

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FEDERATION OF CLUBS




Review ^{Club}

VOLUME 34 - Issue 3, 2021

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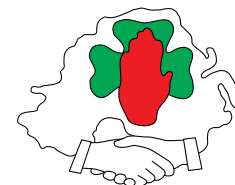
The Federation Invite New Members to Join

Start 2021 off on the right foot by joining the Northern Ireland Federation of Clubs today. Benefit from expert support and advice on a range of topics related specifically to the day-to-day running of your club. Issues such as ever changing employment legislation, the 1996 Clubs Order, accountancy regulations, and rates relief, are only a small sample of the topics we can provide guidance on - **guidance that will cost you less than £1 per week!**

Our helplines are always a welcome source of information and prove beneficial to members.

07889 800329 - 07889 800331 - 07889 800325 & 07889 681714

N.I. Federation of Clubs Membership Application Form



Name of club:

Address:

Telephone No:

Fax No:

Club Officers

Chairman:

Tel:

Secretary:

Tel:

Treasurer:

Tel:

The annual membership fee is £50.00 payable to:

The Northern Ireland Federation of Clubs

c/o Unit B7 Portview Trade Centre,
310 Newtownards Road,
Belfast BT4 1HE.

For telephone queries call:
07889 681714

(Please include your membership fee or completed standing order form with your application)

For administration purposes only

Accepted by: Secretary

Seconded by: Chairman

Date:

STANDING ORDER TO N.I. FEDERATION OF CLUBS

This is to authorise the transfer of £50.00 from the club's account:-

A/C No:

Sort Code:

Bank:

To account no: 627 998 63

Sort code: 95-01-45

**Danske Bank
Belfast BT1 6JS**

The payment is for the annual membership fee to the Northern Ireland Federation of Clubs. The transaction to be effected now and continue annually in January of each year until further notice.

Club Name:

Address:

Authorised by: (1)

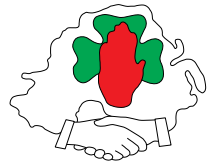
(2)

Please sign and return to:

N.I. Federation of Clubs,
c/o Unit B7, Portview Trade Centre,
310 Newtownards Road,
Belfast BT4 1HE.

A 'taxing' time ahead

Here's hoping the NI increase helps the NHS



John Davidson, Chairman,
N.I. Federation of Clubs



Harry Beckinsale, Secretary,
N.I. Federation of Clubs

The uncertainty and ongoing difficulties of the past year continue, and it is of great concern that the Covid-19 figures continue to rise, even though the vaccination process is saving lives.

Indications from Government at Westminster are that furlough will end, regardless of increasing figures, with the apparent message being that we are all going to have to live with Covid-19.

We feel that the tax rises now facing us, including National Insurance being applied to working pensioners, are only the tip of the iceberg and that the future is likely to see everyone paying over the coming years.

If indeed the National Insurance increase is directed towards the NHS, we feel there will be little objection.

However, as expressed by others, there is scepticism as to whether this will continue to be the case, as so often with this Government, the goalposts are moved!

While the future may be tinged with a degree of

uncertainty, we need to continue to maintain a positive attitude, and indeed that appears to be abundant in our membership and in the hospitality sector in general.

There is concern in respect to the uptake in the vaccination programme within the younger generation, but it is hoped this will improve over coming weeks and months.

Those who are hesitating may have very good and genuine reasons for doing so, but encouragement should continue with advice to avoid being influenced by conspiracy theories.

We take this opportunity to wish everyone the very best as we approach the festive season and invite you to continue contacting your Federation if there are matters in which you feel we can be of assistance.

John Davidson
Chairman

Harry Beckinsale
Secretary







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Urgent update on Linneweber 2 claims

Federation accountant, Lawrence Shearer, has already assisted a substantial number of clubs in securing the Linneweber 1 case and will naturally be assisting further in respect to this recent announcement. Clubs wishing to seek his assistance are invited to contact him to engage his services.

Lawrence Shearer, Chartered Accountant, can be contacted on 028 9030 9550 or email lawrence@oharashearer.com

Recently, at last, the First Tier Tribunal published its judgement in relation to reclaims on VAT on gaming machines for the period 2005-2013. As with the Upper Tier Tribunal ruling on pre-2005 claims heard last year, the judge held that the VAT should not have been charged and claims stood behind this case, commonly known as Linneweber 2, should be paid. This will be welcome news to the industry that has suffered so badly from the pandemic.

However, it must be noted that HMRC have nearly two months to appeal, so the matter is not yet concluded. If they do appeal and again lose, there will then be a need to establish a process for payments to be made. Given our experience with pre-2005 claims, this is not likely to be expedited.

Pressure on Government has secured a meeting with HMRC which will again express the unacceptability of their repayment delays.



Sky announce small increase

Sky Business view it important to continue bringing customers the best content and service so they can benefit from showing outstanding live sport that helps to deliver for their members and guests.

Everyone is aware that price increases are never welcome, but Sky have confirmed that they always look to absorb what they can in order to minimise the impact upon customers. Therefore, no registered club will see a price rise of more than 3%.

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Drew Pritchard, Sales/Service Manager - Mobile: 07917 641781
Email: sales@oasisrs.com - Website: www.oasisrs.com



Amendments to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs Act

After many years of lobbying and tireless work by your Federation, the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 (the Act) finally became law on 26th August 2021.

The Act amends both the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the Licensing Order) and the Registration of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the Clubs Order).

The next step is to bring the law into operation. The changes made by the Act will not all come into effect at the same time but in phases, over the next few years.

