

## **Deaf Appendix**

### Classification

All players must have a hearing loss of 55% in their better ear to qualify for games specifically for deaf players.

### Safety and impairment specific considerations

When coaching deaf players, it is useful to remember the following safety considerations:

- Alert staff at the venue you are using that you have deaf people on site.
- Make sure that all of your group understand the emergency procedures.
- Try to eliminate any background noise.
- Avoid turning the lights on and off to gain attention. If it is dark, they may have an accident.
- Plastic hearing aids can be worn for practical sessions and matches. In practical sessions an adult should determine if they are safe.

### Effective communication

Communicating with players who are deaf can create challenges. Deafness is a hearing loss which makes it impossible to understand speech through hearing alone, even if a hearing aid is used. There is usually a need for other means of communication such as lip-reading or signing.

As with all players, it is beneficial to take time to get to know the player and to establish the most appropriate means of communication. If a player has residual hearing and uses a hearing aid, it is possible to communicate orally. However, the player will also need to see your mouth in order to lip-read. This will reinforce what you are saying. Other factors of which to be aware include the following:

- Ensure your face is well lit. For example if outdoors, face the sun as this will assist the player who may be lip-reading or reading signs.
- Face the player at all times when speaking. If you turn your head, they will no longer be able to read your lips.
- Do not chew, shout or cover your mouth with your hand when talking as this will prevent effective lip-reading.
- Remember lip-reading is not a precise way of communicating. Do not presume that even if an individual can lip-read they will understand every word. Much of lip-reading is intelligent guesswork.

- Ensure the coaching or competition environment is accommodating (e.g. no background noise to interfere with concentration).
- You may need to be near to attract the attention of the player (using eye contact, waving or tapping the player on the shoulder).
- Keep sentences simple and avoid unnecessary jargon. It is always useful to establish the meaning of any football specific or technical language before you start a session.
- Provide written information if relevant but do not hand out the written information to read and then continue to speak (the player will be unable to lip-read or even be aware that you are speaking). Allow the player time to read the information before the practice commences.
- Be aware that a player may be able to read your lips even if you are standing at a considerable distance and not talking to them.

If it is necessary to remove the hearing aid, for example in training or competition, it is useful to establish mutually identifiable signs or gestures before it is removed. This will also help other team-mates. You may be approached by a deaf player who is unable to communicate orally. Again, you will have to establish the most appropriate means of communication.

This may mean:

- Using an interpreter who might be a parent, friend or teacher or a fully qualified individual (the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) will be able to provide you with information relating to professional interpreters).
- Learning to sign or finger spell (RNID will again be able to advise).
- Establishing mutually identifiable signs or gestures.
- Identifying whether or not the player can lip-read.
- Using written instructions if appropriate.

Although deaf players can compete and be coached in the same situation as hearing players, they often prefer to be with other deaf players. As a coach, it is important to respect the player's choice and appreciate the strong cultural identity of some deaf footballers.

Rule adaptations

- The rules of the game are as laid down by FIFA (11 v 11 games are played).
- Players must not wear hearing aids during the game.

Competition structure

- There are deaf football clubs in England playing in non-disabled leagues at weekends.
- There are national cup competitions annually for male and female deaf players.
- There are numerous 5-a-side competitions held annually.
- There are European and World Championships every four years.
- Deaflympic games are held every four years.