Federation (FéMA), G-sport Vlaanderen, Parantee, S-Sport // Recreas, and Special Olympics.

For more information or advice tailored to your specific club, please contact the ACFF.

We wish you all the very best in your endeavours.



WHAT IS DISABLED FOOTBALL?

The term 'disabled football' spans all forms of football played by people with physical and/or learning disabilities. A disabled-friendly football club is a club where players with disabilities are entirely welcome and their differing abilities are taken into account. Disabled athletes compete in a wide variety of different sports at all possible levels, so your disabled football activities could range from high-level sport to recreational football. Your club has various options when it comes to organising its disabled football, ranging from inclusive to exclusive activities, or something in between. These various formats are detailed below. However, it is always important to ascertain the individual needs of the relevant target group when deciding which approach to adopt.

INCLUSIVE DISABLED FOOTBALL

Inclusive disabled football means having disabled and non-disabled footballers playing with and against each other. This approach can be applied universally across all training sessions and matches, or it can be applied solely at training sessions.

ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRATION

Clubs employing this approach have a separate disabled football section or team alongside their standard activities. As in the case of youth teams or girls' and women's teams, that section or team will play a full part in all of the club's activities.

EXCLUSIVE DISABLED FOOTBALL

Clubs offering exclusive disabled football are reserved solely for disabled players. Certain target groups require specific adjustments that necessitate an exclusive approach. It is always important to listen to the needs of the relevant target group when deciding which approach to adopt.



THE VARIOUS TARGET GROUPS AND TYPES OF DISABLED FOOTBALL

This section will look at the various target groups and types of disabled football. It will also provide some advice regarding the approach to be adopted for those target groups and things that need to be borne in mind, drawing on the experiences of coaches and support staff working in the area of disabled football. It is important to always focus on what these players can do, and not to underestimate them. Involve the players when making adjustments to activities or facilities, always doing so in a spirit of respect.



PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities are the result of developments affecting the brain during pregnancy or in early childhood. The cause may be genetic or environmental and often remains unknown.

People with learning disabilities often have difficulty processing new or complex information and acquiring skills. In addition, they also have difficulties in social situations. Their ability to empathise is greatly impaired, and social contact with other people is more difficult



FOOTBALL FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Various Belgian clubs have disabled football sections aimed specifically at players with learning disabilities. There is even an official seven-a-side competition organised by a number of Flemish provinces. Although that competition is also open to players with other disabilities, most have learning disabilities. Your club's section could be for adults, or it could be for children



DID YOU KNOW?

The annual Football Kick-Off event is Belgium's largest disabled football tournament. The majority of participants are adults or children with learning disabilities, but the event is also open to players with other disabilities. Former professional Piet Den Boer is the tournament's ambassador, and professional coaches and referees attend the event to encourage and support the 900 or so players taking part.



DID YOU KNOW?

Football for players with learning disabilities is broken down into four categories:

- **LEVEL 1** For disabled footballers whose technical skills, physical capabilities and level of understanding are similar to those of non-disabled players.
- **LEVEL 2** For disabled footballers with good physical capabilities, sound technical skills and a good level of understanding. These players understand the Laws of the Game and are able to apply them without external assistance.
- **LEVEL 3** For disabled footballers whose physical capabilities, technical skills and level of understanding are relatively weak. These players need support when it comes to understanding the Laws of the Game.
- **LEVEL 4** For disabled footballers who do not possess the minimum skills necessary for disabled football.

ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- With this target group, it is helpful to present rules in a visual manner. It is also important to use simple language when explaining the club's regulations and how it operates.
- Involve these players in all of the club's activities. This will help them to play their full part in club life and give them opportunities to get to know other players of the same age.

We want our disabled football team to be an integral part of the club. They train at the same time as the other teams, and they take part in all of our events.

HEAD OF DISABLED FOOTBALL AT K. RUPEL BOOM FC

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

For these players, it is important to have well-structured training sessions and explain exercises in simple terms. Ensure that players experience success, and make sure that all players receive individual attention in order to retain their interest.



○ AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Autistic spectrum disorders can affect various different aspects of players' development. Social skills, language, imagination, motor skills, self-esteem and empathy are all impaired. This makes it more difficult for them to establish social contacts and communicate with other people, and they have trouble understanding games.

✕ FOOTBALL FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

There are a few teams in Belgium which are aimed specifically at children with autistic spectrum disorders. Such teams are a result of the fact that certain children with autistic spectrum disorders are not capable of joining non-disabled teams. At present, teams are run by Club Brugge KV (Voetbalkraks), Anti-Voetbalclub Waasland and Autivoetbal U-nited, as well as ASBL les Autistes Oubliés in Luxembourg.

ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- Structure is key for players with autistic spectrum disorders. The first time you meet players and their parents, explain how everything works at the club. You could, for example, provide them with a step-by-step plan with very precise pictograms and then follow that plan at each training session. This will allow parents to properly prepare their children for that new environment.
- Structure also means ensuring that players always get changed in the same dressing room, and that they always train and play their matches at the same time. If you want to make changes, it is important to prepare your players well, in cooperation with their parents. You can also use little mats to indicate where each player sits in the dressing room.
- Ensure that these boys and girls train on the quietest pitch available, as they are very sensitive to external stimuli, which could unsettle them.
- Work in small groups and ensure that you have enough people to help you.

When our club celebrated St Nicholas's Day, the boys in our disabled football team were scheduled to go up last. They became extremely agitated and unsettled. We will bear that in mind for next year and call them up first from now on.

