



From Ted Gascoyne – Formerly Disabled Liaison Officer (now Retired) at Derby County FC

Informing disabled fans

Prior to DCFC moving to their new stadium at Pride Park, I had been in charge of the visitor centre where people came to see and hear of the progress being made on the new ground. People came in their hundreds every day, even queuing to be allowed in to the building. One visitor who came near the completion of the stadium was the BBC Sport commentator – Colin Gibson, of Radio Derby, who asked if I would do a spot on his Monday evening programme. I agreed and explained that there would be plenty of opportunities for anyone who was disabled to come to the new stadium and in order that this could happen, I would be at the new stadium at 10am the following Saturday morning, when people with any form of disability would be welcome to come and go inside Pride Park to look at what was available. (We had 28 Disabled at the old Baseball Ground). Imagine my surprise when I arrived on the following Saturday morning to find over 400 people in the main car park, all waiting to go inside!



The result was, that by the time the first match was due to be played, I had sold over 350 season tickets for disabled supporters.

From a wife and carer of a disabled football fan

Just three home matches into the season, I arrived at work one Monday to find the telephone ringing and a lady at the other end of the line who made the following statement: - "Mr Gascoyne, I just have to say thank you to you and DCFC for what you've done for me and my husband.

My husband has been in a wheelchair for 26 years and during that time I have looked after him every day. Until he was struck down, he went to see Derby every week at the Baseball Ground.

Following his accident he never thought he would get to see them again. We heard you on Radio Derby and came to see you, you arranged for Robert to have a carer, you arranged for Erewash Community transport to pick him up from our front door every match day and bring him back after the match. What you don't know is the difference it has made to my life. Now when there is a match on, I can have a long soak in the bath, do jobs I never had time to do before, I've even been shopping on my own, things I have not done for over 25 years. It is wonderful, so thank you DCFC"

Fulfilling a little girl's dream

I had a little girl who had cerebral palsy, Helen, who came to every game. A few weeks before her 10th birthday her father came and asked me if Helen could be 'Mascot' for the match on her birthday.



As she was in a wheelchair and very disfigured (although a lovely girl) I asked Jim Smith the manager if he would agree to it. He did and it was agreed that she would be placed on the side of the pitch in her wheelchair and the players and match officials would come out and have their photographs taken with her. As agreed, this happened, then Christian Dailly and Gary Rowett, two of the Derby players, picked Helen and her wheelchair up and carried her to the halfway line, where she took part in the coin tossing. She was then carried back to her position by the two captains to a wonderful round of applause. (It still makes me cry when I recall those events).