



T.E.A.M.

Together Everyone
Achieves More



Bristol City; Bristol Rovers;
Cardiff City; Cheltenham Town;
Exeter City; Forest Green Rovers;
Newport County; Plymouth Argyle;
Swansea City; Swindon Town;
Torquay United & Yeovil Town



SWDFEF Newsletter

August 2019

Sharing experiences to improve disabled
access and services for disabled fans

South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum

Yeovil Town DSA

'Players of the Season' Awards for Season 2018-2019

At the end of the final home game of the season, after a 0 - 0 Draw against Carlisle, on Saturday 04 May, the player's awards were made on the pitch.



Goalkeeper Nathan Baxter being presented with his DSA 'Player of the Season' award by DSA Committee member Jethro Hill



Defender Tom James being presented with his DSA Runner Up 'Player of the Season' award by DSA member Mary Holt

Give us your questions

Plymouth Argyle DSA have suggested that, as an enhancement to our annual Forums, anyone who has a subject that they would welcome input and comments from other clubs, in between Forums, please email them to me at d.g.munn@btinternet.com and I will circulate them. Once ALL replies are received (no more than two weeks after I have raised the question), I will send all input and comments to every club. Thanks.

Or you can use facebook page : - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DFSAT>

Swansea City DSA
The DSA “Unsung Hero” award
2018/19

Each year, the DSA Committee award somebody who goes out of their way to help the DSA, with an “Unsung Hero” award. This year’s winner was DENISE RUFFELL, who is a Ticket Office Supervisor at the Liberty Stadium. Den has always been very supportive of the DSA, and we feel this recognition is well deserved.



Denise was presented with her award at the March Social Evening, and here she is with those Committee Members who were present at that event. Well done, Denise, and thank you.

Exeter City DSA
Most Improved Player of the Year
2018/19

The winner of the ECDSA “Most Improved Player of the Year” 2018/19 as voted for by our members is:

Matt Jay



Congratulations from everyone here at ECDSA, the award is well deserved.

The award was presented to Matt by our trophy sponsor and ex-committee member Steve Gazzard, at the club’s End of Season Ball. Thanks again Steve for sponsoring the award on behalf of us all.



Promotions & Relegations in our region for season 2018-2019

As previously mentioned in our last newsletter, the probable became fact, when Yeovil Town were relegated and Torquay United were promoted, both to the Vanarama National league. This now makes it the only local derby for both teams.

Two clubs changed leagues in our region, Cardiff City were relegated to the Championship and Plymouth Argyle, who were relegated from League 1 to League 2, having a minuscule minus three (-3) worse goal difference than AFC Wimbledon.

2019 SWDFEF Exeter City FC Forum Date Announcement



The 2019 South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum

will be held at Exeter City FC

on Thursday 17th October 2019 at 1:30pm

**For further information or application,
please contact: d.g.munn@btinternet.com**

Invites to the Forum will be sent out on 05 September

**Together we need
to continue to
SPEAK, LOOK AT &
LISTEN with each
other**



**Not close our
MOUTH, EYES &
EARS to each
other**



T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More

LPF's DSA New Season Guide for Season 2019-2020

The 'DSA New Season Guide' is a PDF advice guide on how DSA's can kick off the new season by using the positive energy that comes with that first game. Liam can email or send a printed copy, on request.

Inside the PDF, you will see segments on:

- Attracting New Members
- Social Media
- Weeks Of Action
- Season Review
- Away Days
- & more!



Liam will be happy to talk to any DSA members about any of the content inside this PDF. He can be contacted on liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk.

This may be of interest to someone

A friend of mine has two tickets in a corporate box for the Real Madrid v Barcelona game on Sunday 27 October 2019. He paid £600 each including flights but didn't realise when he bought them months ago that it was going to be the same day as his wedding! If you are interested, he is looking for someone to take his place.

It's at Yeovil Registry Office at 2 pm. The bride's name is Shirley - she is 5'8", about 10 stone, auburn hair and own teeth, has a good job and is a really good cook. Contact 01234 789832.

Yeovil Town DSA



Soccer Sight commentary at Huish Park

Owing to resignations, changes and developments outside our control, after 12 seasons of continuous service, we regret to state that our 'Soccer Sight' match day commentary for the Blind and visually impaired supporter has now been terminated. We apologise to our listeners for this inconvenience. Match commentary can still be heard using the BBC Somerset Radio Broadcast on 95.5 FM, 1566 AM, on digital radio, online and on the BBC Sounds app.