COACH AT K. SCHELLE SPORT



ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- Be mindful of the fact that players with autistic spectrum disorders often have difficulty judging what other people think, want and feel. If they say something harsh, they probably do not mean it.
- Be as clear as possible in all your communications. These players will hardly ever understand sarcasm or irony.
- To make your communications understandable, you can use the pictograms on this website: www.sclera.be
- If players have to work together for specific exercises, it is better if they already know the relevant team-mates well. Bear this in mind when organising your training sessions.
- If you are angry, say so clearly and explain why you are angry. These players will often have difficulty understanding emotions, so you can help them by providing some context.
- These boys and girls will often have difficulty judging time. You can use an autism timer during training sessions to provide a visual indication of the number of minutes remaining.
- Ensure that unstructured events are limited as far as possible. You can also structure your breaks by always using the same system (drinks break, toilet break, sit-down break).

We've agreed that he can request a time-out when he feels himself getting angry. He goes and kicks the ball against the hoardings for a bit, and once he has calmed down, he comes back of his own accord and sits on the bench. That tells me that he's ready to go back on again.

COACH OF DISABLED FOOTBALL TEAM



PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

People with physical disabilities have disorders affecting their movement. Within this group, a distinction is often made between players who use a wheelchair and players who do not.

PLAYERS WHO DO NOT USE A WHEELCHAIR **CEREBRAL PALSY AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES**

Children and adults with cerebral paralysis or palsy have less control over their muscles as a result of problems affecting their brain (which are often caused by a lack of oxygen in certain areas of the brain). This affects their movement, muscular tension, reflexes and posture.

A traumatic brain injury can be the result of a sudden trauma (e.g. a heavy blow to the head) which causes damage to the brain.

Players with cerebral paralysis or a brain injury can have problems with motor skills, the ability to read the game, perception, concentration, communication and/or movement. They often have trouble running, jumping, retaining their balance, etc. With these players, it is important that coaches pay attention to signs of fatigue.

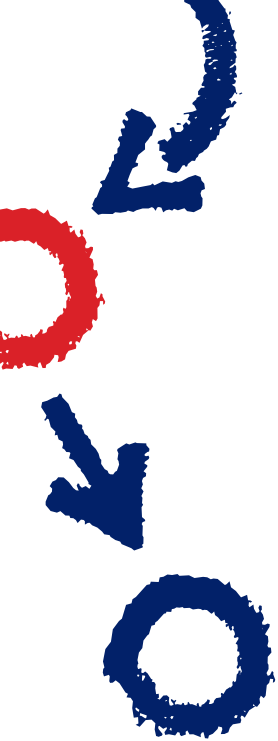
CP FOOTBALL

CP football is aimed specifically at children and adults with cerebral palsy or a traumatic brain injury. However, players with physical disabilities that are not caused by cerebral palsy or a traumatic brain injury are also able to take part. Official international regulations dictate that CP football is played seven-a-side.



DID YOU KNOW?

CP football was a Paralympic discipline until 2016. Indeed, Belgium's national CP football team took part in the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Paralympics, winning gold in 1984 and silver in 1988.



ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- Ensure that your facilities are suitable for players with physical disabilities. For example, you can arrange to use dressing rooms that are close to the pitch, and ramps can be a lifesaver if they avoid your players having to deal with too many steps.
- Children will want to be treated like any other child, and they will appreciate having contact with non-disabled children of the same age where the two groups can come together for specific exercises. CP footballers should not be regarded as an entirely separate group of players – just a different category, like the different age categories.

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- Pay attention to what children and adults with cerebral palsy are able to do, to ensure that they are sufficiently successful in training sessions and matches.
- Take account of their cognitive skills: use visual aids (after first attracting players' attention) and prepare plenty of different exercises. A single agreed gesture or signal is often clearer than three sentences.
- Prepare plenty of individual exercises. Frustration will soon mount if a player's team-mate keeps losing control of the ball during exercises in pairs, etc.
- Focus on what the child/player wants, not what the coach wants. Be receptive to contributions from children/players.
- Be conscious of the fact that this is a group of children/players with a different level. Be mindful of what children/players can do, but try to organise interesting exercises.
- Plan sufficient breaks.
- Be patient when it comes to increasing the difficulty of exercises, and give constant encouragement, helping players to push back the boundaries one step at a time.
- It is important to differentiate between players, as there can be big differences between the abilities of children with cerebral palsy.

These children often have problems with their balance. We automatically stop the game when someone falls over, regardless of whether a foul was committed.

CLUB OFFICIAL AT KOSC WIJGMAAL

AMPUTATION

BAmputees have had all or part of a limb amputated. This group also includes people who were born with a missing limb. These players' physical capacity is assessed on the basis of their stump and the point at which the limb was amputated. These players may have a prosthetic performing some of the functions of that part of the body.

The stump can be very sensitive. These players can also feel 'phantom pain' – i.e. pain, heat, cold, irritation, etc. in the part of the body that has been amputated.

AMPUTEE FOOTBALL

Amputee football is played seven-a-side. Outfield players are all leg amputees (anywhere from the ankle up), while the goalkeeper is an arm amputee (anywhere from the wrist up). Outfield players move around the pitch with the aid of crutches and do not wear prosthetics.



DID YOU KNOW?

Amp Football Belgium organises regular training sessions for amputee players of both sexes, typically at the Belgian Football Centre in Tubize. It is hoping to contest international matches and tournaments in the future.

ADVICE AND TIPS

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- In cooperation with players, check that facilities are accessible to people using crutches.
- Arrange for training sessions to take place on the pitch located closest to the dressing rooms. This will prevent players from having to walk long distances on crutches and allow them to save their strength for the football.
- Most players will use a prosthetic the rest of the time. Organise a dedicated place where players can leave their crutches, so that they do not have to carry them around the whole time.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are 42 countries with a national amputee football team.

