**THE FA LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL FESTIVAL**

**TO MARK 100 DAYS TO GO UNTIL UEFA EURO 2020**

**Embargoed until 00.01 on Wednesday 4 March**

The FA has today marked 100 days to go until the start of UEFA EURO 2020 by launching THE FA FIVES – a nationwide five-a-side football festival that is set to captivate the nation ahead of this summer’s European Championships.

Funded by the Government via Sport England and promoted in partnership with BBC Sport, THE FA FIVES will be the nation’s largest and most inclusive five-a-side football event to date. More than 5,000 teams and up to 50,000 participants are expected to register a team into one of the 15 categories on offer, which include U14, U16, adult, veteran, disability and walking football provisions for both male and female players.

Events are set to take place at over 120 venues across the country, providing an opportunity for thousands of people to get involved. The fun kicks off on the 2-3 May, with teams looking to progress to one of five festival-style Regional Final events on the weekend of 30-31 May. THE FA FIVES will reach its climax with a very special National Finals weekend played against the backdrop of the iconic Wembley Stadium on the 12-13 June – the same weekend that UEFA EURO 2020 gets underway in Rome.

The FA is working with Rio Ferdinand, England’s ambassador for UEFA EURO 2020, to get as many teams across the country registered for the event before the sign-up period closes on 23 April.

**Speaking about the initiative, Rio said:** “If having the chance to watch England on home soil this summer wasn’t exciting enough, people all over the country can now dust off their boots and get involved in a football festival of their own.

“It’s great to support such an inclusive initiative – one that’s completely free to enter and has provision for so many different people, regardless of their ability or background. With just 100 days to go until the tournament starts, there really is no better time to give football a go.”

**Chris Bryant, The FA’s Head of Tournament Delivery, said:** “For Wembley Stadium to host seven games at UEFA EURO 2020 is a real privilege, but also an extremely exciting prospect for the whole country. We’re delighted to be able to deliver this inclusive event giving people of all abilities the chance to be part of it – whether that be playing for the first time at a Round One event or supporting friends and family at a Regional Final. We’re grateful to our partners and stakeholders for their support in delivering THE FA FIVES and look forward to watching the fun unfold this summer.”

In its 60th anniversary year, UEFA EURO 2020 will be the biggest celebration of European football in history, with the hosting shared by 12 cities across Europe – including London – for the first time. Wembley Stadium will welcome over 600,000 fans when it hosts seven games next summer, including both semi-finals and the showpiece final.

THE FA FIVES is one of many initiatives taking place to celebrate UEFA EURO 2020 this summer. In the capital the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is working with boroughs and other organisations to ensure that Londoners from all walks of life and backgrounds can share in the joy and excitement of the tournament. Throughout the competition there will be fan zones, cultural activities, interactive public art, as well as Mayoral funding for grass-roots community groups and initiatives. The family-friendly Greenwich Fan Zone will screen England games, the semi-finals and the final for 30,000 fans, who will be able to apply for free tickets via a ballot in due course.

**Sports Minister, Nigel Huddleston, said:** “Major sporting events have the power to bring the nation together and inspire people to take up sport, boosting both physical and mental wellbeing.

“UEFA EURO 2020 is a golden opportunity to host some of the best footballers in the world, and to get more people from all backgrounds into the sport.

“I encourage people of all ages and abilities to get involved in THE FA FIVES, a festival that I hope will capture the imagination of the nation and offer the public their own chance of glory at the home of football.”

For more information or to register a team for THE FA FIVES, visit TheFA.com/THEFAFIVES.

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**Notes to editors:**

**THE FA FIVES**

* The full list of THE FA FIVES categories is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Adult Male (aged 16+)  Adult Female (16+)  Male Veterans (35+)  Female Veterans (35+)  Female Walking Football (40+)  Walking Football Mixed (50+) | Adult Male Disability League (16+)  Adult Male Disability Premiership (16+)  Adult Male Disability Championship (16+)  Adult Female Disability (16+)  Youth disability (11 to 16) | Under-14 male  Under-14 female  Under-16 male  Under-16 female |

* The FA is working with Limelight Sports to deliver all Round One events and the five Regional Finals
* The FA FIVES Regional Finals will take place at five venues across the country on 30-31 May. The specific locations will be announced in March.

North East Sunderland, Tyne and Wear

North West Manchester, Cheshire

Midlands Rugby, Warwickshire

South West Yeovil, Somerset

South East Elmbridge, Surrey

* Every team that enters THE FA FIVES and participates in a Round One event will be entered into a ballot to win tickets to England’s UEFA EURO 2020 opening game against Croatia on Sunday 14 June at Wembley Stadium. Participant T&Cs can be found at TheFA.com/THEFAFIVES

**Sport England EURO 2020 Small Grants Legacy Programme**

Sport England has successfully linked its Small Grants programme to THE FA FIVES to enable organisations including County Football Associations the opportunity to unlock additional revenue investment to support EURO 2020 legacy projects.  Sport England’s Small Grants programme uses National Lottery Funding to make awards of between £300 and £10,000 to not-for-profit organisations and statutory bodies that support its ‘Towards an Active Nation Strategy 2016-2021’.

The Small Grants fund will help local organisations support people to stay active during and beyond THE FA FIVES and can be used for things such as hiring coaches, facilities, equipment and transport, and supporting organisations to use a diverse range of accessible facilities including park settings for THE FA FIVES events. The funding is primarily aimed at projects that are encouraging more people to become active from those living in the top 20% most deprived parts of England.

The first funding decisions from this programme are due to be announced soon. More information on Sport England’s Small Grants Programme is available at [SportEngland.org/SmallGrants](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/our-funds/small-grants)