

Annual Report, Season 2023/24, by Geoff Pike, Chairman

Firstly, on behalf of the DFL Management Committee, a big thank you to all Clubs for battling through yet another terrible season of extremely inclement weather. It appears to be getting wetter and wetter, season after season, I'm sure I commented similarly in last year's report !

I would also like to thank all DFL League Secretaries and the Referee Appointments Secretary for keeping their very stretched patience throughout and managing to re-arrange fixtures, in some instances several times, due not only to the bad weather but having to work around County Cup matches too which have precedence.

So on behalf of all Clubs, cdf3ethanks should be offered to Jeanette Elliott (Saturdays), Nicky Speed (U18s & Veterans), Paul Gibbons (Women's) and Jon Fancy (Referee Appointments). Thanks to good teamwork between Clubs and the League Secretaries the season's fixtures were accomplished, "well done to you all" !

It appears wet weather is something we're going to have to put up with in the future according to the experts, consequently the League will be exploring one or two ideas to try to alleviate the situation.

Despite the weather, all the Leagues were well competed for and the League wishes to congratulate all the Champions and Runners-up and wish them and all promoted clubs the very best for Season 2024/25. For those Clubs who found themselves at the other end of their respective League tables, we wish better fortunes next 'term'.

'Growth'

Dorset Football League is very pleased to report we are 'bucking the national trend' and are attracting more new Clubs and Teams, season by season; we are very encouraged by this and we hope this trend continues.

For season 2024/25, there will be seven divisions on Saturday; and on Sundays, three U18s divisions, two Women's divisions plus the Veteran's League . Unfortunately, the Vet's League will only consist of six teams but we remain hopeful that numbers return to double figures in the not too distant future. (Has your Club ever considered a Vet's Team ? - Food for thought!)

'Honours'

The DFL was honoured to be invited by Roger Vaughan (CEO) and the Board of Directors of the Dorset County Football Association Ltd to play in a celebratory match at the County Ground in March, to commemorate the official opening of the new Grandstand. In keeping with the usual weather (rain throughout the whole of the match), we were well beaten by a very good Hamworthy Utd team. My thanks to Steve Coward from Weymouth for being the Team Manager.

'Thank yous'

At the AGM we will be wishing thank you and 'au revoir' to our League President and Life Member Trevor Schorah. Trevor has been a genuine stalwart in grassroots football for Flight Refuelling FC (now Merley Cobham FC) the DCFA, and the Dorset Football League. He was an expert on Rules Revision, excellent on Disciplinary Committees and a really good Football Administrator. Trevor will certainly be missed, but he remains a Life Member, so we could well be graced with his presence yet. Trevor you will always be very welcome.

Finally...

I would like to thank all members of the DFL Management Committee for their support, not only for the 2023/24 Season, but also for the five seasons I have had the privilege to have been Chairman. I feel it is time for a rest and to give someone else the opportunity to take on the role of Chairman.

You all work extremely hard for the good of the League and I believe it is down to all your efforts, enthusiasm, loyalty and expertise that we continue to excel in what we do.

I know you will all support my successor as you have me. Team work wins every time, never ever forget that.

Wishing you all an enjoyable and, hopefully, successful 2024/25 Season, likewise, the Management Committee. The two work hand in glove if you want to be happy and successful.

Kind regards

Geoff Pike