

## **Sharp Shooter Ronnie**

This summer between 20 July - 2 August, The FA will host the 2008 European Learning Disability Championship in the North West of England, with the final at Oldham Athletics' Boundary Park.

The European Championships is the most recent addition to Logistique's growing portfolio of international, national, regional and local events and earlier today the event got underway with England's Learning Disability team captain Ronnie Watson who was in the unusual position of meeting two new Managers.

First of all he met his new national boss Alan Gillett, before falling under the wing of Oldham Athletic Manager John Sheridan and his Assistant Tommy Wright at the Latics' training ground.

The League One side will host three games of the 2008 INAS-FID European Championship this summer and Ronnie was given the chance to train alongside the likes of Mark Crossley and Lee Hughes as part of the first team squad, in an attempt to find a local club.

After spending the majority of his 26 years in London, Ronnie recently moved to Cheshire with his wife and one year old son, and is keen to get himself ready for 20 July and England's first game.

"Today was excellent" Ronnie told TheFA.com and a group of assembled journalists. "John Sheridan and the players invited me into their club and they couldn't have made me any more welcome.

"I don't think I did myself any harm and there are hopefully a couple of options for me to explore now after today, to get myself fit and sharp for July."

After netting a couple of beauties in training, including a bullet diving header, the former Spurs trainee explained how he was at Wembley with his younger brother on Sunday to see Juande Ramos's side defeat Chelsea.

"Lifting a trophy in front of your own fans must be a fantastic buzz.

"This England side have played tournaments in Japan, Germany, Portugal and Sweden, but we've only played a couple of games in this country, so the tournament in July is a great chance to showcase what we can do."

Ronnie admits that people often skirt around the term 'Learning Disability' and described how at primary school he struggled with dyslexia.

"There is a stigma attached to having a learning disability and some players in the past turned down the chance to play, as they worried people thought there must be 'something wrong' with them" he said.

"I found reading and writing at school difficult but when I get on the pitch, the referee doesn't come up and ask me to spell a ten letter word; it's just all about playing the game. When I was at Spurs, I didn't turn professional because my disability held me back, it was because the Coaches thought I wasn't good enough.

"I know the experiences I've had - like winning the World Cup in front of over 25,000 fans in Yokohama in 2002 - wouldn't have happened without this team and it really would be a dream

to win the Euro's this summer in front of friends, family and hopefully football fans who would like to cheer an England team on."

The FA now fund seven national disability sides, and as part of the long term development of the sport, have committed to hosting a major tournament once a year, leading up to the 2012 Olympics.

In September, players from the England Cerebral Palsy and Blind squads will represent Great Britain in the Paralympics in Beijing.

"The FA sometimes get a lot of stick" said Ronnie "but over the last five years, they've really invested in providing opportunities for many disabled people to play or get involved in the game.

"Sport is just a game, and you're supposed to enjoy it. If you're disabled, try and put it to the back of your mind and just try and get involved, even if just to meet new people.

"I didn't give up, and this summer I'll be captaining my team in a European Championship in my own country - not many people can say they've done that."

Tournament Director Jon Dutton said "This is the second major disability football event that we have managed for The FA following the hugely successful Partially Sighted World Championships held in 2004. We are very proud to have been selected by The FA to help them deliver what will hopefully be a quality event that will raise the profile of both Learning Disabilities and other impairments across the country".

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## **England coming to Tameside stadium**

The 2008 European Learning Disability football championship in partnership with The Regard Partnership, kicks off in Greater Manchester on 20 July.

On Sunday 27 April at Curzon Ashton FC (1pm kick-off), England will take on reigning European champions Holland in a friendly international, and the following day, the club will host the Euro 2008 draw, to be made by a current England international and The FA's Sir Trevor Brooking.

England's squad contains a high number of semi-pro players and are captained by former Spurs trainee Ronnie Watson who recently had a day's training with Oldham Athletic's first team. Ronnie spent six years with the North London side, playing alongside Ledley King, Peter Crouch and Jonny Jackson.