In terms of changes to the Clubs Order, which will affect your members, the following sections of the Act will come into operation on 1st October 2021.

Section 30 - Removal of additional restrictions at Easter

Easter weekend permitted hours now mirror what is available for any other weekend throughout the year.

Section 30 of the Act amends Article 24 of the Clubs Order by removing all references to Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Section 31 - Removal of restrictions on late opening on Sunday

Section 31 of the Act further amends Article 24 and Article 26 of the Clubs Order to remove the restrictions on late opening on Sundays. This means that closing times on a Sunday will be the same as any other night. It is important to note, there will be no changes to the opening times on a Sunday.

Section 32 - Extension of "drinking-up" time

Section 32 of the Act amends Article 25 of the Clubs Order to extend the current drinking-up time in registered clubs from 30 minutes to one hour.

Section 33 - Increase in number of authorisations for special occasions

Section 33 of the Act amends Article 26 of the Clubs Order to increase the maximum number of late night authorisations the police may

grant registered clubs from 85 to 104.

Provision which clarifies the current law relating to day membership at sporting clubs also comes in to operation on 1st October and is included in paragraph 19 of Schedule 1 to the Act.

This allows a person specified in paragraph 13 to use facilities of the club on the day in question only if that person also engages in sporting activities of the club on that day.

There are a number of other changes coming into effect from 1st October which do not directly impact on registered clubs. Further details can be found in the main guide which is available

by following this link - <https://www.nifederationofclubs.com/download-documents/>

It is important that the management committee or governing body of all registered clubs are familiar with the changes summarised above. We recommend that you engage the services of a solicitor where necessary, or contact the Federation Helplines for further guidance.

The changes will come into operation on 1st October, and registered clubs are legally required to comply with these changes.

Work is ongoing to identify the most appropriate time for the remaining changes to come into operation.

N.I.F.C. HELPLINES

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07889 800325
07763 835449 (North West)

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Email: lawrence@oharashearer.com

Federation secure special deal with Bank of Ireland

It would seem we are drawing ever closer to a cashless society, with only one in six payments now being made in cash.

We have moved a step closer to becoming a cashless society after official data showed that the number of payments made using notes and coins fell by 35% in 2020. Changes in spending habits were dramatically accelerated by the pandemic, with 13.7 million people leading a “cashless life” last year - almost double the 7.4 million figure in 2019. Five out of six payments involve no notes or coins, compared with around half of all transactions made ten years ago.

A growing number of businesses, both big, medium and small now refuse cash,

with many having opted to go card-only.

The retailer Ikea says on its website that “for now” it is not accepting cash payments in its UK stores. Similarly, the restaurant chain Nando’s says customers cannot pay with cash, and the craft beer firm BrewDog is among the hospitality businesses that are now cashless.

With the contactless limit on cards being increased to £100 in October, many clubs will be wishing to make the card payment option available for their members and guests. This is where your Federation have been active in investigating the various offers available. We are pleased to inform you that a special, and very attractive,

tariff has been secured by the Federation with Bank of Ireland Payment Acceptance.

Can your club afford to not have a card payment facility?

To find out more about the special deal available to your club, call Bank of Ireland local representative, **Kieran McIlwaine** today on **07388 990902** or email **Kieran.McIlwaine@boipa.co.uk**



Federation Chairman and H&W Welders Treasurer, John Davidson, is pictured with staff members (L-R) Sharon and Ali, using the club’s newly installed card payment terminal which was supplied by Bank of Ireland representative Kieran McIlwaine.

Kieran is astutely aware of the needs of clubs in regards to card payments and he is waiting to help you take the step into the next generation of payment options.

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Begin

BOI UK Payment Acceptance enables businesses to accept card payments in-store, in-app, online, over the phone or on the move.

BOIPA UK has partnered with the Northern Ireland Federation of Clubs to offer all members preferential rates.

Talk to us.

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Q. Our committee are having a disagreement regarding how the accounts are approved. Should the committee be required to approve the accounts before asking the members to receive the accounts, or is approving the accounts purely a matter for the members, and the committee has no power to reject the accounts?

A. The committee should accept the accounts as presented to them by the accountants/

auditor. The accounts are then put to the members at the AGM and the members are asked to receive them.

Clearly, if the committee are concerned over any aspect of the accounts then we would encourage you to discuss this with your accountants prior to approving them or asking the members to receive them.

Q. There have been differing opinions within our committee as to what the exact roles of officers are. Can you give us a definitive guide?

A. This is a common enough query and we are pleased to detail the roles for you below.

The President

He should identify himself actively with the club and its affairs and be more than a figure-head. He should also preside *ex officio* over all meetings (*other than committee meetings*).

The Chairman

The chairman presides *ex officio* over all committee meetings and, in the absence of the president, those of the club. He should be thoroughly familiar with the rules of the club and the procedures which govern club meetings. He must, at all times, endeavour to maintain the dignity of his office and, by precept and example, the reputation of the club. The chairman should not be afraid to exercise his authority, quietly and tactfully, when occasion arises. He should work in the closest co-operation with the secretary in assuring that all legal and other club obligations are carried out.

The Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for seeing that all monies, whether received by himself, the secretary, the steward or any other official or employee are duly banked. He is to ensure that all debts of the club are paid as directed by the committee and that cheques are signed by himself and one, or more, members of the Finance Committee, then countersigned by the secretary. It is his duty to produce the paying-in book, bank statement, daily takings book etc. at every meeting of the committee, or whenever required.

