

**PE1319/TT**

28 May 2014

Chris Hynd  
Public Petitions Committee Assistant  
Public Petitions Clerks  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Chris

**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1319  
ON IMPROVING YOUTH FOOTBALL**

Please accept the following as the submission for Petition PE1319 on behalf of the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA).

**Evidence session on 20 May 2014**

Scott Robertson states:

*“The Scottish Youth FA does not know what to do with that list and sits on it, so that information is not sent to clubs such as Musselburgh Windsor and Hillwood Boys Club”*

SYFA have requested information from the Scottish FA on several occasions and in light of evidence supplied by Andrew McKinlay I have now written to him personally and we have agreed to meet on Friday 6 June 2014 in order that we can give opportunities to play football to players who have been released from Club Academy Scotland.

John Murray states:

*“I just add that our players sign is exactly the same form that the boys club players sign.”*

And later *“it is the same form that is signed.”*

I make two points here, firstly we are not “boys clubs” as we provide fun football for players of both sexes and secondly the statement is factually incorrect in that we do not sign the same form and register under the same conditions.

A player registering for a club in full or associate membership of the Scottish FA under 18 years of age uses a Non-Recreational Player Registration – Youth form covered by registration procedures 2.5 to 2.12.

A player registering for an SYFA member club uses a “Recreational Player Registration form covered by registration procedure 12.

*“In the past 18 years at Hearts I have tried to sign players from boys clubs and met a lot of aggravation. Some boys clubs refuse to release the player’s registration so that he can come to Heart of Midlothian Football Club”*

I would draw the committee’s attention to Scottish FA registration procedure 8.A.2.6:

*“Should the Secretary of the Scottish Youth FA Club formally deny the Scottish FA Member Club permission to enter discussions with one of its registered Players or their parent(s)/guardian(s) as appropriate then the secretary of the Scottish FA Member Club should contact the Chief Executive of the Scottish Youth FA.”*

SYFA inserted this clause into an agreement with the Scottish FA 10 years ago before it was latterly incorporated within the registration procedures thus ensuring that all players were made fully aware of opportunities available.

*“Until recently boys club registrations continue on for years. I can check a player on the SFA website and find that they signed with a boys club 18 months ago.”*

Again this statement is factually incorrect as all clubs, officials and players have to renew membership/registration on an annual basis in accordance with the Articles of Association of SYFA Limited and the Supplementary and Playing Rules as follows:

*“57. Player registrations for member clubs will only be done online.*

*Access to the online player registration system for clubs participating within a competitive season will be after the club affiliates and on or after 1<sup>st</sup> May to clubs who have renewed their membership. Clubs who have renewed their membership can commence registering players who have been registered for them and not cancelled in the current season. After 31<sup>st</sup> May of each season a club may approach and sign an unregistered player of another club if they so desire.*

*Clubs officially intimating their resignation during the currency of a season shall forfeit the right to have first call on any player they may have had registered during the season they ceased to function.”*

*“I know of teams in Edinburgh that have three or four teams of the same age group, all of whom are paying money every week to play football”*

Mr Murray is factually correct and the following extract from the SYFA Articles of Association, article 7 supports his evidence:

*“To promote, maintain, improve and advance, in any way that may be deemed appropriate in the sole discretion of the Board, without discrimination against any organisation or person for reason of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, language, religion or politics, the game of Association Football among youth football clubs or leagues of such clubs in Scotland, and to take all such steps as may be deemed necessary or advisable for (i) improving the quality of playing, coaching and enjoyment of the game, (ii) preventing infringements of the rules of the game or other improper methods or practices in the game, and (iii) protecting it from abuses; and”*

So as well as promoting the game SYFA also acknowledges that we and our members are subscription lead and rely on payments from parents, fundraising, the business community and sponsors as and when available. We do not receive any monies from the Scottish Government.

### **Cancellation of a Player's Registration**

I would try and assist the Public Petitions Committee by again re-iterating procedures within SYFA for the cancellation of a player's registration:

#### ***Cancellation of Player Registration(s)***

69. *A player may have his registration cancelled by submitting a letter requesting such cancellation to the secretary of the player's current club. If the club secretary agrees to*

*cancel the player, the club secretary would go online and submit the cancellation request to SYFA. The SYFA decision will be emailed to the club secretary.*

70. *A Club desiring to have a player's registration cancelled, the club secretary must go online and submit the cancellation request to SYFA. The SYFA decision will be emailed to the club secretary.*

71. *The cancellation of a player's registration will be effective from the date processed by the SYFA online registration system. When a request to have a registration cancelled has been lodged, the player concerned shall neither play nor sign for any other club until his registration has been cancelled by the Chief Executive of the Scottish FA.*

72. *It shall be an offence for clubs to request cancellation of registration for any player while the player is under a dated suspension. Players of clubs which fold or cease to exist during the currency of a player's match suspension should register for a new club.*

*The club for which said player registers should send the registration form to the Chief Executive accompanied by a letter from the player which indicates the number of matches of his suspension he has still to serve. The games played by that new club from the date of receipt will be counted towards suspension.*

*Only after the completion of a dated suspension will a player be allowed to sign and register for a member club.*

73. *When a player and a club for which he is registered are unable mutually to agree to the cancellation of his registration, the player may apply in writing to the Chief Executive to have his registration cancelled. In such circumstances, the registration shall be cancelled when a period of 28 days has elapsed from the date such application was properly lodged and provided that the SYFA is satisfied that the player has met all his commitments to the club. If the SYFA are not satisfied they will carry out an investigation. The player will only be eligible to participate again in football after receiving written notification from the Chief Executive.*

*A player may only have his registration cancelled in such a manner, once per season.*

74. *The Board shall have the power to cancel registration of players in cases of clubs for which they are registered becoming defunct, debt suspended for a period of one month or where reasons satisfactory to the Board are adduced why the registration should be cancelled.*

I would comment specifically on rule 73 and on my role within this rule as chief executive. Under normal circumstances the only reason a club refuses to cancel a player is due to the player's failure to return club kit or equipment. If a player has met his/her obligations to the club I WILL cancel the registration to allow the player to continue having fun through football.

I hope that this written submission is of assistance to the committee.

Yours sincerely

David Little  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Youth FA