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- Amputee footballers will tire more quickly than non-amputees. Plan sufficient breaks to ensure that training sessions are not too tiring.
- These players may have problems with their balance on account of their amputations. You may wish to take account of this by including relevant exercises in your training sessions.
- Safety is a key issue for these players on account of their use of crutches. Be very clear with the players on this point, and check in advance to see whether the pitch is in an acceptable state (without any deep holes, for example).

PLAYERS WHO USE A WHEELCHAIR

Wheelchairs are used by players with a whole range of different disabilities, from people with problems affecting only their legs to people with disabilities affecting all of their limbs and limited movement, muscular strength, etc. There are also different types of wheelchair. Some players, for example, use a manual wheelchair, while others use an electric powerchair.

If you wish to work with this target group, it is important to check in advance to see whether your facilities are sufficiently accessible for players using wheelchairs (toilets, width of corridors, stairs, etc.).

POWERCHAIR FOOTBALL

Powerchair football was developed for people with severe physical disabilities that prevent them from playing other kinds of football. Most players' disabilities are a consequence of muscular dystrophy or cerebral paralysis. Powerchair football differs from other kinds of disabled football in that training sessions and matches take place indoors on a basketball court.



DID YOU KNOW?

The European Powerchair Football Association (EPFA) organises powerchair football tournaments at European level. In 2014, a team from Belgium took part in the EPFA Nations Cup.

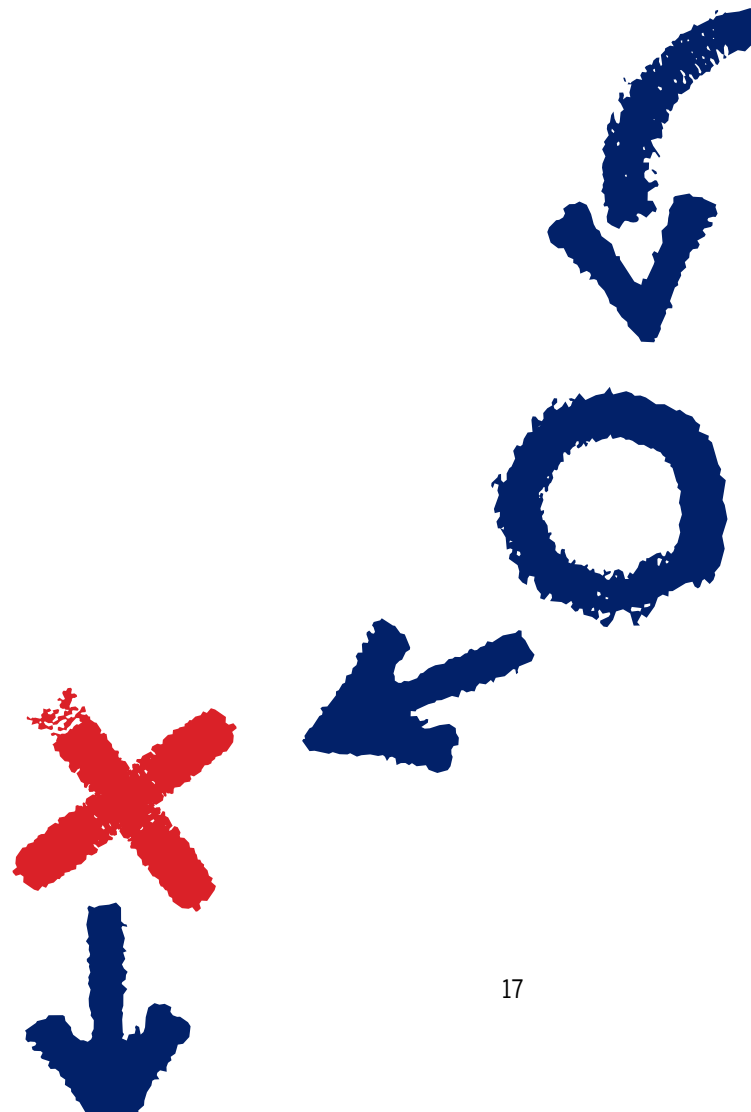
ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- The issue of accessibility is the key consideration for these players. Check in advance to see whether all necessary facilities (dressing rooms, toilets, the club's bar/cafe, etc.) are accessible by wheelchair. Feel free to involve members of your target group in such audits of your facilities.
- Find out whether players are able to get themselves to the club independently. If not, you can try to identify an appropriate solution in cooperation with the players and relevant third parties.

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- These players can quickly become too cold or overheat. Check regularly to see whether they are warm or cool enough. If need be, you can give them a thermal blanket or organise additional refreshments.
- With this target group, it is important to do regular stretching in order to ward off spasms and muscle vibration.
- Foster autonomy and avoid being too quick to offer assistance. Players will ask for help if they need it.



○ BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE

As with other disabilities, visual impairments vary greatly in terms of their severity. Players may have problems with their visual acuity and/or their field of vision. In some cases, players' eyesight may deteriorate over time.

Certain adjustments need to be made in order to allow blind and partially sighted people to play football. These players rely primarily on their hearing and their sense of touch. They also require additional coaching/support staff.

✕ BLIND FOOTBALL

This is a form of five-a-side football designed specifically for blind and partially sighted players. The four outfield players play blindfolded, and the goalkeeper is fully sighted. Hoardings at least 1m high are placed around the pitch, and the ball contains little bells so that the players can hear where it is. Additional coaches stand on the touch line and give instructions to players.



DID YOU KNOW?

The following classifications are used in blind football:

- **B1** Football for players who are blind or can detect only light. All the players on the pitch, with the exception of the two goalkeepers, are blindfolded. This is the only Paralympic discipline for visually impaired players.
- **B2/B3** Football for partially sighted players. The rules for these players are different in certain respects to those used for B1 players.



ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- These players rely heavily on their hearing. It is therefore important to ensure that training sessions are conducted in a silent environment. Arrange for training sessions to take place at the quietest possible times.
- Ensure that you have sufficient support staff on hand. Players will need to be accompanied to/from the pitch before and after training, with continual feedback to help them find their way.
- You will need to adjust the way that you communicate with players. These players will prefer phone calls to other forms of communication. You should also ensure that your website, emails, etc. comply with the guidelines published here: www.anysurfer.be/en
- Safety is very important. Always ensure that everything is tidied away and that balls and other equipment are not left lying around.
- Work in small groups.
- Order a few audible balls.
- Ensure that these players have sufficient contrast in their playing environment. You could, for example, purchase some brightly coloured kit/equipment (e.g. bright red or yellow). You should also use large equipment (e.g. large cones, rather than small ones) to make it easier for partially sighted players to see.



DID YOU KNOW?

Blind football is a Paralympic sport. Belgium has a national blind football team – the Belgian Blind Devils – which is recognised by the Royal Belgian Football Association and represents Belgium at European and world championships. In 2015, they competed in their first ever IBSA Blind Football European Championships. Those players were spotted playing for various blind football teams across Belgium.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

www.belgianfootball.be/fr/Belgian-Blind-Devils



ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- Back up your demonstrations with a verbal commentary. Always explain in great detail what the players need to do, where they need to position themselves, etc.
- For these players, it is important that training sessions are well structured.

I've been playing visually impaired football for four years now. It gives me an opportunity to push myself, meet great people, travel and – above all – have fun on a daily basis.

DAVID DORTU, 31 YEARS OLD, MEMBER OF THE BELGIAN NATIONAL TEAM WITH RETINAL DEGENERATION

I've been partially sighted since birth. I tried to play football at a non-disabled club, but my eyesight deteriorated around the age of 17 or 18, and that stopped me from playing. [...] I wasn't a great fan to start with. I didn't even want to be seen wearing a blindfold. I gradually improved and ended up really taking to it. It's a great sport. [...] I love the team spirit – the fact that we win and lose together. Meeting other people with the same disability helps you to develop in a variety of different ways.

JEAN-MICHEL BERTINCHAMPS, VISUALLY IMPAIRED FOOTBALLER



DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

People with impaired hearing vary quite significantly in terms of the severity of their disability. At one end of the spectrum you have people who are slightly hard of hearing, and at the other you have people who are completely deaf. People who are hard of hearing can understand people talking with the help of a hearing aid, but deaf people cannot.

People with a hearing impairment can also have problems with their balance, given that their disability affects their inner ear. Moreover, some deaf and hard of hearing people have difficulty speaking or do not speak at all on a social level, which can complicate communication.

FOOTBALL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

With a few adjustments when it comes to communication, deaf and hard of hearing players can easily be integrated into a non-disabled team. Indeed, there are a number of deaf and hard of hearing footballers in Belgium who play for non-disabled teams, taking part in training sessions and competitive matches alike.



DID YOU KNOW?

Belgium has a national team for deaf and hard of hearing players – the Belgian Deaf Devils – which is recognised by the Royal Belgian Football Association. They train together on a regular basis in preparation for the Deaflympics and European and world championships. In July 2016, the Belgian Deaf Devils finished eighth in the DIFA World Deaf Football Championships in Italy. Moreover, an Under-21 team was established last year in order to give promising young deaf and hard of hearing players the best possible opportunity to hone their skills, with a view to potentially being selected for the senior team.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

www.belgianfootball.be/fr/Belgian-Blind-Devils

ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- When communicating with a deaf player via an interpreter, it is important to maintain visual contact with that player at all times.
- Organise a basic sign language course for your coaches. Knowing a few signs will make it easier to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing players during training sessions. There are also online sign language dictionaries that you can use.
- Ask the player which form of communication they prefer.
- When communicating with a player in writing, use simple language

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- Make sure that you always establish contact with a player before explaining something. If the player is not looking at you, you do not have their attention and they will not know what they need to do.
- These players will often need to read your lips in order to determine what they need to do. Make sure that you articulate properly when explaining things and speak sufficiently slowly.
- The referee should be informed before the game if a player is deaf or hard of hearing, so that this can be taken into account. The referee will need to know, for example, that there is a possibility of the player playing on when the whistle is blown for a foul.
- Use visual aids to explain your training sessions. You could, for example, draw pictures of exercises or use pictograms



○ **PSYCHOLOGICALLY VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

It is important to be aware that these kinds of problem can develop over time. Thus, children's pathologies may be different from those of adults. In addition to genetic factors, a player's environment can also have a major impact – both positive and negative – on the future development of any issue. In such circumstances, good support for players can help to improve the situation.

ADHD is another fairly common psychological problem, affecting children and adults alike. This can cause children to be impulsive and hyperactive and make it very difficult for them to concentrate on an activity or task.

There are a number of towns and villages in Flanders that organise training sessions and matches for psychologically vulnerable people, and the Parantee/Psylos sports association specialises in supporting Flemish clubs that work with this target group.

✕ **FOOTBALL FOR PSYCHOLOGICALLY VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Parantee-Psylos organises a friendly football competition for member clubs in each Flemish province aimed exclusively at psychologically vulnerable players. These days, the majority of clubs have clearly established links with mental health providers. It is perfectly possible to integrate such people into club operations.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every member of the Geestige Buffalo's team in Ghent is psychologically vulnerable. The team was established in cooperation with the KAA GENT FOUNDATION.