The Secretary

It is the duty of the secretary to keep the books, documents and papers of the club in proper order and carefully filed. They must summon and attend all meetings and take minutes of the proceedings.

The duties imposed on a club's secretary make the person undertaking this office the linchpin in the conduct of club affairs. Unless the secretary is truly competent, a club will find that it is unable to operate effectively and in accordance with the increasingly complex

legislation affecting clubs.

The secretary acts under the superintendence, control and direction of the Committee of Management and is responsible for seeing that the decisions of the committee are conveyed to the proper quarter.

Committee

It is the duty of the committee to attend their meetings regularly. The committee conduct the general business of the club and are responsible for its management and control, and for seeing that the rules are duly observed. Acting in a quasi judicial capacity, they are empowered - subject to what the rules say - to suspend or expel offending members, having first given them an opportunity of being heard in self-defence. The appointment, control and dismissal of all club employees rest solely in the hands of the committee.

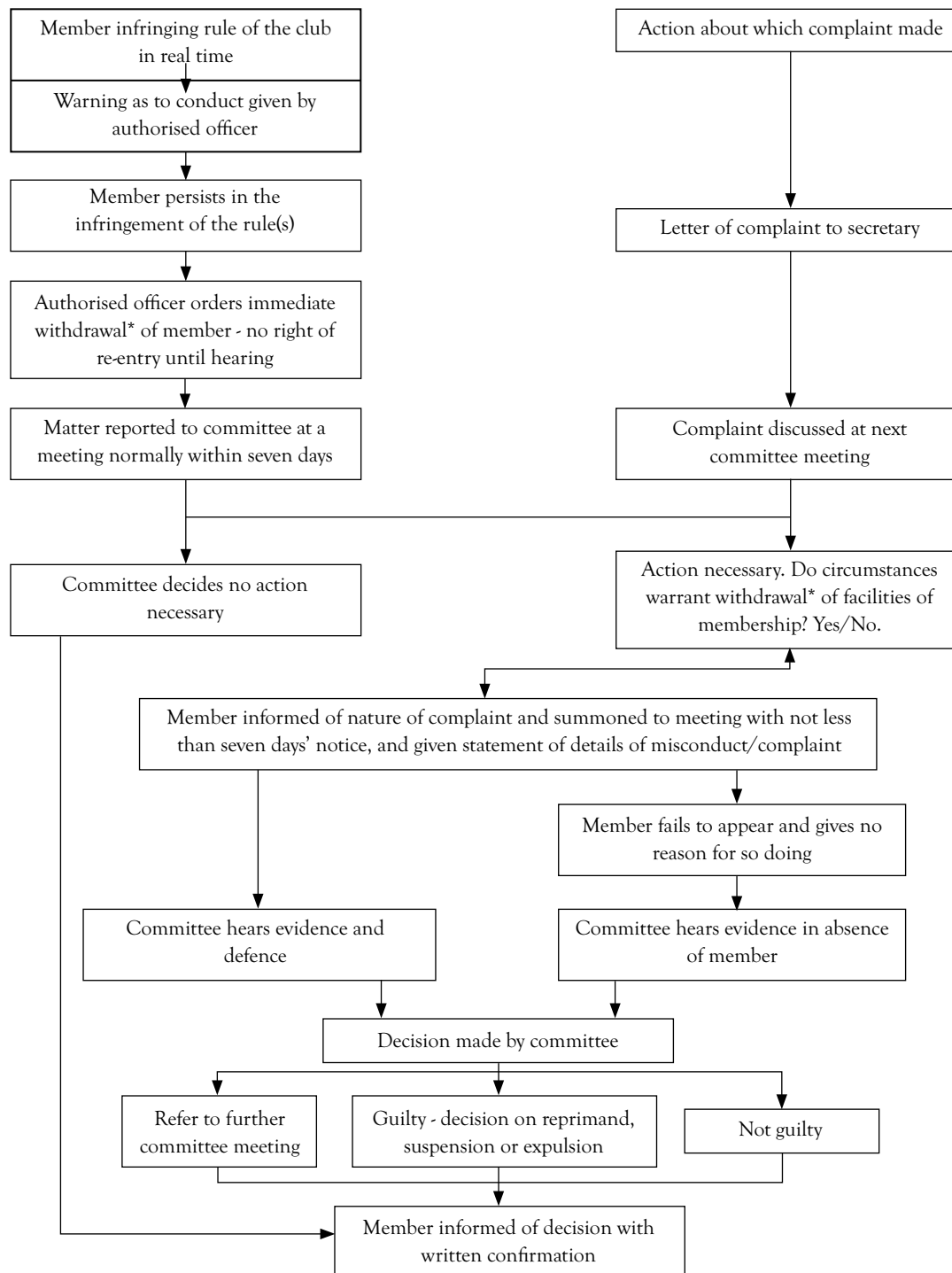
The committee is responsible for checking books kept by the treasurer or secretary and seeing that all takings have been duly paid into the bank. They should examine the order book and be satisfied that only goods authorised by them have been purchased and that accounts submitted for payment have been duly checked and verified with the goods received book kept by the steward. The committee, realising their position of trust and authority, should rigidly observe the rules of the club, thus setting an example to the members.

*If you have any questions you need answered for your club, then please send them to us at:
info@nifederationofclubs.com*

An advertisement for AVA Leisure, a gaming supplier in Northern Ireland. The ad features the E&E Gaming logo, the AVA Leisure logo, and the text 'WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF GAMING'. It lists various gaming products and services, including Fruit Machine, Poker & Club Machine, Air Hockey & Pool Tables, LED Digital Advertising, Large Screen TVs & Games, and Kiosk Buses/Voices. The ad also provides a phone number (07810 743 164) and mentions 365 days a year call out service available. The background shows several gaming machines.