Level Playing Field (LPF)

The football season is underway and like clubs from up and down the country, we've been working hard all summer to ensure the coming season is one the best yet for all disabled supporters.

So, what have we been working towards ahead of the new season?

Weeks of Action 2020

This season's 'Weeks of Action' will take place between 29 February and 15 March, where we aim to celebrate the positive initiatives undertaken by clubs, sporting venues, and their governing bodies in partnership with disabled sports fans and disabled supporters' associations.

What are the Level Playing Field Weeks of Action?

LPF's Weeks of Action were established in 2005 to help highlight the positive initiatives undertaken by clubs, sporting venues and their governing bodies in partnership with disabled sports fans and disabled supporters associations (DSAs).

The campaign, now an established date on the sports calendar, is a great opportunity for clubs to organise and host matchday and non-matchday events and activities to show their commitment to access and inclusion for disabled spectators.

DSA campaign packs will be out by the end of August.

Level Playing Field DSA membership 2019/20

Why should your DSA be a Level Playing Field Member?

- It's FREE (donations welcome)
- Receive quarterly newsletter updates
- Opportunity to network with other disabled fans, fan groups and disability/sports organisations at our regional and national forums.
- Invitation to take part in LPF events, such as our annual Weeks of Action. A national event that could bring about local or national media attention to your DSA and Club.

Level Playing Field (LPF) - continued

- Invites to regional DSA Governance Training
- Plus lots more benefits!

We want to hear from YOU, the fans. Level Playing Field also offers a Fan Membership, which is FREE to join too, it's the best way to keep up to date with our latest work and developments as we campaign for Access For All.

For more information on either the DSA or Fan Membership schemes, contact ben@levelplayingfield.org.uk for details.

Discrimination in Sport Debate

Level Playing Field Chair, Tony Taylor, provides a statement in response to the parliamentary debate that took place on Wednesday 12th June.

Tony Taylor, Chair of Level Playing Field said:

“Level Playing Field was interested to read the Parliamentary debate held on Wednesday 12th June on Discrimination in Sport.

It is important that everyone participating in, and attending sport, at any level can do so without being subjected to ugly abuse and discrimination.

Yesterday's debate in Parliament helped to raise the topic of unacceptable discrimination faced by sportsmen and women but we see it as an oversight that spectators were not included. We know from police figures and disabled fans contacting us that disability abuse is on the rise.

Furthermore, once again even at government level, we are faced with a hierarchy of protected characteristics under the Equality Act; racism, homophobia, antisemitism and sexism. In 2010 the Equality Act was passed to protect nine minority groups and that included disability, the largest minority group in any population, and so we ask the press and government alike to stop prioritising certain groups.

Level Playing Field asks anyone witnessing disability abuse at a sports event to report it. We provide support and advice and work closely with clubs and governing bodies to help stamp it out”.

N.B.

This article was submitted by Ben Southby - LPF's recently appointed Media & Communications Officer.- Mobile 07973 861983

Plymouth Argyle DSA (PADSA)

Stephen Helley - Chair of PADSA on s.helley@icloud.com advised that on 01 August, his wife Mary underwent brain surgery and apologises that he is unable to supply an article for this newsletter. The operation went well and our thoughts are with them both during her long period of recovery.

Newport County DSA

At Newport County we are going through a transitional phase with regards to responsibility and support around disabled supporters and accessibility. Colin Faulkner stood down as DSA Chair at the end of last season due to his election to a Club Director from Supporters Trust Members; his wife Claire took the role up but due to health issues for both Claire and the majority of the remaining committee they have been unable to move forward as they had hoped. Colin took a lot of the responsibilities to the club as a Voluntary DAO but other responsibilities have left him struggling to manage time between the various roles. As the Director responsible to the EFL for Equality and Diversity he has also had to look at other areas of the club and whilst keeping up to date he has not been able to be as active with forums and updates as he'd liked.

This season the SLO role has been fulfilled by Ben Jones who is now the first point of call for all matchday requirements and issues including accessibility. Colin is supporting Ben as he gets used to the role and working with him to improve process, policy and meeting needs – if you need to reach Ben you can do on FanFeedback@newport-county.co.uk and he will assist you on matchday queries. Colin can now be reached on Equality@newport-county.co.uk for anything around awareness campaigns, LPF Weeks of Action and SWDFEF business for the club.

The DSA are looking to recruit some additional Committee Members supported by Colin and will probably be looking for a new Chair to drive this forward. We hope to arrange a meeting soon so the DSA can get back to being the driving force in supporting the club in this area. Whilst their social media remains live there is no email address at present so if you do need to reach them please use the Equality email address above and the message will be passed on.