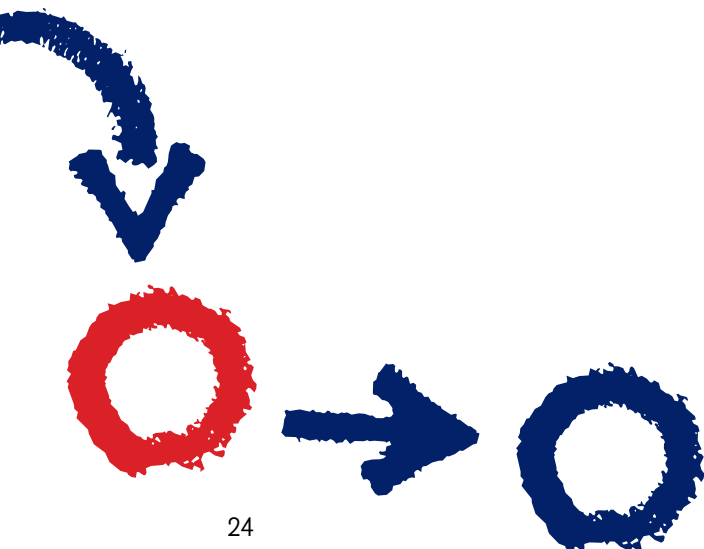
ADVICE AND TIPS ➡

ADVICE FOR CLUBS

- Psychologically vulnerable people often live in isolation. However, membership of a football club presents opportunities to escape such social isolation. Identify a trusted person and then enter into dialogue with the individual in question in order to see what you can do as a coach or as a club in order to get the player to play for you. There might, for example, be organisational issues (e.g. problems getting to training), or there might be financial problems requiring the club to allow the payment of membership fees in instalments or provide equipment.
- Invite these people to all club activities and talk to them about such events. They often need this kind of additional nudge to give them the confidence and motivation to come along.
- Do not isolate these players. Talk to them and ascertain which people need to know that they have mental health problems. There is no need for all club officials to know

ADVICE FOR COACHES FROM THEIR PEERS

- If a player misses a training session or behaves apathetically or angrily during training, that does not necessarily mean that they are not interested or lack good intentions. It may be a sign that they do not feel good about themselves. Discussing this with the player in an adult manner may be an important first step towards them feeling valued and finding (or refinding) their place within the team.
- As a coach, you should be conscious of the fact that a player's obesity or poor physical condition may be a consequence of their pathology and medication, and not necessarily a sign of a lack of good will. Manage the player's workload and plan sufficient rest breaks and drinks breaks.
- Allow players to call a time-out when they are very angry or frustrated. You can agree a specific location within your field of vision where they can go for a moment to cool down.
- These players do not always have particularly long concentration spans, so it is important to repeat things frequently.



LAUNCHING DISABLED FOOTBALL AT YOUR CLUB

If your club wants to set up its own disabled football team or integrate disabled players into its non-disabled teams, you can use the checklist below to ensure that you plan properly and do everything you need to. Do not forget to let the ACFF know what you are doing, as it supports clubs offering disabled football in a number of different ways.

Before launching your disabled football activities, you might wish to run through the following basic questions with your disabled football steering group:

ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

- Are there other disabled-friendly football clubs in the local area?
- If so, what do they offer?
- What potential target groups are there in the vicinity of the club?

TIP 1 The ACFF's website contains a map showing all disabled-friendly football clubs, as well as details of all the different activities run by the ACFF and the clubs themselves in Wallonia. That map is updated on a regular basis.

TIP 2 There is also useful information on Le Guide Social's website:
<http://pro.guidesocial.be/Handicap.html>

DISABLED FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES

What are the aims and objectives of this initiative?

- Type of disabled football.....
- Recreational or competitive?
- Frequency of training sessions (weekly, monthly, sporadic, etc.).....
- Start date for initiative.....
- Format (i.e. inclusive, exclusive or organisational integration).....

TARGET GROUP

What will be the target group for these disabled football activities?

- Age group
- Gender (i.e. male, female or both)
- Restrictions applied
- Minimum number of participants
- Maximum number of participants

TIP Visit an existing disabled-friendly club and obtain answers to the following questions:

- How was the club set up?
- What problems were experienced?
- How does the club recruit members?
- What equipment is needed?
- How does the club deal with the issue of transport?

Once you have decided on all of the above, it is important to consider possible bottlenecks and obstacles in cooperation with the club's executive board. The main points to bear in mind are listed below. You can tick off any action that has already been taken. Use this checklist to structure your meetings with the working group.

INTERNAL SUPPORT

- ☐ Disabled football forms part of the club's yearly and multi-year planning.
- ☐ The executive board has approved the launch of disabled football activities.
- ☐ The coaches, youth technical director, etc. are aware and approve of the launch of disabled football activities.
- ☐ A club official is willing to act as a permanent point of contact for disabled football.
Name and contact details:

- ☐ The club has a number of volunteers who are willing to assist with the development of disabled football activities (be it as support staff or as members of the disabled football working group).
Names:

SPORTS FACILITIES

- ☐ A sports hall or pitch is available for training sessions.
- ☐ A dressing room is available for the players.
- ☐ Training sessions will take place at a fixed place and time.
Location and time:

ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY

- ☐ The club's facilities are accessible to the target group.
- ☐ If not, authorisation has been granted for a number of adjustments to club infrastructure.
- ☐ The target group can easily access the club's sports facilities using public transport.
- ☐ If not, the club has identified alternative means of transport.

TIP 1 Make your website accessible to partially sighted people. For more information, visit: www.anysurfer.be/en.

TIP 2 Take account of players' disabilities and organise the best possible training session given the facilities available. Do not, for example, arrange a training session for blind players at a time when there are many other teams on site making lots of noise.