Management spotlight

Member discipline and misconduct flowchart



This flow chart is for explanatory purposes only and is not a substitute for the rules. For all formal purposes the rules should be consulted.

***Withdrawal:** Pending a member's appearance at the disciplinary meeting, they can be prevented from using the club until the meeting has taken place. Alternatively, the committee can invite a member to a disciplinary meeting but can permit them to use the club until the disciplinary meeting has taken place.

Latest (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations

The following is the latest up-to-date information provided to us by Belfast City Council and the PSNI. All clubs should adhere to these regulations.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (as amended)
Belfast City Council and PSNI would like to update you of the requirements that businesses or members' clubs which sell or provide food or drink for consumption on the premises must adhere to under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 as amended. These requirements came into force at 5pm on 10th September 2021.

The Executive reiterates the importance of continuing to follow public health guidance, including the use of face coverings, observing social distancing and the importance of ventilation in all indoor settings. Hospitality venues must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus and have an updated Covid Risk Assessment.

Table Service
Hospitality venues can permit customers to go to the bar to place orders or pay. However, in indoor settings, customers will still be required to return to their table in order to consume their food or drink. Because there is less risk in outdoor settings, standing to consume food and drink outdoors will be permitted.

It was also agreed to remove the prohibition on movement and standing to allow customers

to play darts, pool, gaming machines etc.

The 1m social distance requirement is still in place in the hospitality sector, therefore you will need to consider how best to manage the movement and queueing of customers to mitigate risk. In some venues, it may not be possible to operate bar service. In addition, the requirement to wear face coverings while not seated indoors will continue.

Music and dancing
In relation to indoor, live performance events (concerts and gigs) the requirements for tickets to be purchased in advance and allocated seating is removed. However, customers must still be seated and the requirement to record contact details for all attendees continues.

The current restriction on music to background or ambient levels where that restriction currently applies is removed.

No dancing is permitted indoors with the exception of post wedding and civil partnership celebrations.

Dancing outdoors will be permitted. Please be aware that, under the Regulations, a place is indoor if it would be considered to be enclosed or substantially enclosed for the purposes of Regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Premises, Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007(5), and otherwise a place is outdoors. If you require further advice on whether an area is outdoors please email envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk

Before any offering of music in either an indoor or outdoor setting, it is essential that an appropriate entertainments licence is in place. Further details can be received regarding this requirement by contacting the Building Control Service via buildingcontrollicensing@belfastcity.gov.uk

Track and Trace
To help with the Test, Trace and Protect contact tracing programme, hospitality businesses must still collect the following details from every customer over the age of 16. Where the information is not provided in advance, it must be obtained at the time of the visit. The following must be recorded:

- Name
- Telephone number
- Date of visit
- Time of arrival

This information must be provided to a relevant officer as soon as is reasonably practicable, and no later than 24 hours of a request. This information must be recorded and retained for 21 days, commencing on the date of the person's visit. Once the 21 days has passed, the data must be destroyed securely, as soon as is reasonably practical, or in line with data protection regulations.

Licensing Requirements
Notwithstanding the Health

Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (as amended), licensees should be clear that The Licensing (NI) Order 1996 remains unchanged. In particular, but not limited to, areas used for the sale and/or consumption of intoxicating liquor must be marked as "licensed area" on the premises map held by the Court.

Officers from the Council and PSNI will be carrying out visits to premises to ensure adherence with the Regulations and relevant guidance.

Advice Line
You can contact the Council's free and confidential Advice Line on 028 9027 0565 or email covid19businessadvice@belfastcity.gov.uk for practical advice on managing your business safely or for guidance on the current restrictions.

Further information

- The Regulations can be found at the following link - <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-regulations-northern-ireland-2021>
- General guidance for working safely in tourism and hospitality in Northern Ireland can be found at the following link - <https://www.tourismni.com/covid-19/practical-guidance-for-working-safely-during-covid-19/guidance-for-restaurants-pubs-and-bars/>

N.I.F.C. HELPLINES

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Clubs spoil for choice this autumn with the ultimate sporting schedule on Sky Sports

Live sport helps bring communities together in their local. With Sky Sports your members can enjoy the best live sport experience, and this season you can continue to bring them more of the drama and excitement from the sports they want to watch.

Not only do sports fans want to watch more sport in their local club, it is likely that they will continue to spend more time and money in your venue if live sport is showing.

Sky Sports offers the broadest range of content across 11 channels of sport with 70,000 hours of sport every year, and this autumn is packed with the best games and tournaments on offer.

The Premier League, EFL, Women's Super League and World Cup Qualifiers are in full swing, with much more blockbuster fixtures to come, contributing to the total figure of over 400 live football games live on Sky Sports.

Clubs can expect to show all the best head-to heads

throughout October, with a total of 4 Super Sundays including Crystal Palace v Leicester at 2pm and Liverpool v Man City at 4.30pm on Sunday 3 October, and West Ham v Spurs followed by Man Utd v Liverpool on Sunday 24 October.

There's plenty of weekday football on offer too with West Brom taking on Birmingham City at 8pm on Friday 15 October.

There's plenty of fan favourites set to return to the screen too, including the Ryder Cup at the end of September, the World Grand Prix of Darts on Sunday 3 October to Saturday 9 October, and the UEFA Nations League Finals in October, along with the climax to the Formula 1 season.