Goals meanwhile will be expected from the likes of Bertie Brayley. Brayley this season has been playing for Chelmsford City who have been crowned champions of the Ryman Premier League. Nine years ago in 1999, Bertie was scoring in the FA Youth Cup Final in the same side as Joe Cole and Michael Carrick in a 9-0 aggregate win over Coventry City, who featured Chris Kirkland in their goal.

Head Coach Alan Gillett has worked with the likes of Dave Bassett, Dario Gradi and Peter Shilton in a long coaching career which has also seen him manage in Japan's J-League, and manage the national sides of Malawi and The Solomon Islands.

The European Championship draw on Monday 28 April will take place at Curzon Ashton FC at 2.30pm, as the eight competing nations find out their fate.

Children from local special schools from across Greater Manchester will be playing after the draw, Sir Trevor and the England international on hand to pass on their expertise, as part of the tournament's Legacy programme.

In the build-up to the tournament, a roadshow organised by Manchester FA and Cheshire FA [supported by The Regard Partnership, Reside Housing Association and Mencap] will run for three weeks across mainstream and special schools, with player appearances, coaching sessions and education workshops all helping to raise awareness of the European Championship.

### **England Squad:**

Kevin Ginever, Junior Bilal (AFC Wimbledon), George Chukwuma, James Morris, Grant Smith, Ronnie Watson, Liam Francis, Dean Earle, Danny Cole, Simon Deane (London Colney), Royce Greenidge (Charlton Athletic DFC), Anton Pack (Charlton Athletic DFC), Lele Bajada (Aveley), Matthew Edwards, Frank Curley (AFC Wimbledon), Bertie Brayley (Chelmsford), Tony Boot (Billercay Town), Rudi Hall

### **Media Notes:**

Admission to England's friendly against Holland at Curzon Ashton FC is free.

The 2008 European Learning Disability championship takes place between 20 July and 2 August.

The opening game of the championship featuring England will be at Sport City on Sunday 20 July (3pm kick-off), with the Final at Oldham Athletic kicking off at 3pm on Saturday 2 August.

Games will also be played at Hyde United, Curzon Ashton FC, Stalybridge Celtic and Springhill (Rochdale).

For further information and to attend the match and/or draw later this month, please contact:  
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### **Logistique's event portfolio continues to expand**

Logistique are preparing for a busy summer of events with the team managing a European Championships, 2 National Competitions and assisting in the staging of the largest event of its kind in the Country.

Everything kicks off in April with a friendly international for players with a Learning Disability to be held at Curzon Ashton on April 27th. This match is a pre cursor to the European Championships which will be held in July and August across Greater Manchester.

Logistique have been selected to event manage the tournament following the successful staging of similar disability events over the past few years.

The European Championship is the largest disability football event to be staged in England and will see 8 countries competing for the right to be crowned champions.

The friendly in April will see hosts (England) against holders (Holland) and promises to be a good warm up ahead of the main event.

In June Logistique will be busy delivering 9 regional finals of The FA UMBRO Fives across the country. Logistique have been re appointed in a role as Tournament Directors following the success of last year's event. The main prize for the men's and women's teams is to qualify to play at Wembley later in the year, again an event that will be managed by Logistique.

Also in June Logistique will be helping Manchester FA, Salford Community Leisure & Lower Kersal & Charlestown NDC stage the annual Mini Soccer Festival which has grown from a small local event into one of national significance.

In July Logistique will be event managing the National Futsal finals at EIS in Sheffield. This is the first time that Logistique have been asked by The FA to help with the prestigious event.

Logistique Managing Director, Jon Dutton said "it promises to be a busy summer for the team but one that we are wholeheartedly looking forward to".

"To have been selected to event manage these events is fantastic in particular the Learning Disabilities European Championships which is an event that we have been involved in the planning of for some time". "As we continue to expand our event portfolio we aim to offer our clients a dedicated and professional service with attention to detail the primary aim".

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## **Dutch edge out England**

England 0-2 Holland  
Jaap van Duyn 8, Dino Cornet 42

Learning Disability International Friendly  
1.00pm, Sunday 27 April 2008  
Curzon Ashton FC

England's Learning Disability team warmed up for this year's INAS-FID European Championship with a narrow 2-0 defeat to the reigning champions Holland.