TIP 3 You can find more information on accessibility here:
www.wallonie.be/fr/actualites/laccessibilite-des-espaces-aux-personnes-mobilite-reduite

COACHING/SUPPORT STAFF

- ☐ There is a (trainee) disabled football coach available.
Name and contact details:

- ☐ If not, the club has advertised for a disabled football coach (either internal or external).
- ☐ There are additional support staff and/or assistant coaches available.
Names and contact details:

- ☐ The club will encourage support staff, coaches and administrators to undergo training and/or retraining.

TIP The LHF's website contains information on training opportunities:
www.handisport.be/lhf/index.asp?M=393&lang=2

EQUIPMENT

- ☐ The disabled football section is able to use the club's training equipment.
- ☐ The club has enough specialist equipment for disabled football (e.g. if you intend to organise blind football).
- ☐ If not, the club has looked into borrowing disabled football equipment.

TIP Feel free to contact the head of disabled football and the official responsible for your province at the ACFF. They will be able to give you more information on possible subsidies.

FINANCE

- ☐ The club's budget includes a sum set aside for the disabled football section
 - Hire of sports facilities: €.....
 - Purchase of equipment: €.....
 - Marketing costs: €.....
 - Insurance for coaches: €.....
- ☐ Costs have been estimated in terms of expenditure and revenue.
- ☐ The club has already looked into the possibility of raising additional revenue.

TIP 1 Keep an eye out for calls for projects within Belgian football, as disabled football initiatives are often eligible for support.

COOPERATION AND NETWORKS

Local level

- ☐ The club has made contact with possible partners in the local area: schools, specialist institutions, disabled sports clubs, sports organisations, etc.

National level

- ☐ The club has contacted the head of disabled football at the ACFF.
- ☐ The club has contacted the LHF.

Affiliation

- ☐ The club knows about membership of the Royal Belgian Football Association and the LHF.
- ☐ The club has a clear policy on membership fees for disabled players and potential discounts.

TIP 1 The Royal Belgian Football Association has a reduced fee for disabled players. For more information, contact the head of disabled football at the ACFF.

Once you have ticked off all the items on the checklist above, it is important to think about marketing and promoting your new disabled football activities. Please let the ACFF know, so that we can add your details to our disabled football map. The list below details various things you can do to promote and market your activities.

CLUB MARKETING

- ☐ Details of your disabled football activities are included in the club's general leaflet/brochure.
- ☐ News regarding such activities features on the club's website and in its magazine and electronic newsletter.
- ☐ The website has a separate section dedicated to disabled football.
- ☐ Disabled football features in the club's annual presentation/meeting of members at the start of the season.
- ☐ Information on disabled football is communicated using the club's social media channels.
- ☐ Details of disabled football activities are presented to sponsors.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Club's own activities

- ☐ Free taster sessions
- ☐ Disabled football festival
- ☐ Additional session for disabled footballers at the club's open day
- ☐ Disabled football event
- ☐ Demonstrations and taster sessions at club activities

TIP 1 Contact the ACFF with a view to organising a disabled football festival at your club.

TIP 2 Contact the ACFF so that your promotional activity can be added to the disabled football map on its website

Cooperation with partners

- ☐ Taster sessions or a stand at the annual community sports fair
- ☐ Taster sessions at a specialist primary school during PE lessons, during lunch breaks, after school, in the context of the school's sports day, etc.
- ☐ Taster sessions at a specialist institution
- ☐ Taster sessions and other initiatives in the context of 'club sports weeks', etc.

PRODUCTION OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

- ☐ Disabled football leaflet/brochure
- ☐ Poster
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Disabled football mascot

TIP 1 If you produce a flyer or a poster, you need to mention the following:

- The location
- The time
- The target group
- The activities taking place

GENERAL ADVERTISING

Local media

- ☐ Articles in regional newspapers and advertising at town/village and regional level
- ☐ Contact with regional television and radio stations

Leaflets and posters

- ☐ Billboards in the town/village
- ☐ Sports centres
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Waiting rooms of mutual insurance associations, physiotherapists, doctors, rehabilitation centres, etc.
- ☐ Specialist schools/institutions for people with disabilities
- ☐ Interest groups

Visits to members of the target group

- ☐ BuSO-scholen, reguliere scholen.
- ☐ Zorgcentra.

It is important to assess your disabled football activities on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to operate smoothly and that a high-quality service is provided to all disabled members. As part of that assessment, the working group might wish to consider the points below. If you need help with this, you can also contact the ACFF, which will assist you in any way it can.

