

RAF Football Association - E-Bulletin

RAF FA - ENGLAND ELITE DISABILITY FOOTBALLERS VISIT RAF SHAWBURY



Jack Rutter Team GB Paralympian, Former Cerebral Palsy Team Captain and Under 21 Coach

Members of The FA England Elite Disability Talent Pathway team have visited RAF Shawbury to raise awareness of Disability Sport. Visiting the North Shropshire Airbase to complete a brief on England Disability football and complete a hands-on demonstration event was The FA Talent Pathway Manager, James Watkins, accompanied by coaches from the England Blind, Cerebral Palsy and Powerchair disciplines. In addition, elite England players attended to meet staff and trainees from the units Defence College of Air and Space Operations.

The day was designed to brief the station personnel on Disability sport and in particular football through The FA and the Talent Pathway for Elite football. Whilst raising awareness the staff and trainees received a greater understanding of performing at the highest level with either a visual or physical impairment. This is very pertinent as the College trains UK Military Air Operations Controllers in the Air Traffic and Weapons Control disciplines and all Air Operations Systems staff in the Flight Operations and Battlespace Management Surveillance roles. Training is also provided to the Trade Group 7 Air and Space Operations Specialists.

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Representing The FA and England Squads, accompanying James, were Paul Harrison (Performance Lifestyle Lead), Adam Bendall (England Blind Squad Assistant Coach), Adam McEvoy (Wheelchair Football Association National Development Manager) and Owen Bainbridge (England Blind B1 Senior Player). In addition, the unit was extremely proud to be able to host Team GB Paralympian and England Cerebral Palsy former player and current Under 21 Coach, Jack Rutter.



Owen Bainbridge (England Blind B1 Senior Player) showing DCASO students how it's done

Following a brief in the units briefing facility and lunch in the Officers' Mess the England team and Shawbury personnel moved to the unit's fabulous Jubilee Hall Sports facility to complete some hands-on demonstrations with the players, allowing everyone to play with and against the Internationals.

Event organiser, Sergeant Andy Ford (a trainer on the School of Air Operations Control), said; 'we are very proud to be able to complete an excellent Force Development Day with the inspirational England Disability players and coaches. The staff and trainees from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations had an educational and thought-provoking day and had great fun interacting with the Elite players.'

Wing Commander Neil Hope, who represents the RAF on The FA Council and is a member of The FA Disability Committee said, 'We are again indebted to James Watkins and his team for bringing these inspirational sportsmen to RAF Shawbury to assist us in further developing our staff. This was a fabulous day, and everyone had great fun whilst learning more about Disability Football.'



Students working together to practise the skills needed for blind football



DCASO Students playing Powerchair Football

James Watkins, The FA Disability Talent Pathway Manager said, 'this is the third time we have visited RAF Shawbury to assist in their Force Development Days. Every event has been a huge success and we are proud to be able to continue our links into the RAF and RAF FA through RAF Shawbury and its staff and trainees.'

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