



WELCOME TO WESTERN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN



We welcome you to the Western Football League. We are part of the National League System with 1 step 6 division and 1 Step 5. We encourage all our teams to be aspirational and sustainable. We have a dedicated Board of Directors with lots of experience from many aspects of the game, club people and those who continue to volunteer, ex-match officials and those who have worked professionally in the game. Please engage with us as much as you can.

John Pool

Chairman

This season we are launching an FA Initiative - The Club Programme. More information will be available at the AGM but as mentioned above its the opportunity for clubs to look at their structures, see what is right for them, the benefits and downsides. Signing up will give you expertise from the FA through a dedicated Team. We encourage all teams to be England Accredited which sets minimum standards which we would expect as a League.



ABOUT WESTERN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The Western Football League was formed in 1892. Commonly known as the Toolstation League, the League has 41 member Clubs covering Bristol, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall, parts of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

In the first half of the 20th Century the League enjoyed mixed fortunes, but for the past 60 or more years has been recognised as the strongest of the south western-based leagues. The establishment of a clearly defined pyramid system of promotion for clubs gave all member clubs a clear and achievable route to the Football League. It is recognised that the clubs who win promotion from the League have facilities in excess of the grading requirements, and in recent years the promoted clubs have established themselves well in the higher league.

Clubs in membership over the years have included the reserve teams of all of the Football League clubs in the area but with a change of rules brought in by The FA there are now none. The Western League Premier Division is at Step 5 with the First Division at Step 6.

Four seasons ago The Football Association took on the responsibility for match official appointing for all Contributory Leagues, which led to the League losing its Match Officials Officer. Then, within two years with the reorganisation of non league football, the First Division was re-designated as a Supply League in the refereeing structure, which meant that a Match Officials Officer was once again required to deal with that division.

Over the seasons the standard of play within the League enabled many referees to gain experience and to progress to higher levels, and local referees who became FIFA officials acknowledged that they were able to hone their skills within the Western League, to provide the opportunity to operate successfully on the international scene.

The Western League has led the way in attracting sponsorship and when Rothmans became involved in non league football as sponsors it was the Western League that they chose to support in the south. Since that ground breaking deal the League officers have been successful in gaining financial backing from south west based businesses. Great Mills Warehouse, then a well known DIY retail chain, became main sponsors in the early 1980's only to step away when the company was taken over. Screwfix Direct Ltd were in the early years of trading when they stepped in with the offer of a three year deal, which lasted for 11 years, again brought to an end because the company was taken over.

Sponsors, Toolstation Ltd, broke the previous record for Western League sponsorship, and probably for any league at the same level, and have been supporting the league since 2005. Their sponsorship has enabled member clubs to enjoy the benefits of increased prize money, free match balls and reduced membership fees. At the time of writing we are negotiating a new deal with a major company.

CONSTITUTION

SEASON 2024/25

The constitution of the league is provided by the FA in May, taking into consideration play-off winners, ground grading requirements and may include lateral movement of clubs moving across from other leagues at our level. We ratify this at our AGM in June (which you will be notified of) via our Company Secretary. The AGM is normally held in Bridgwater.

This is how the league will shape up for the season (Appeal dependent)

Western Football League

Step 5 - Premier Division (WLP)

- 1 AFC St Austell
- 2 Barnstaple Town
- 3 Bridgwater United
- 4 Brislington
- 5 Brixham
- 6 Buckland Athletic
- 7 Clevedon Town
- 8 Ilfracombe Town
- 9 Ivybridge Town
- 10 Nailsea & Tickenham
- 11 Oldland Abbotonians
- 12 Paulton Rovers
- 13 Portishead Town
- 14 Saltash United
- 15 Shepton Mallet
- 16 St Blazey
- 17 Street
- 18 Torpoint Athletic
- 19 Wellington
- 20 Welton Rovers

Western Football League

Step 6 - Premier Division (WL1)

- 1 AEK Boco
- 2 Avonmouth
- 3 Bitton
- 4 Bradford Town
- 5 Bristol Telephones
- 6 Cadbury Heath
- 7 Calne Town
- 8 Cheddar
- 9 Cribbs FC Reserves
- 10 Devizes Town
- 11 Gillingham Town
- 12 Hallen
- 13 Hengrove Athletic
- 14 Keynsham Town
- 15 Longwell Green Sports
- 16 Mendip Broadwalk
- 17 Odd Down (Bath)
- 18 Radstock Town
- 19 Shirehampton
- 20 Sturminster Newton United
- 21 Warminster Town
- 22 Wells City

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Photo courtesy of official League Photographer John Newport

Board of Directors and League Officers Season 2023/24



Back Row LR Ian Nockolds (Communications), Brian Rose (Club Rep), Dave Brammer (Finance), Colin Goodland (Registrations), Steve Loxton (Club Rep), Malcolm Price (Co. Secretary)

Front Row LR Jen Gregory (Secretary), Martin Painter (Club Rep), George McCaffery (Fixtures), Richard Palette (Vice Chair), B Beer (President), John Pool (Chair), Dave Wilkinson (Club Rep), Sue Merrill (Events), Allan Skuse (Ground grading) (Ian Purchase not in attendance)

Name	Position	Email	Phone
John Pool	Chairman	chair@westernleague.co.uk	07815 197734
Richard Palette	Vice Chair	vicechair@westernleague.co.uk	07721 679681
Jen Gregory	Secretary	secretary@westernleague.co.uk	07856 901022
George McCaffery	Fixtures Secretary	fixtures@westernleague.co.uk	07803 415655
Dave Brammer	Finance Director	finance@westernleague.co.uk	07984 666795
Ian Purchase	<u>South West Pool</u> Match Officials	refappointmentswp@gmail.com	07920 0399335
Colin Goodland	Registrations	registrations@westernleague.co.uk	07736 947867
Ian Nockolds	Communications	Communications@westernleague.co.uk	07817 484955

We have given you a starting point of some key members for any initial queries (listed above). You will see and hear from other members as time progresses.