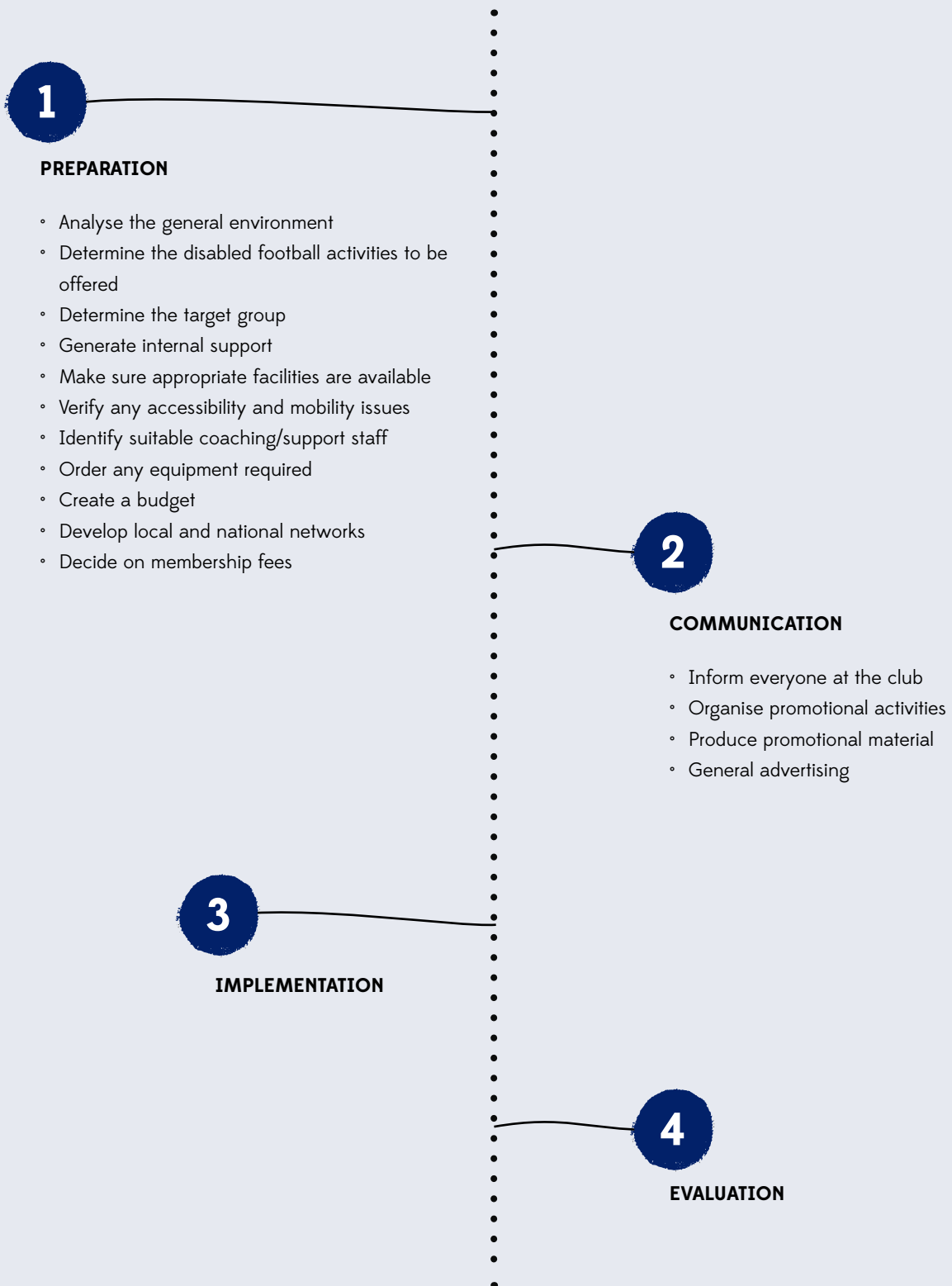
INTERIM ASSESSMENT

- ☐ Our disabled football activities have sufficient numbers of participants.
- ☐ All disabled players are members of and insured with the Royal Belgian Football Association.
- ☐ Coaches and support staff have taken steps with a view to retraining.
- ☐ A club visit by an ACFF official has been scheduled.
- ☐ The club officials responsible for disabled football meet on a regular basis.
- ☐ The disabled football coordinator can easily be contacted by parents, coaches and disabled players.
- ☐ Disabled players are sufficiently involved in the running of the club's disabled football activities.
- ☐ The club has sufficient funding for its disabled football activities.

TIP 1 Talk about your disabled football activities with parents and disabled players, discussing positive and negative aspects, suggestions for next season, etc.

TIP 2 Contact your local sports coordinator and your ACFF coordinator. They can help you to assess your disabled football activities.

TIMELINE



TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS



THE ACFF

WORKSHOPS

Clubs can send their coaches and support staff to workshops and information sessions on the subject of disabled football.

For more information, send an email to fbrence.hock@acff.be.

TRAINING FOR LEVEL 1 SPORTS INSTRUCTORS SPECIALISING IN ADAPTED PHYSICAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES

This qualification, which is recognised by ADEPS (the physical education and sports authority for the French-speaking population of Wallonia and the Brussels region), combines a core syllabus with a range of different optional modules, such as visually impaired football, a multi-sports module and a multi-disability module.

This course will give you the theoretical, methodological and technical knowledge necessary to run adapted sporting activities. It covers all types of disability – mental, mobility-related and sensory.

For more information, visit: www.handisport.be/lhf/index.asp?M=393&lang=2

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

If your club would like individual support with the launch of its disabled football activities, email fbrence.hock@acff.be to set up a meeting.

The ACFF supports its clubs in a variety of ways:

- Assisting with the various different stages involved in establishing a disabled football section
- Visiting to the club with a view to providing guidance and advice
- Helping with the organisation of disabled football events (football festivals, tournaments, events raising awareness of disabilities and disabled football, etc.)

NOTABLE DISABLED FOOTBALL INITIATIVES



THE LHF

The LHF is the only sports association recognised by ADEPS when it comes to high-level disabled sport. It spans more than 1,300 athletes, 50 clubs and 30 different sports. However, in addition to competitive and high-level sport, it also covers leisure activities.

If you wish to establish a disabled football section, all you need to do in order to register your club with the LHF and benefit from its support and expertise is contact your sports federation or the LHF itself.

If you require assistance establishing your disabled football section, the LHF can help you in the following three ways:

- Checklist: This document will help your club to assess its options when it comes to establishing a disabled football section. It can be requested from the LHF or found here: www.handisportfriendly.be
- Site visit: LHF officials will, on request, come and advise you on the approach being adopted.
- Day-to-day assistance: The LHF will provide both administrative and technical support on request.