The content doesn't stop there either. Clubs can appeal to a broader range of sports fans, offering their members increasingly popular sports like NFL, Netball and NBA. So whatever the appetite is, Sky Sports has the variety to provide sport for everyone.



With a host of sporting events taking place over the next month, venues should make sure they've registered with www.myskysports.com to receive their regular emails to

help promote and plan ahead; order free poster packs, and share upcoming fixtures on their social media channels, all with one click.



SEPTEMBER

24th-26th September..... Ryder Cup Weekend
F1 Russian Grand Prix
25th September..... WSL: Everton v Birmingham
Brentford v Liverpool
26th September..... Arsenal v Spurs

OCTOBER

1st October..... Stoke City v West Brom
2nd October..... WSL: Chelsea v Brighton
3rd October..... Liverpool v Man City
3rd-9th October..... Darts World Grand Prix
24th October..... F1 USA Grand Prix
29th October..... QPR v Nottingham Forest
30th October..... Spurs v Man Utd

OVER

4



LIVE GAMES

This season, Sky Sports will be serving up 600 unmissable hours of live football. So get set for plenty of fans thirsty for action and refreshment



sky sports

THIS SEASON, SKY SPORTS BRINGS YOU:

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Sky Sports requires a Sky subscription agreement. Channels and content availability are dependent on the Sky subscription agreement. Equipment and installation costs may apply. Scheduling and content are correct at the date of print (16/09/21) and may be subject to change. Further terms apply. Calls to Sky cost 7p per minute plus your provider's access charge

MJ Utilities announce new partnership

In addition to energy savings, MJ Utilities (MJU) are always looking at different ways to help their clients reduce expenditure.

Over recent months, energy prices have risen to an all time high, and if you haven't reviewed your club's energy contracts in a while, there's a good chance you are paying much higher default rates and possibly additional charges. To be perfectly blunt, there isn't much in the way of good news for anyone renewing an electric or gas contract at the moment. Wholesale costs, however, are expected to dip substantially next year, so the advice we would be offering clients is to secure perhaps a 12 month

contract, then revisit next year and lock in something longer term, taking advantage of the expected lower prices.

Over the past year or so, MJU have also teamed up with a number of selected partners that can offer additional savings and value to your club. These services include telecoms (mobile, landline & broadband), merchant services, LED lighting etc. Most recently, MJU welcomed EOS Systems onboard as a partner. A Belfast based IT company, they have been delivering reliable, personal and cost-effective multi-platform support to hundreds of public and private sector organisations, of all backgrounds and sizes,

across the province since 2002. IT may not be something MJU clients may previously have thought of when considering savings, however it's not just about the savings, it's also about security.

We would ask you to consider just how important your computers/laptops/smartphones are. Now take a step back and consider what they do; any of these relevant to you? *Online banking/Internet/Applications/Email/Storage/Payroll/Websites/Accounting/Social Media/Shopping/Cloud storage.*

Quite a lot to consider eh? The next question is who is actually protecting your computers and devices, and what happens if your PC crashes and won't recover, or a virus takes over and your data vanishes? When it comes to IT support it will be good to know you have EOS Systems to call on.

EOS specialise in helping businesses and organisations, like yours, to become more efficient through their use of technology, plus they are unique in that they are the longest established NI company to install and support both Apple and PC platforms. Their aim - very simply, to save customers time and increase productivity, so you can focus on your business while they handle your IT. Their managed IT services deliver 24/7 system diagnostics and off-site backup. And if you need them on-site, they will arrange a call-out to fix your system quickly and efficiently.

For more information on IT support please get in touch:

T: 028 9045 9222

E: sales@eossystems.co.uk

W: www.eossystems.co.uk

For energy, telecoms and merchant services:

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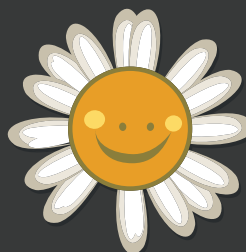
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Diageo presents a positive picture

Diageo's Preliminary Results for 2021 show the company delivering strong net sales of £12.7 billion, an increase of 8.3%, and an organic net sales growth of 16%.

Despite the on-trade being significantly restricted in many markets due to COVID-19, the company reported that it has invested in long-term growth despite near-term uncertainty. This included increased investment in marketing (up 23%), and continued investment in capacity, digital capabilities, consumer experiences and sustainability. It had also expanded its gin and ready to drink portfolios with acquisitions, including Aviation American Gin.

A global on-trade recovery fund

of over £72 million (\$US 100 million), had already reached around 35,000 outlets in 11 countries, and 25 new goals had been included in the company's 'Society 2030: Spirit of Progress'.

Ivan Menezes, Chief Executive, said, "These results demonstrate the strength and relevance of our brands and the extraordinary efforts of our talented people. I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their dedication and resilience, and to express my deepest condolences to all who have lost loved ones this year due to the pandemic.

"A key priority has been supporting the hospitality sector through the pandemic, including our \$100 million



Ivan Menezes, Chief Executive, Diageo

global fund to enable the safe re-opening and recovery of bars.

"We have also built on our successful ESG track record with the launch of 'Society

2030: Spirit of Progress', our new 10-year action plan to shape a more sustainable and inclusive business."

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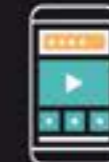
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A reflection on George Best

In the year Bestie would be 75, Barry Fry gives us an inside view

“As you get older, you look back and think: how the hell did I pull that off?”