LEAGUE INFO



RESPECT is a value we hold in high esteem. Its crucial to running the league whether that on match days with Match Officials, opposition or league officials for admin processes. We will not tolerate abuse of league officials in any communications. League officials are volunteers too, some have jobs so please be patient as responses may not be immediate.

COMMUNICATION is essential - liaise with opposition /Match officials when wet weather prevails. Ask questions of us, keep everyone in the loop. If you have a problem, don't understand or just feel a little lost then contact us - we are here to help. That doesn't mean you always get the answer you want but hopefully a mutual understanding!

ENGLAND ACCREDITED - all clubs should hold this certification and we will give you a time frame and support to achieve this. If you want more information on this speak to your County FA.

GROUND GRADING is via an FA produced report and you will provided with log on's to a website called Stadium Power to review and update aspects of improvements at your ground.

CLUB PROGRAMME - you will hear more about this FA initiative at the AGM

SAFEGUARDING - You should refer to your County FA for safeguarding advice at the current time.

LEAGUE CHARITY - We support the various MIND charities based in the South West. This may include bucket collections at your ground.

CHAPLAINCY - Building on our work to promote positive mental wellbeing across our Clubs, the Western League have started a partnership with Nigel Manges, the Pastoral Support Lead in the South West for Sports Chaplaincy UK. Nigel was previously Club Chaplain to Sheffield Utd and was a part of Sheffield Sports Chaplaincy. Whilst Sports Chaplaincy UK is a Christian charity, its chaplains support individuals of all faiths or none. If your Club would like support in the areas of pastoral and spiritual care then please contact Nigel at nigel@swbaptists.org.uk

Diary Dates

AGM 2024 - 5th June 2024 7.15 at Canalside Bridgwater
League Start Date 27th July
Further dates FA Vase / Cup, LPC Final & Convention TBA

LEAGUE RULES IN BRIEF

This is an aide memoire to some of the common regulations and requirements of the league. It is no way replaces the rules as published in the handbook and you should refer to this for a full explanation.

PRE- SEASON		
AGM	Mandatory attendance	
AFFILIATION	Check you have changed league information on WGS affiliation Les Phillips Cup mandatory entry	
LEAGUE INFO FORM	Annual task & will form part of the handbook – please promptly complete Updates to key personnel provided during season to General Secretary	
LOG ON	Do you have access to: WGS / Club Portal Full-time – this will be provided later on by Gen. Secretary Stadium Power – For ground grading review and updates MOAS	
REGISTRATIONS	16 players sign on by 14 days prior to scheduled KO date Normally registrations are open up to 4 hours before a game Registration Fees (you will be invoiced) Deadline for season 5pm on 4 th Thursday in March Transfer and De-regisration fees (you will be invoiced) Cut off of 50 players – you can de-register (invoiced) Duplicate players – contact CFA Technical problems not solved by league contact playerstatus.thefa.com .	
SAFEGUARDING	All Committee members completed safeguarding for committee members course Committee Safeguarding Technical area personnel have an FA DBS including physio	
PRE-MATCH	Contact Match officials and opposition 5 days prior to match with game info 6 complimentary tickets to be provided to opposition (names on gate) Meet and greet Match officials and provide refreshments (60 mins prior to KO) Entrance fees minimum charge £5.00 Organise programme (online and/or printed version) Exchange Teamsheets 45 minutes before Properly record all gate receipts	
DURING MATCH	Use League provided footballs Only 2 technical area standing up at any one time Electronic Subs Boards provided by league and used Consider stewarding for large gate games Half-time hospitality for travelling club & league officials	
POST MATCH	SMS result to be texted – Noted as Team Secretary in WGS if unsuccessful text 07856 901022 Pay Match Officials £70 Ref £40 AR Update full-time with teamsheet info, attendance, mark hospitality within 3 days of game Complete MOAS information and mark referee within 3 days of game Send teamsheet to secretary@westernleague.co.uk within 3 days of game	
POSTPONEMENTS	Liaise with Referee and opposition regarding leaving/call off times. Ref will indicate how he wants inspection completed ie via facetime or local referee If called off contact Opposition, Match Officials, Fixtures Secretary, Ref Appointments Secretary and General Secretary Send pitch postponement form signed by Match Official calling off game to General Secretary (form on website)	
TROPHY	Return by 31 st March annually	
LES PHILIPS CUP	Set of rules in handbook (will be provided prior to next season) Statement of Receipts and Payments form to be completed and sent to opposition and Finance Director within 14 days including any payment	
CONVENTION	Attendance required (always held in May) Any trophies brought back on Night for re-presentation Great opportunity to celebrate and network	



WISHING YOU EVERY
SUCCESS IN

**WESTERN FOOTBALL
LEAGUE**

