



**ENGLAND
FOOTBALL**

ALAN LEE

I am currently the secretary of Lincoln Invictus a
Walking Football and Ability Counts Football Club
based in Lincoln.





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In 2017 I had a Heart Attack. As part of my rehabilitation I went along to a Walking Football session. It's fair to say that as a former player my first impressions were less than complimentary however I persevered and after a few sessions I found myself hooked.

After a short while, along with two other players, we decided it may be a good idea to create our own club. We did this and started playing from a local Sports Centre. Over time, as the number of players increased so did the demand for pitch time and space. We made the decision to make this our permanent home and moved to Ruston Sports where we eventually re-named ourselves as Lincoln Invictus.

As a Walking Football section, we now have teams at Over 50's, Over 60's, Over 65's and Over 70's plus a team called Heart Attackers!

As mentioned above, Lincoln Invictus incorporates an Ability Counts section with 5 PAN Disability teams, 4 Adult teams and 1 under 16's team.

Since starting this journey, I have completed my BT Playmaker course and the FA's 'Introduction to Coaching Football', FA Safeguarding Courses, FA First Aid Courses and Walking Football Referees Workshops.

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive club.

THE IMPACT OF THE GAME

The Club's Walking Football section provides a safe environment for exercise with the added benefits of both social interaction and mental stimulation. Sessions include players whom have previously played football and wish to re-engage with the sport and players who have never played but see this as an opportunity to relive their youth.

The section has players recovering from serious conditions including heart events who have been through the NHS Cardiac Rehab Programme. We also have players who have lost their partners to cancer and players battling with various cancers. Playing walking football and helping run Lincoln Invictus has given me a renewed purpose following my Heart Attack and retirement.



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I find it gives me focus, an opportunity to learn, develop and challenge myself as well as an opportunity for physical activity and social wellbeing. I have found being involved in Grassroots Football personally rewarding, not only as a player but also as a coach; not something I ever envisaged I would be doing in my 60's. Playing walking football amongst a really varied background of experiences gives our club an ethos to be proud of. Inclusive not exclusive is our tag line.

Recently our eldest player turned 80. Mike is a Goalkeeper and an inspiration to all that come along to play. He is fit, mobile, dives around like a 25-year-old, and above all he has become a true friend to not only me but to so many of us.

Over the last few months Kevin who is deaf and uses BSL (British Sign Language) as his first language, has joined the club and the Walking Football section.

One of our proudest achievements is the creation of a club 'Player Access Fund' allowing the club to financially support those less fortunate, purchasing kit and footwear as well as covering club fees.

The County FA have supported me both individually and as a club secretary and representative. As an aging technophobe Lincolnshire FA have assisted me in all things 'Whole Game System' and in setting up the club's 'Just Play' account, this has been via personal visits, telephone and email support.

2021 saw Lincolnshire FA successfully run an over 60's Walking Football League and Festival, with a pilot Festival event for the over 50's. The club had three teams represented and looks forward to supporting future events.

The County FA is currently supporting our Ability Counts teams via the Lincolnshire Ability Counts League in which we are represented by four teams.

The future sees the club looking to provide regular female Walking football and Ability Counts sessions which will be supported by the County FA.

I believe we need, as a County, to continue promoting and supporting the growth of both Walking Football for men and women plus Ability Counts, Leagues, Tournaments and Festivals that bring Communities together with a common focus.