It was perhaps the most surprising move of all time for one of the world’s greatest players. He was a football icon and still only 28. They were bottom of the Southern League Division One North.

George Best played on the biggest stages against star-studded teams for Northern Ireland and Manchester United, scoring in a famous European Cup final triumph, but Barry Fry was the man who took him to Dunstable Town - a side who were getting crowds of 34 and 43.

In the year Best would have turned 75, this is the story of how a sporting legend left Old Trafford for Creasey Park, told by the man who made it happen.

“He was a genius on the field. A skinny kid, but he rode tackles like no-one else; a wizard at dribbling, with the heart of a lion. He was the best player I’ve ever seen.”

Fry is reflecting on his friendship with Best. They were teenage team-mates at Manchester United’s youth academy. One became a playing great, the other one of the game’s most colourful managers. Just as Fry had been mentored by Johnny Giles and Nobby Stiles as a youngster at Old Trafford, manager Sir Matt Busby wanted him to help Best settle in after he arrived from Belfast in 1961.

“I was asked to watch out for this young lad but he only lasted two or three days before he ran back home to his parents. He used to go all red, he was a very shy boy,” remembers Fry.

“United talked to his parents, persuaded him to return and he never looked back. He was brilliant, he trained sensationally. He’d beat three or four blokes, then beat another three or four blokes.”

Fry used to buy the two complimentary tickets Best received for each match. It gave his pal some cash and his own girlfriend’s father the chance to see his favourite team. Fry thought nothing of it, but for Best it was very different - as Fry would later find out.

While Fry struggled with blood clots and called an early halt to his playing career, Best was changing the game after being fast-tracked from the A team to the first team. Football had seen nothing like it. Pace, poise, balance, control and resilience - he danced around opponents in the glory, glory days for Manchester United. Best thrived alongside team-mates Bobby Charlton and Denis Law as United won the First Division title twice before landing the coveted European Cup in 1968.

He was named European Footballer of the Year but his career didn’t quite reach the same peaks again. Distractions off the field dominated, and an increasing reliance on alcohol changed him forever and by 1974, he had fallen out with United boss Tommy Docherty



and played his last game for the club after 178 goals in 466 matches.

“He didn’t like Tommy Docherty, he hit the self-destruct button and ran away from it all. What a shame that he packed up at 28,” says Fry.

Best retreated to his Manchester nightclub and it was in the Bootle Street venue Slack Alice, that Fry put an offer to his old pal.

“I got the job as Dunstable manager. My first crowd was 34, and the next was 43 because I made all my family come from Bedford,” laughs Fry.

“Attendances were so small, rather than announcing the team changes to the crowd, we’d announce the crowd changes to the team. We were about to finish at the bottom for the ninth year running, and I needed a gimmick.”

That Sunday night in Slack Alice, Best agreed to turn out in two pre-season matches. The only issue was Docherty, who held the player’s registration. Fry went to see him.

“Dunstable Town! What makes you think Bestie will play for ‘Dunstabubble’ when I can’t get him to play for Man United?” boomed Docherty in his office at the The Cliff, where United trained. The Scot was eventually persuaded and even agreed to send a United reserve team down as opposition, reportedly with the help of a sweetener from building magnate and Dunstable Town owner Keith Cheeseman.

Cheeseman had already helped to recruit ex-England striker Jeff Astle. There was much more to the new chairman than the odd shady business deal - as we will read later.

Temporary stands, a shed that doubled as a tea bar and hundreds crammed onto a mound overlooking the ground. Souvenir programmes were 5p. Being there was priceless.

“It was electric,” remembers Fry.

“As a schoolboy, I played at Wembley in front of 90,000 people in an England v Scotland game and that was deafening. Believe you me, that night at Creasey Park, the reception Bestie got was out of this world.”

The United team included George Graham, who went on to manage Arsenal and Spurs. Dunstable ran out 3-2 winners and the match featured on the BBC News.

“Dunstable did brilliantly out of it. The place was packed to the rafters,” Best wrote in his autobiography *Blessed*. “The crowd ran on to the pitch at the end and I was mobbed.”

Fry said the players could barely believe who was in the dressing room alongside them.

“They wanted autographs, photographs. Bestie was just one of the lads with no airs and graces. I think we left Creasey Park at about 2am - they just enjoyed his company,” he says.

A week later, Best was back at the sixth-tier club - this time facing Irish side Cork Celtic, managed by former Chelsea striker Bobby Tambling, after an eventful journey down south.

“His car broke down and he was at Knutsford services,” says Fry.

“When I told everyone, they assumed he wouldn’t turn up, but he got a taxi from there to Dunstable and arrived 20 minutes before the game.”

Best had reportedly been paid £200 a week. He donated £25 so Dunstable could afford new nets for the goals.

The increased profile and ticket sales helped attract new players to the club. It heralded the start of a season where they were promoted after scoring 105 goals, including 34 for Astle.

“Bestie didn’t do it for money. He had a nightclub and a boutique which were lucrative businesses at the time. He just did it as a favour,” says Fry.

“Nobody had heard of Dunstable, but because of the publicity, I was able to bring in players and it was a dream come true when we got promotion.

“Financially, we were making half a crown a week but in our promotion year we had 18 crowds of more than 1,000.”

Dunstable was the first in a series of fleeting appearances Best made at clubs in the late 1970s and early 1980s - from Stockport County to Hong Kong Rangers, via Hibernian, Fulham and spells in the United States with the North American Soccer League.

It all helped fund a champagne lifestyle which spawned his famous quote about spending money on booze, women and fast cars: “The rest I just squandered.”

