

Amateur clubs in the West of Scotland will soon have an opportunity to join the Scottish football pyramid after an agreement between the West of Scotland Football League (WoSFL) and the Scottish Amateur Football Association (SAFA).

The agreement means that when a vacancy arises for a club to join the West of Scotland Football League, perhaps due to the Premier Division champion club being promoted to the Lowland League, that the vacancy could be filled by an amateur club, from the Scottish Amateur Football Association (SAFA), that satisfies all the necessary stadium and other criteria required to join the WoSFL.

Any SAFA amateur club, based within the defined geographical boundary of the League, that wishes to apply for membership of the WoSFL will now be able to do so at any time via the wosfl.co.uk website. There, all the information will be available, including a copy of the stadium criteria clubs will be required to meet and the League constitution. Clubs will also be able to complete an online self-assessment form to start the process.

A visit from a delegate of the WoSFL will highlight any aspect of the application that needs to be improved, including the stadium criteria and once the club has satisfied the requirements, they will be placed on an accredited list clubs eligible to join the League. When a vacancy arises, those clubs on the approved list will be invited to make a presentation to a panel made up of both the WoSFL and the SAFA to determine which club will fill the vacancy.

The agreement also means that any youth club that wishes to become a member of the WoSFL must in the first instance, join their local SAFA League or Association. After they have been members of the Scottish Amateur FA for a season, they will then be eligible to apply to become an accredited club to join the WoSFL.

SAFA President, Iain Cowden, said that this agreement was a positive step that allowed those progressive amateur clubs an opportunity to make the step into senior football, while allowing open dialogue with member clubs to assist them going forward.

“This agreement is great news for all amateur clubs in the West of Scotland who may have ambitions of progressing into the pyramid system of Scottish Football whilst at the same time protecting the status of the Scottish Amateur FA in the West of Scotland, in that clubs out with our organisation who wish to join the pyramid system, must become a member of the Scottish Amateur FA before they can become eligible to apply to the West of Scotland League.”

“This is an excellent opportunity for our clubs, and I believe that this is a blueprint that could be replicated elsewhere in Scotland for the benefit of our national game.”

Matt Bamford, Chairman of the West of Scotland Football League agreed and stated that football is the winner from this agreement.

“This agreement is a win/win for both the League and for amateur football. It allows clubs to achieve the minimum criteria for membership of the WoSFL so that they have everything in place when a vacancy arises.”

“It also protects the amateur game and benefits not only progressive amateur clubs but also youth clubs with a defined pathway into senior football should they so desire.”