The visitors took the lead after eight minutes thanks to a brilliant piece of individual skill from Jaap van Duyn.

The skilful winger danced through the England defence before slotting the ball past the helpless Kevin Ginever from 12 yards.

Holland continued to pile on the pressure with the impressive Dino Cornet denied on at least four occasions thanks to excellent goalkeeping from Ginever, the pick of which was a fine save with his feet after the tall forward burst clear of the defence.

Alan Gillett's side had their chances to equalise in the first half with both Grant Smith and Rudi Hall shooting just wide from the edge of the box.

But despite their best efforts The Three Lions went into half-time two goals down after Cornet was rewarded for his good work minutes before the break.

The striker ended a flowing move from the Dutch with a powerful low drive from the edge of the box sending it into the bottom corner of the net.

England were much improved in the second period as they took the game to the Dutch.

Michel Lion in the Holland goal could not hold on to a blistering drive from Ricky Mandleson and Dean Earle was the quickest to react, but couldn't steer the ball home from a tight angle.

Holland's counter-attacks were good and their goalscorers also missed a great chance each to double their tally for the day, with Cornet rattling the bar midway through the second period and Van Duyn firing inches wide when through on goal.

Despite the result, it proved a great work out against a skilful side and the England performance bodes well for the upcoming tournament.

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## **Draw made for Euros**

The England Learning Disability squad will face Hungary, France and Portugal in the group stages of this summer's INAS - FID European Championships after the draw was made in Manchester on Monday afternoon.

Tournament venue, Curzon Ashton FC, hosted the draw with The FA's Director of Football Development Sir Trevor Brooking and Manchester City and England defender Micah Richards as special guests.

The competition will take place over July and August with England's campaign starting against France at Manchester SportCity on July 20.

Portugal are up next at Curzon Ashton's Tameside Stadium on July 23 with the group stage concluding against Hungary on July 26 at Boundary Park, home of Oldham Athletic.

New England Head Coach, Alan Gillett, can't wait for the tournament to begin: "I'm confident that we can do very well in the summer. If you don't think you're going to win it then there's no point in entering."

Gillett's reign began with a 2-0 friendly loss against European Championship holders Holland at Curzon Ashton on Sunday and Gillett believes the game will have given his side valuable experience ahead of the European Championships.

"The Dutch are a very skilful side and they've set a benchmark for what we must do this summer.

"Holland have an excellent disability football setup and meet for regular coaching every month. It would be great if we could do something similar in the run-up to the Championships, as we've got a great set of experts on the backroom team with the likes of Lyndon Lynch and Jeff Davis."

Sir Trevor Brooking is also confident that the European Championships will be a great success.

"I'm sure it will be a good occasion and it's brilliant to have someone like Micah Richards involved in today's draw as it gives everyone involved a massive boost," he said.

"I'm told that both Holland and Poland are strong sides so Alan Gillett will be pleased that they won't feature in our group games.

"I know what it's like to play in a tournament for your country and it's a great feeling. Hopefully, the Manchester area will get behind the England team this summer as it's a very good standard of football and will help raise the profile of the disability game."

Holland and Poland are joined in Group B by Germany and Sweden.

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## **Visions for the future**

Logistique have just finished work with three County Football Association's who have undergone a thorough root and branch review as part of a new 4 year County strategy planning process.

The new strategies set out the vision, key priorities and targets for investment into grassroots football from 1st July 2008 until 30th June 2012 and represents each County FA's contribution to the delivery of The FA National Game Strategy.

Work was undertaken with West Riding FA, Gloucestershire FA & Wiltshire FA.

The process involved a large amount of consultation with each County FA choosing to host a 'Your Game Your Say' event that gave club's; leagues, referees and the whole football family a chance to input into key priorities in their respective County FA.

The consultation distilled all the challenges into four strategic goals and three key enablers that the County FA's will address over the next four years:

### Goals

- Growth and Retention – sustaining and increasing the number of players
- Raising Standards and addressing abusive behaviour – creating a safe and positive environment
- Developing Better Players – focusing on the 5-11 age group
- Running the game effectively – leading and governing the game

### Key Enablers

- A skilled workforce – recruiting and developing a highly skilled, diverse, paid and voluntary workforce
- Improved facilities – improving the access and quality of training and playing facilities
- Marketing and PR – clear communications to everyone involved in the game

Project Manager Phil Heap said "working on three County Strategies in tandem was a real challenge but one that we have thoroughly enjoyed".