His affairs became increasingly chaotic as alcoholism took hold. He eventually needed a liver transplant and died aged only 59 in 2005.

“It was such a shame. He tried everything to stop him being an alcoholic, but it got the better of him,” says Fry.

“He was a different man when he was drunk and became aggressive. It just wasn’t him.

“As a person, one to one, he was a lovely, intelligent man with a dry sense of humour.”

While Best’s fortunes suffered, so did Dunstable’s. Cheeseman had been a shady benefactor, with Astle suggesting in his biography that he gave Docherty £1,000 to ensure Dunstable faced United.

“About a year later, the chairman Keith got put inside for embezzlement - six years for embezzling nearly £300,000 - so the players weren’t getting paid,” says Fry.

Best turned out for a third, and final time, against neighbours Luton Town in a match which raised money for the players.

Cheeseman’s dodgy dealings would leave Dunstable Town in liquidation. He later admitted involvement in a 1990 conspiracy to sell nearly £300m of bonds stolen at knifepoint in the world’s biggest mugging.

Meanwhile, Best went on to guest at Astle’s West Brom testimonial, repeated the trick for Fry when he managed Barnet and Maidstone, and was twice a guest speaker at Peterborough.

“He turned up for everything, which was a miracle in itself,” says Fry, who was invited when Best was the subject of the *This Is Your Life* programme.

“I said to him, ‘I can’t believe you came to play for me at Dunstable.’

“He said, ‘Baz, I’ll never forget you, mate. I used to send my wages to my mum and dad. You helped me out with the money you gave me for the complimentary tickets.’

“Honestly, I had a lump in my throat. To be so loyal, to me -

small fry - when he reached the top of the game.

“It’s mind-blowing. He said to take it as a compliment - you helped me a lot, and didn’t even know.”

Creasey Park is now owned by the local council and used by both Dunstable Town and the separate AFC Dunstable team.

“The snack bar sells ‘Bestie Burgers’ and ‘Barry’s Fries’; in honour of George and Barry. I’m not sure how many people make the connection,” says Dunstable Town chairman Andrew Madaras.

The club tried to cash in on Best’s famous appearance for them in an all-white kit by adopting the same style before realising it cost too much to wash.

Efforts are being made for Dunstable Town, once home to England internationals Tony Currie and Kerry Dixon, to become a community benefit society - a not-for-profit organisation with mutual benefits for the local area. It will be a new chapter in the story of a club which looks back fondly on its brief spell as George Best’s home.

Fry has been typically ebullient but pauses when I tell him that Best’s 75th birthday is approaching - briefly lost for words, before continuing.

“George was a great entertainer. I don’t think he realised how much pleasure he gave to other people who watched him perform,” he says.

“He helped a lot of ex-players and was absolutely fabulous to me. I’ve been in the game for 60 years, and dreamed of being a manager. None of it would have come true if it wasn’t for Bestie.

Sam Davidson, living legend, of the blues/rock world, shares his life & "TASTE" in music



Nigel Blair, Belfast 89FM.

It is a pleasure to share my recent interview with rock and blues star Sam Davidson.

Sam was born in East Belfast and educated at Orangefield Boys High School. At the age of 12 his father bought him his first six string acoustic guitar. Impressed by his interest in the instrument, his father organised lessons with music teacher Jim Armstrong no less. After only two lessons, Jim told Sam's father, "He does not take well to instruction, and prefers to do things his own way." From there on he was self-taught, and later was to play piano/keyboards, flute and drums.

Sam told me, "I was about 15 when I started playing electric guitar and taking my music seriously. I was into bands like Fleetwood Mac, Free, and Jimi Hendrix and, of course, Taste. I took an interest in guitar-based bands, especially those with lead players like Rory, Peter Green, and Paul Kossoff, so I guess that's what got me into blues and rock.

"My first band was called 'By Itself', with Kenny Greg (drums), Billy Bingham (vocals), and myself on guitar. Lyn McMullen, the current drummer with Sam Davidson's Taste, joined us at a later date."

When asked, whilst playing in bands, which moment stood out in his mind, he replied, "I was asked to fill in a few nights with a band called "Just Us," and ended up with them almost twenty years, but if you mean pro-bands, then TASTE has to be top of the list. I admired Rory's style, in that he played it as he felt it on the night, something I still do."

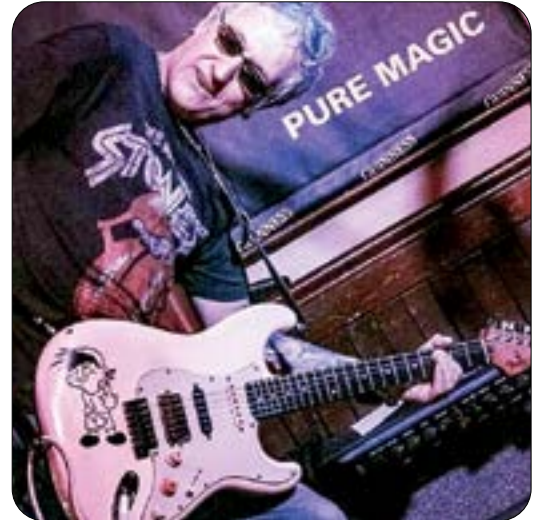
Sam toured Europe with the Belfast Blues Band, and also with SK'Boo. Sam's favourite

venues played at home were Betty Staffs in Belfast and the Stella Ballroom in Stillorgan, Ireland. Abroad, it had to be BB King's Blues Club, Moscow, Russia; Taste played there in 2001.

