

Amputee - Support card

No two people with amputations are affected in the same way. Get to know the person to understand their motivations and usual behaviour. This will help you notice when additional support is needed.

What is an amputation?

An amputation is an acquired limb difference from the surgical removal of a limb (arm/s or leg/s), as a result of trauma, medical illness or surgery. Congenital (amputation) limb difference is when a child is born without part or all of a limb or limbs.

Football pathways

Amputee players can play mainstream, pan-disability, and amputee-specific football. In pan-disability and domestic amputee-specific football, players can play with their prosthesis or without (on crutches). Mainstream football also allows the use of a prosthesis although this is subject to prior approval from The FA Medical Department.

General characteristics

- Mobility, range of movement, coordination, balance and comfort vary greatly depending on the level and cause of the amputation/limb difference and individual player's may have a preference to play with or without their prosthesis on.
- Residual limbs (stump) can vary in quality (integrity) and length which may affect involvement and movement.
- Congenital amputees may have less stump pain, discomfort and soreness than those who have lost limbs through injury which may impact on the length of time a player can play or train for.
- Be mindful of fatigue in the arms and upper body, as well as blistering on the hands when using crutches. Sports gloves, blister plasters and additional padding on the crutches can help mitigate the risk of developing blisters.
- Amputee players have greater difficulty regulating body temperature because the ratio of surface area to body volume is different and could result in overheating. Coaches must therefore ensure players wear suitable clothing and ample opportunities are provided for rehydration and recovery.
- Perspiration and volume change during activity can affect the prosthetic fit and comfort. Players may need time to adjust their socket during play, so time and an appropriate location need to be provided for this.
- Be aware that in England, crutch-based amputee football should take place on a 3G artificial grass pitch and should not be played on grass pitches.

Coaching considerations

- Manage fatigue levels well – two to three minute 'mini training blocks' with two-minute rests in between.
- Consider what movement patterns are already established that you can develop. If the player is a new amputee, they may need more training on how to travel on crutches or with striking the ball techniques.
- Be aware that the football journey and physical literacy of players will differ depending upon whether they were born with their amputation or not.
- Provide lots of movement practices to encourage physical literacy and confidence in the player's own movements.
- Use repetition – this allows new and younger players to get used to their crutches.
- Avoid throwing and catching practices for players using crutches – playing on crutches make it extremely difficult to catch the ball.
- Be aware that participants may have a slower response time when moving on command, if playing with their prosthesis on.
- Safety and comfort are paramount.



Don't forget the golden nugget – Make sure your environment is always a safe and welcoming place to be!

How do I use STEP to adapt my session to include amputee players?



Space – Consider the size of area used. A big pitch may cause fatigue due to continuous crutch and/or prosthesis use.



Task – Play short activities and take regular breaks to manage fatigue.



Equipment – Use flat spots to limit slip risk. Encourage players to wear padded gloves and/or padded crutch handles to help prevent blisters.



Players – Small sided games like 2v2 or 3v3 allow players more opportunities with the ball.

Step top tip:

Remember: STEP is a tool to help you coach, NOT a list of things you have to do. In order to use STEP effectively, it's essential you get to know your players so you can use the right modification at the right time to aid their development.

Additional Resources

- England Football Website: Disability Section
- Disability Football Introduction Course
- England Amputee Football Association Website
- Limb Power Website
- Playing Football with a Prosthesis Guidance
- UK Coaching: Coaching Amputee Participants Guidance