

Contact details



THE INDEPENDENT
FOOTBALL OMBUDSMAN

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THE INDEPENDENT
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A BRIEF GUIDE



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WHAT IS THE IFO?

The Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO) has been established by the English Football Authorities (the Football Association, the Premier League and The Football League) with the agreement of Government. The IFO has a clear remit to receive and adjudicate on complaints which have not been resolved at an earlier stage and will act as the final stage in football's complaints procedure. The IFO is the successor body to the Independent Football Commission (IFC), which operated from 2002 to 2008 as an integral part of football's self-regulatory system.

The vast majority of complaints are resolved at an early stage, but if you feel dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint you have submitted, then you can refer it to the relevant governing body. This, for example, would be the Premier League if your complaint arose from a service provided by a Premier League club. It is only when your complaint has been considered by the governing body that you can appeal to the IFO. For many complaints there will be a 3 stage process (club, governing body, IFO), though where a complaint relates to a governing body itself (eg the FA for an England game), there would be 2 stages (governing body, IFO).

You may wish to communicate your concerns to the IFO, using any of the contact addresses at the back of this leaflet. However, do remember that the IFO can adjudicate formally only on those complaints which have already been dealt with by a governing body.

The IFO has been given some other responsibilities. The IFO can suggest subjects for research and enquiry; it will be consulted on regulation changes; and it may identify wider policy issues arising from complaints it has adjudicated. In announcing the creation of the IFO, the Football Authorities confirmed that they were "committed to the highest standards of self-regulation" and that "the creation of an Ombudsman would maintain a position as the independent and final arbiter of football complaints."

Operating from the 2008-09 season, the IFO will produce an Annual Report to the Minister for Sport and the Football Authorities. This report will be made publicly available.

WHO'S WHO AT THE IFO?

The Independent Football Ombudsman service comprises the Ombudsman (Professor Derek Fraser), his deputy (Mr Alan Watson) and an Advisory Panel.



PROFESSOR DEREK FRASER was for the whole of its existence the Chairman of the IFC, having been appointed in August 2001 and implementing its closure in June 2008. He has been watching football since the late 1940s and he supports his hometown club, Birmingham City. His best football moment was being at Wembley to see England win the World Cup in 1966. Derek has chaired many bodies and is currently Chair of Standards Verification UK. He is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Teesside, where he served as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive from 1992 to 2003.



MR ALAN WATSON CBE was also an IFC Commissioner throughout the life of the IFC, serving as Vice-Chairman during its later stages. He was a senior civil servant and has a wealth of experience in complaints resolution. He was Deputy Parliamentary Commissioner, responsible for investigating complaints against government departments. Alan is a qualified and still active football referee. He is an avid Newcastle United fan and travels long distances from his home in the south to watch his beloved black and whites.



The IFO Advisory Panel will comprise members with a broad range of relevant experience. This expertise includes legal, compliance, communications, stadium operations and security. Members of the Advisory Panel will assist the IFO in dealing with cases where their specialist knowledge is relevant.