Some time after Rory's passing, John Wilson approached Sam asking him to join Taste. After much thought he agreed, on the condition he would play Rory's music his style. From 1996, the line-up was - Sam Davidson (guitar), John Wilson (drums) and Richie "Charlie" McCracken (bass). They completed two albums, (Wall to Wall and a Taste of Rory) and were writing another (Dream Pusher) when John took ill. Sam's last gig with Taste was in Cork in 2018. Sam said, "I had to decide whether to continue with new band members or fold the band. I decided to continue with the spirit of the band, as Sam Davidson's Taste. I wanted people to know I would continue playing Taste and Rory's music, and the way they played it, Alive."

Sam told me, "I think I've done everything I set out to do in my career and enjoyed every minute of it, so the only goal I have is to do it as long as I can."

Lyn McMullen, current band member who has known Sam from they were 8 years old told



me recently, "Sam and I grew up together as children, his mother's settee was my first drum kit. We formed our first band together as teenagers. We have always remained in close contact, even when he was touring Europe.

@I had left music for a while, but we both now play in Sam Davidson's Taste together. To me, Sam's playing and song-writing, are second to none. He lends his own unique style, flair and interpretation to everything he does, a true Legend."

Sam has a wonderful adoring family. His beautiful wife Yvonne, two daughters Niki and Stephanie, and four grandchildren, Kloe 25, Brad 19, Eva 11, and Alfie 9.

It is a pleasure to know such a talented, warm and friendly man, and I hope he continues keeping music lovers happy for many, many years. Thank you Sam.

Nigel.

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2007

God save Croke Park



When Ireland's hidden jewel in the crown, Croke Park Stadium, finally agreed to allow 'foreign games' such as rugby and soccer internationals to be played there whilst Lansdowne Road (the oldest international rugby ground in the world) was being refurbished, inevitably it caused controversy when England came to town.

When British troops, the notorious 'Black and Tans', along with police auxiliaries opened fire into the packed crowd in Croke Park in 1920, 14 people died. This infamous massacre was called 'Bloody Sunday'. Among the dead was Michael Hogan, a Tipperary player. The Hogan stand in Croke Park is named after him.

Naturally, the thought of the Irish Army band playing the English national anthem 'God Save The Queen' stirred deep emotions. One protester withdrew his family's collection of GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) medals which had been on loan to the Museum in Croke Park. However, the family of murdered Michael Hogan accepted that the anthem should be played.

One compromise suggested was to get the popular Irish band, the Saw Doctors, to play God Save the Queen (as they add some excitement to their songs and often use hurleys to hit tennis balls into the crowd at their concerts). The President of Ireland, Mary MacAleese, recalled that in 1973, during the height of the Troubles, it was England who agreed to play in Dublin when Scotland and Wales refused to travel. She asked that on the day the English be given as big a welcome as they were given back then (an eight minute standing ovation).

The Irish Times correspondent, Fintan O'Toole reported, "We are a sovereign nation with average per capita incomes above those of the UK," and he noted that the Irish should be "confident and at ease in situations where we used to feel Anglophobia." And indeed they could be, with 82,300 tickets sold out many months earlier (and some selling at £1,600).

The people of Ireland showed dignity and mutual respect for national difference. The English were applauded as they ran onto

the pitch. God Save The Queen was sung without interruption. Then came the Irish national anthem "Amhran na bhFiann" and its additional compromise song "Ireland's Call" which were sung with unprecedented passion by a packed house of more than 82,000.

Several of the Irish players were seen on TV with tears rolling down their cheeks. Tears of pride gave way to whooping jubilation as Ireland ran in their biggest ever victory over England, 43-13.

Irish and Lions hero Ollie Campbell said, "I have never in my life been more proud to be an Irishman." It was indeed a great day for Irish sport. The entire occasion was one of the most memorable occasions ever witnessed. It was an act of sporting reconciliation. And it happened in Croke Park.

Barney v Taylor

The 2007 Ladbrokes.com World Darts Championship was the 14th World Championship organised by the Professional Darts Corporation since it separated from the British Darts Organisation. The championship was once again held at the Circus Tavern in Purfleet, Essex, where it had been staged since the first PDC World Championship in 1994. However, it would turn out to be the last time the tournament would be held there after the PDC announced in April that the event would be moving to the Alexandra Palace from 2008.

Raymond van Barneveld became the first player in the history of the sport to play in the BDO World Championship final and the PDC World Championship final in consecutive years, having decided to switch organisations after the 2006 Lakeside event. Barneveld was close to defeat against top seed Colin Lloyd in the second round, but then never dropped another set on his way to the final, which was much anticipated between the best players of the era. Barneveld and Phil Taylor had 17 World Championships between them and in one of the greatest matches in darts history, Barneveld came back from 3-0 down in sets to win 7-6 after a sudden-death leg. It was Barneveld's fifth world title overall.

Taylor maintained his record of reaching every single PDC World Championship final to date, but the defeat ended a 21-match unbeaten run at the Tavern, as well as his three-year reign as World Champion.

It happened in 2007

Golf - *The Open, held at Carnoustie, Scotland, was won by Ireland's Pádraig Harrington who defeated Spain's Sergio Garcia in a play-off.*

Racing - *Kauto Star won the first of his two Cheltenham Gold Cups this year, repeating the feat again in 2009.*

Formula 1 - *2007 heralded the start of Lewis Hamilton's career in F1. Racing for McLaren, he finished third in his debut race in Australia.*

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