Hopefully when the next newsletter is due there will be some positive updates from the DSA along with updated contact details.

Colin Faulkner (Newport County Equality & Diversity Director)

Yeovil Town DSA



Yeovil Town F C say “Thank you to the volunteers from the DSA for refurbishing the disabled bays at Huish Park”.

TEAM WORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



Swansea City DSA

Our manager, Graham Potter, has left the club for pastures new, but we are delighted to welcome Steve Cooper to Swansea. The DSA wish Steve a fantastic time at Swansea, and are looking forward to the new season.

At the Swans FC end of season awards, Matt Grimes was voted as the Supporters' Player of the Year and has this season been given the captains' armband by head coach, Steve Cooper. Llongyfarchiadau Matt.

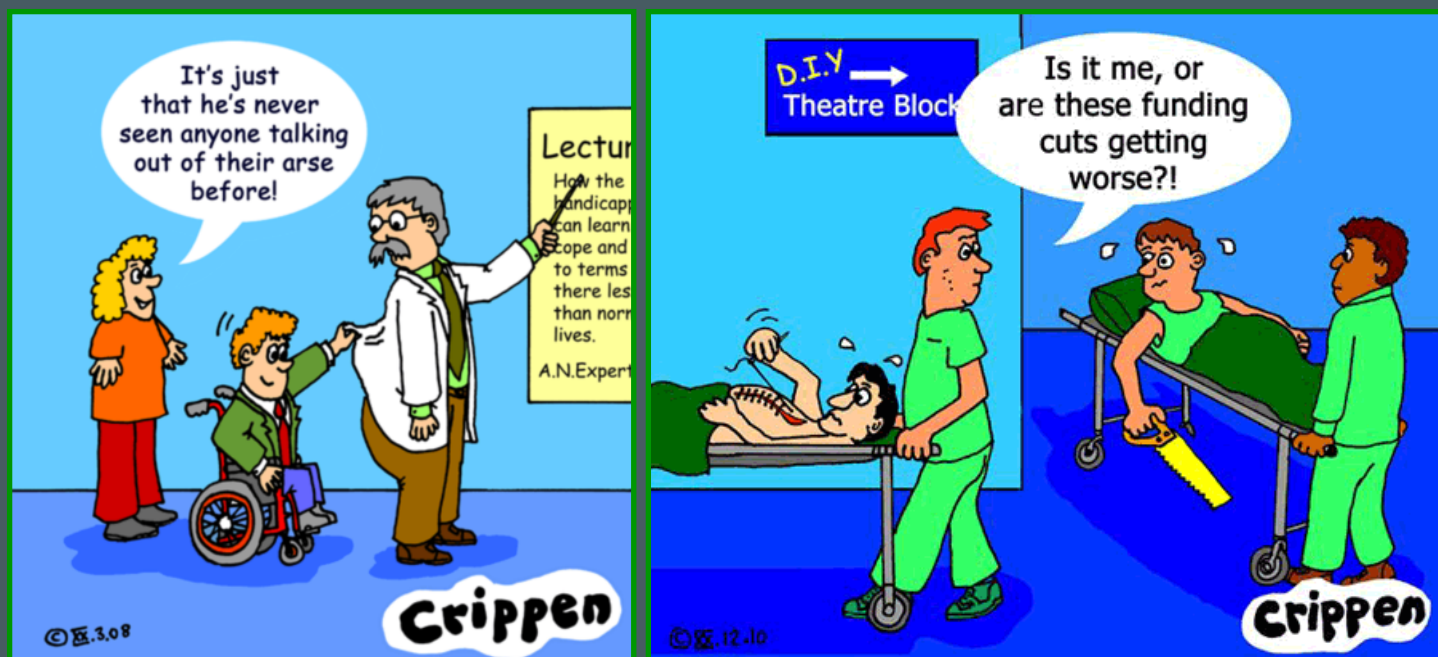
Our new DSA committee has been formed for the 2019/2020 season. Our chair is Andrew Brayley, Vice chair Michelle Preece, Secretary Cath Dyer, and Treasurer Malcolm Fearn. We can be contacted on secswandsa@gmail.com

The DSA suggested that the club try a quiet hour in the club shop. This happened on Thursday 12th July, and following this, the club will now be doing a "quiet hour" between 9 and 10am on the first Saturday of the month.