Integration is a key priority for the LHF, which explains why it subsidises clubs that establish disabled football sections. The subsidy, which is capped at €1,250, is calculated on the basis of the extent of the disabled football activities being offered. A subsidy is also granted by ADEPS on the basis of the number of hours of training, the qualifications of coaching/ support staff and travel expenses. Moreover, where clubs are members of the LHF, ADEPS provides financial support to help them (i) purchase sports equipment (contributing 90% of the cost in the case of specialist disabled sports equipment) and (ii) organise sports development programmes, activities promoting sport, certain sporting activities aimed at the population as a whole and sports camps. The LHF provides its clubs with tax certificates when it makes donations.

In addition to financial support, the LHF also lends its clubs specialist disabled sports equipment (such as inflatable five-a-side facilities) free of charge.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS BELGIUM

PLAY UNIFIED

In 2016, Special Olympics Belgium, which organises activities for people with learning disabilities, launched its Play Unified campaign, encouraging clubs to become 'Play Unified clubs'. It is good to see disabled teams being fully integrated into the operations of non-disabled clubs, but clubs can go even further by allowing players with and without learning disabilities to train and play in matches together. The Play Unified campaign ties in perfectly with the Belgian football authorities' commitment to an inclusive approach and the organisational integration of disabled football. The Red Devils recently supported this campaign by taking part in a special 'unified match'.

Is your club committed to offering inclusive disabled football activities? If so, go to the website www.playunified.be and ask to be labelled a Play Unified club.

UNIFIED FOOTBALL

A club that is committed to unified football will go the extra mile to foster the integration of people with a disability. Scientific research shows that offering these kinds of sporting activity helps to support inclusion.

In practice, unified football means that players with and without disabilities train together and play in matches together. There are already a number of certified Play Unified clubs out there organising unified football tournaments.

Special Olympics has developed a dedicated concept based on three possible models: the 'unified sports competitive model', the 'unified sports player development model' and the 'unified sports recreation model'. All three models seek to foster social inclusion, but they differ in terms of their structure and the way that they function. In this video, Special Olympics explains the various models. Additional information and documentation can be found on the Special Olympics' website.



FÉMA

For more than 15 years now, FéMA has been recognised by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation as a sports association fostering the integration of disabled people through recreational sport. It organises adapted sporting activities on a daily basis for disabled people living in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, covering a number of different sports and catering for a range of disabilities. It currently spans more than 180 sports clubs and more than 5,000 members. It runs competitions, taster sessions, more advanced sessions and sports camps across a range of different sports. FéMA also organises specialist training for adapted sport with a view to furthering the professional development of coaching/support staff. If sports clubs become members of FéMA, they gain access to ADEPS subsidies (which help with the cost of purchasing sports equipment, organising sports camps, etc.), as well as an annual subsidy supporting the organisation of disabled sports activities.

A WORD OF THANKS

The Belgian football authorities would like to thank the various disabled sports organisations that have provided information, advice and tips for this disabled football guide. We are particularly grateful to Parantee, the LHF, G-sport Vlaanderen, S-Sport // Recreas and Special Olympics Belgium. We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with these key partners in the area of disabled football.

CONTACT DETAILS

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DISABLED FOOTBALL IN WALLONIA/BRUSSELS

ACFF

Avenue Houba de Strooper 145

1020 Brussels

handifoot@acff.be

Responsibilities: support for clubs in Wallonia and Brussels; organisation of local disabled football festivals and workshops



DISABLED FOOTBALL AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Royal Belgian Football Association

Avenue Houba de Strooper 145

1020 Brussels

an.de.kock@footbel.com

Responsibilities: national disabled football teams; overall coordination of disabled football project as part of UEFA's HatTrick programme; Football Kick-Off event



DISABLED FOOTBALL IN FLANDERS

Football Flanders

Avenue Houba de Strooper 145

1020 Brussels

g-voetbal@voetbalvlaanderen.be

Responsibilities: support for Flemish clubs; organisation of local disabled football festivals and workshops; content for disabled football coaching course

DISABLED FOOTBALL AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

- **European Amputee Football Federation (EAFF)**
www.facebook.com/EuroAMP • office@amputeefootball.eu
- **European Deaf Sports Organisation (EDSO)**
<https://www.edso.eu> • info@edso.eu
- **European Powerchair Football Federation (EPFA)**
<http://europeanpfa.com> • scommunication@europeanpfa.com
- **International Federation of CP Football (IFCPF)**
<https://www.ifcpf.com> • info@ifcpf.com
- **International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA)**
<http://www.ibsasport.org> • football.eurdev@ibasasport.org
- **Special Olympics Europe Eurasia (SOEE)**
<http://www.specialolympics.org/region-europe-eurasia.aspx> • MKrogulec@specialolympics.org
- **Frame Football - Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA)**
<http://cpisra.org/sport/frame-football-2> • info@cpisra.org

FURTHER READING

- www.handisport.be: the LHF's website; more information on disabled sport in general
- www.playunified.be/en: more information on the Special Olympics' Play Unified concept
- www.sclera.be: simple icons facilitating communication (e.g. when communicating with children with autism or a learning disability)
- <http://handisportfriendly.be/accueil>
- www.sportadapte.be

REFERENCES

- www.inas.org
- www.ampfootballbelgium.com
- <http://europeanpfa.com>
- www.deafdevils.be
- www.handisport.be
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- Parantee vzw. Plan à étapes avec checkliste.
- Vlaamse Hockey Liga/Ligue Francophone de Hockey. Personne hors-jeu! Plan à étapes hockey handisport.
- Special Olympics (2016). Coach Guide for Special Olympics Unified Sports: Creating a Unified Sports Team – Basketball.



RESPECT