"We have worked with three very different County FA's both geographically and culturally. All three of our clients appreciated the process, the extremely challenging timescale and the fact that the strategy provided a real opportunity for a strategic review of all operating systems from both a football governance and football development perspective".

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## **2008 Salford Mini Soccer Festival a resounding success**

Budding stars from all over the north-west headed for Salford Sports Village on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June 2008, with 240 teams participating through under-7 to under-10 age groups and a separate girls-only section for under-10 and under-12 teams.

This truly unique competition concentrates solely on youth football and a fair play ethos meaning that there is no overall winner.

Fair play marks are awarded by match referees bringing football back to its routes with the main objectives being enjoyment and respecting the game and its players.

This makes for a pressure free environment in which the children can develop their football skills. Every child is a winner and goes home with a festival medal and fun-packed goodie bag.

Logistique were involved in the festival for the second year running and were responsible for the organisation of the results service, presentations, volunteers and sponsorship with the festival attracting a number of deals from both local and national companies.

Speaking about the festival, Philip Heap, Principal Consultant said: "We are pleased to support such a fantastic grass roots football extravaganza. We have been fortunate to see from close proximity the previous success of The Salford Mini Soccer Festival which has evolved from the Manchester FA Mini Soccer Festival, and we can only see it continuing to flourish".

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## **Gosforth Sports Fields Association score big!**

Gosforth Sports Fields Association has been awarded funding worth £2,300,000 to develop new facilities and become a sporting hub in its Derbyshire community.

The Association has been awarded a grant worth £1,000,000 from the Football Foundation – the UK's largest sports charity – to develop a new changing pavilion, a full-size, floodlit third generation artificial grass pitch and drainage to natural grass pitches.

The new changing pavilion will boast:

- changing rooms with shower and toilet facilities
- officials changing rooms with shower and toilet
- club room
- function room with bar
- kitchen
- office
- committee room
- male, female and wheelchair accessible toilets
- storage facilities

As well as building a new all-weather pitch, the layout of the existing grass pitches will be drained and re-configured to provide:

- three full size
- four junior
- two Mini-Soccer
- two rugby

Gosforth Fields Sports Association has also been awarded a separate Sport England grant worth £250,000 as part of the Community Investment Fund (CIF) because of their multi sport provision. A further rugby facilities grant application to the Rugby Football Union for ground maintenance totalling £50,000 was also successful. This along with a capital receipt from Derbyshire County Council worth £1,000,000 means the Association will receive a combined funding package worth £2,300,000.

This project will support the club's growth from 40 to around 70 teams. The extra changing facilities are desperately needed and the Artificial Grass Pitch will be well used, by not only Dronfield Town FC, AFC Dronfield and Dronfield Rugby Club but also other local clubs and all the primary schools in the area. The site will also be the home to well-established Rounders, Rugby League and Archery clubs giving the site a strong multi sports feel.

Stephen Brown said: "We have been delighted to have been involved in this true multi sport project. The facilities will provide a huge boost for the local community, helping more people get involved and reach their potential. Clearly this funding will go directly to the heart of community sport to revitalise popular facilities and encourage more people to take part in sport more often. Gosforth Fields Sports Association commitment to providing high-quality facilities demonstrates a demand and passion for football, rugby and multi-sport – both at these clubs, and further a field."

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## Festival of Futsal

**This weekend saw almost 100 junior teams from all over the country descend on the English Institute Of Sport for The FA UMBRO Youth Futsal Festival.**

Both boys and girls' teams from the U10, U12, U14 and U16 age groups participated against each other on Saturday and Sunday.



A fine way for young players to develop crucial ball skills, Futsal has been growing in its popularity over the last few years and this can be seen in the interest shown in the Festival this year.

With teams travelling from as far apart as Northumberland and Devon, the game's nationwide appeal is obvious and Dermot Collins, The FA's National Manager for Small Sided Football, is pleased to see the interest in the competition.