The club and DSA have been in discussions re a sensory room for over 2 years, and we are very pleased to announce that during our pre season friendly home game a trial was held which went fantastically well. The bubble tube, fibre optic lights, music. projector and bean bags were a huge success. A consultation event is to be held in the next few weeks and we hope to have more news about the sensory room in due course.
Cath Dyer (Swansea DSA Secretary).



Swansea City supporter Claire Dyer enjoying the new sensory room, with the Swan's Disability Liaison Officer Mark Phillips



Exeter City DSA

ECDSA held their AGM on Tuesday 30th July which was well attended and 4 new members were voted onto the committee for the 2019/20 season after a volunteer search over the close season.

Roles for all committee members will be decided at their first committee meeting of the new season to be held on Tuesday 27th August.

Summary for the DSA is as follows:

- **Dugout issue:** The new dugouts were put in front of the Main Stand which made visibility of the game for users of accessible areas 2 and 3 very difficult. The positioning of the dugouts severely restricted the view of one half of the pitch and made it impossible to enjoy the match. With redevelopments complete these two areas are now unavailable on match days as the club have stopped selling tickets for these areas on the clubs Disability Liaison Officers advice.
- **Bucket collection:** The football club again kindly gave the DSA the opportunity to have a bucket collection which was held on Sat 1st September at the Lincoln City match. The collection raised £260.12
- **ECFC Accessibility booklet:** A new accessibility booklet has been put together which includes a breakdown of the Accessible facilities at the club plus the Disability and Assistance dogs Policies. The DSA paid to have 150 copies printed and copies are available from the club shop. The ECDSA Chairman Nick Saunders and David Jones (DSA Vice-chair) were joined by Nicky Baker from Level Playing Field at the Tranmere Rovers match on 2nd March to undertake a launch of the new booklet, which coincided with Level Playing Fields 'weeks of action' campaign 2018.

Exeter City DSA (continued)

- **Re-development:** A big thank you to the football club for taking onboard all the DSA's concerns and their understanding of the needs of those with disabilities. The club now have 41 (57 if needed) wheelchair spaces for home supporters, up from 34 spaces; 8 wheelchair spaces for away supporters, up from 3 spaces. A Changing places room equipped with a height-adjustable table, portable hoist and privacy screen provided by the DSA. Easy access to the new stand from the Stadium Way accessible entrance and a new perimeter walkway to the new stand, avoiding the large slope in St James Road, to the back of the stand from Well Street.
- **End of seat hand rails:** To help with accessibility and safety, both the IP Office Stand and the new Stagecoach Adam Stansfield Stand have been fitted with new and improved end of seat hand rails. Installation of hand rails to all of the IP Office stand was made possible by donations from supporter groups including ECDSA.
- **Christmas draw:** Draw took place on 12th December at the Park and was attended by City player & ECDSA President - Lee Holmes, together with Russell Lemon from Exeter Nissan who helped to draw the lucky winning tickets. All in all, there were 31 prizes up for grabs with all prizes kindly being donated by Exeter Nissan, GreenMyBusiness, Signs Express, Mi Space, Subway of Sidwell Street, Mr Herniman, Hartley's Certified Accountants, Exeter City FC, Exeter City Directors and all our committee members. The draw raised over £1,700.
- **Safety Netting:** This was brought up at the last AGM. Safety netting was put up on the front of the front wheelchair areas in the Big Bank Stand. The nets were put up while the players were taking shooting practice and taken down for kick off.
- **Portable Induction Loop:** This was the first item the DSA bought the football club back in 2007. The system was not charging properly, so it was decided to purchase a new unit, which is hoped last as long as the old one did.
- **Membership reach milestone:** The DSA hope for many years was for their membership would reach the 100 mark and this was finally archived with the DSA finishing the season with a fantastic 142 members after a recruitment drive. The hard work has already started to build on this and can only happen with a hard-working committee who are dedicated and active.

Nick Saunders (ECDSA Chairman & DLO)

Level Playing Field (LPF)

Level Playing Field is very excited to announce that on Monday 4th November we will be hosting our first-ever National Forum to be held at Stadium MK, Milton Keynes.

Unlike our regional forums, we invite all members of the sporting community to attend and be part of a day of activity, discussion and action.

The forum will provide an opportunity for disabled fans, Disabled Supporters Associations (DSAs) and other interested parties to discuss all aspects of access and inclusion.

This National Forum is an opportunity to see what's going on across the country and to build a network and share best practice.

A full itinerary and guest speaker list is being drafted and will be shared over the coming weeks but to register your interest in attending, please email Liam Bird at liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk

The full article can be read at: -

<https://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/news-item/level-playing-field-national-forum/>



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