"The size of this year's festival – 96 teams – indicates a growing interest in Futsal," he said.

"The growing popularity of the game is due mostly to the fact that it is a really enjoyable game to play.

"It offers participants lots of touches of the ball, lots of shots, saves, counter-attacks and goals.

"The laws of the game allow attacking players to express themselves more freely than other more physical versions of small sided football and the low bounce Futsal ball means that many players find it easier to control and to try out their repertoire of tricks and flicks."

FC Barca's victory in the U12 girl's cup prevented a clean sweep for the Sheffield & Hallamshire Representative sides that were victorious in the U10, U14 & U16 girl's cup. The U10, U12, U14 and U16 boy's cup winners were Hull Futsal Vikings, Stocksbridge Park Steels, FC Enfield and St John Fisher High School respectively.

Speaking about the festival, Philip Heap, Principal Consultant said:

"Logistique were asked to manage this event in partnership with Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA as part of the National Cup event which we are managing in July.

The event was very challenging due to the large number of teams and the relative inexperience of the majority of players to the game of Futsal".

"Despite this the excellent venue, competitive yet good all round nature and behavior of the teams contributed to an outstanding event".

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## **100% record in Football Foundation funding applications!**

Logistique would like to congratulate the two football clubs it supported in their successful applications for funding from the Football Foundation.

Alder Sports Club has been awarded £350k to build new sports facilities that will comprise adult, youth and mini-sized football pitches and a new build four-team changing facility which will be incorporated into the existing social facilities.

Logistique has also helped Wythenshawe Town secure £560k of both Football Foundation and Sport England Community Club funding to build a new four – team changing facility which will also include education and social facilities.

The intention is that the new sports provision will facilitate the development of football in this part of Liverpool, and in particular encourage young people, especially girls, women and players with disabilities, to take part in organised sport. The project will therefore achieve many national, regional and local needs, such as increased participation in football and promotion of a healthy lifestyle for all ages and abilities; improved performance and standards; and stronger partnerships with local clubs and schools.

Commenting on these recent awards, Stephen Brown, Logistique's Managing Director, said, "We are proud to have played a part in the development of these funding applications in order to help shape and continue to foster opportunities for players to participate. The Football Foundation funding awards will drive implementation of associated action plans. These will ensure that players can "follow their own ideas and interests in their own way for their own reasons"

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## **Helvecia and Doncaster crowned champs**

Helvecia Futsal and Doncaster Rovers Belles have both become the new national FA Futsal Cup champions, Helvecia following a dramatic victory over last year's winners Ipswich Wolves on Sunday evening, while the Belles also beat last years winners Watford Ladies earlier in the afternoon.

The Final looked all set for extra time when it was still goal-less in the last few seconds, but a piece of quick thinking from Thiago Roberto Diorio won it for the London-based team of Brazilians.

After winning a line-kick, he quickly played it back to their play-making goalkeeper Elizandro Boria Lima. He looked to place a shot, but having spotted Diorio dash into the box, played a perfect pass for his team-mate to flick home from close range with approximately 0.1 seconds showing on the clock.

As soon as Wolves could kick-off again, the final buzzer sounded to leave Helvecia and their noisy bunch of supporters in ecstasy.

It had been a finely matched game over the 30 minutes of play, with both teams constantly probing and looking for the openings that could lead to the first goal.

Doncaster Rovers Belles, up against all of the odds, went on to lift The FA Futsal Women's Cup on Sunday, courtesy of a hard fought victory against Watford Ladies.

The Belles were only brought into the competition as a late replacement for the Sheffield and Hallamshire CFA last week and had never played Futsal before the weekend.

After quickly familiarising themselves with the laws of the game and taking in a few of the matches between the more established teams in the competition, they soon got to grips with Futsal but they were made to work hard for their victory before a goal from former England international Vicky Exley proved the difference.

Speaking about the National Cup, Jon Dutton, Tournament Director said:

"The event was a great challenge for Logistique as we had never been involved before. The standard of competition was high, the venue excellent and all round the participants enjoyed a good weekend of Futsal that we were proud to manage".

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