



Respect



# Adult football clubs

Your guide to The FA's Respect programme

# Who will you be today?



## Show some Respect

Thousands of referees drop out of the game every season due to abuse.

## Why football needs Respect

The FA is responding to concern from grassroots football to tackle unacceptable behaviour in football.

The plea came out of the biggest survey yet undertaken of the grassroots game in England. This pinpointed eradicating unacceptable behaviour as the No.1 priority. It was an opinion shared by everyone in the game – players, league and club officials, referees and spectators.

The FA is responding in a variety of ways, and one of the main actions is the **Respect** programme. It is not a short-lived campaign but an ongoing commitment to improve behaviour in football. It won't be tackled in one or two seasons as we all have a lot of work to do over the seasons ahead.

One of the main aims of **Respect** is to tackle the mass drop-out of referees from football due to abuse. Thousands of referees drop out of the game every season, mainly due to the abuse they receive on the pitch and from the sidelines. The number of match officials in 2008 reached its lowest-ever level.

Without referees the game simply cannot be played properly.

**Sadly, the following is a reflection of the current grassroots game:**

- 98% of referees have been verbally abused and 27% have been physically abused. In season 2008-09 over 500 referees were assaulted – 100 of them seriously. This must come to an end.
- Thousands of grassroots matches are played without a qualified match official.
- In 2007-08, 846 grassroots matches were abandoned due to unacceptable behaviour from players and/or spectators.

Of course, your club and league may not have experienced these issues, but nationally it is a problem. Given we all love the game, we should all want to take behaviour standards to a new level.

**Respect** needs your club and its players to play its part. Together, we can make a huge difference.



Respect



# Respect

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## What is Respect?

**Respect** is the collective responsibility of everyone involved in football, at all levels, to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place. It is the behavioural code for football.

**Respect** is a continuous FA programme, not a one-off initiative.

### What do we want to achieve with Respect?

1. There will be a base of registered referees in England sufficient for the demands of the game at every level.
2. There will be zero tolerance for assaults on referees.
3. There will be an improvement in on-field player discipline, particularly in the area of dissent to referees and in competitions that have an established record of poor discipline.
4. There will be a 'step change' in youth football on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from parents and spectators.
5. We will work with coaches to create an enjoyable learning environment for children's football





# How do we achieve Respect?

**For clubs, the Respect programme includes four practical steps to improve behaviour – on the pitch and on the sidelines – in and at matches throughout the country:**

- Step 1:** Codes of Conduct
- Step 2:** Designated Spectators' Area
- Step 3:** The captain takes responsibility
- Step 4:** The referee manages the game.

**Step one:**  
**Codes of Conduct**

Codes of Conduct aren't new and are already in use by some clubs (for example, they are mandatory for Charter Standard Clubs). Some Codes are successful, some are forgotten and simply not acted upon.

**Respect** brings them to life.

How? By supporting and strengthening the Codes of Conduct with possible consequences. There is little point in having a set of rules if no action is taken if and when they're broken.

**There are Respect Codes of Conduct for:**

- Young Players
- Adult Players
- Spectators and Parents/Carers
- Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials
- Match Officials.

Each Code explains that actions can be taken if the Code is broken. Although your County FA or The FA will deal with cases of reported misconduct, clubs also have a role to play in dealing with poor behaviour from players, officials or spectators. This can range from education, mentoring, official warnings, suspension or even exclusion from the club. For further guidance on these specific actions speak directly to your league or County FA.

All the **Respect** Codes of Conduct can be downloaded from [www.TheFA.com/Respect](http://www.TheFA.com/Respect)

Respect works on placing responsibility for their actions by individuals: break your Code, and bear the consequences.

**Codes of Conduct:**

**Your club's responsibilities:**

Each Respect Code of Conduct explains that action can and will be taken if the Code is broken.

**Your club has three main responsibilities around the Codes:**

1. To ensure everyone within the club (club members), whatever their role, has read, agreed and signed up to their relevant Code – and understands the actions which could be taken if Codes are broken.
2. To collect and retain the signed agreement forms at the foot of each Code.
3. To deal fairly and consistently with anyone who breaks 'their' Code.

If your club hasn't used Codes of Conduct before – or has Codes without consequences – this needs discussion, so your members understand how the Codes work and what their responsibilities are. Your league or County FA **Respect** Lead Officer will be able to give you some further guidance in this area.

**Clubs which already have Codes of Conduct:**

If you are an FA Charter Standard Club, and/or you already have your own club Codes of Conduct, it is advised that you adopt the new Respect Codes or revise your existing codes to include any elements you may have missed.

It is suggested that it may be helpful to display the Respect Codes of Conduct by in dressing rooms, pavilions, club houses and if applicable, displaying the Spectator Code publicly or handing down the sidelines.

The important difference is ensuring your club members understand and appreciate what can happen if Codes are broken. That way, there should be no subsequent debate because they didn't understand the consequences of breaking a Code.



### Imposing Sanctions

The Codes identify a range of sanctions which can be applied in the event of misconduct or poor behaviour.

Whilst your County FA or The FA will deal with reported misconduct, clubs also have a role to play in educating its membership as to what is – and what isn't – acceptable behaviour and taking action when the Codes are broken.

It's important for Clubs to be clear about what it expects from its members and to educate people when guidance is required. Should this guidance be disregarded then the management of a Club has the right to implement sanctions against offenders. Such action should:

- Be fair and consistent – treating people in the same way regardless of their position in the club
- Be proportionate to the offence
- Be progressively more serious for repeat offenders
- Follow a process that allows people to know when they have broken a Code of Conduct and provides them with an opportunity to explain their actions.

### Step two:

#### Designated Spectators' Areas

The creation of designated areas for spectators is a key element of Respect but is a measure largely aimed at youth football where large numbers of spectators can be attracted, some of whom may behave poorly.

If your games in an open-age league attract touchline supporters, then the following detail on the introduction of a Designated Spectators' Area will be of interest. However, if your games are watched by very few people, you may be better focusing your attention on the other Respect measures.

A Designated Spectators' Area can be marked by an additional line, the use of cones, a roped-off area or use of a temporary spectators' barrier.

The areas literally draw the line which spectators should not cross. Research has shown it to have a beneficial impact on the behaviour of spectators and their impact on players and match officials.

The ideal arrangement is to mark out a Designated Spectators' Area on the opposite side of the pitch to club officials (manager/coaches etc) for spectators to stand behind.

This allows the manager/coaches of both teams to stand on the other side of the pitch, meaning players can better distinguish the advice from their team officials.

You may prefer an alternative form of marking a Designated Spectators' Area, but you must ensure this is safe for both the spectators and the players. The FA strongly recommends you obtain formal agreement from the facility/pitch provider about which method of marking is most suitable for the pitch, before beginning any work or buying any new equipment.

The safety of the players, officials and spectators is paramount.

**To help implement the Designated Spectators' Area, The FA has endorsed a Respect Barrier Kit which is available from [www.respectzone.com](http://www.respectzone.com) which comprises:**

- 120 metres of specialised Respect-branded tape (2 x 60 metres lengths)
- A complete set of safety poles
- A simple-to-use and effective reeling system
- Assembly kit comprising of mallet, securing pegs and instructions
- Lightweight carry bag.

The Designated Spectators' Area should start two metres from the touchline on one side of the pitch and should run the full length of the pitch. This means no-one should be watching from behind the goals. It is recognised however that the alignment of some public pitches does not allow for this arrangement in which case other appropriate arrangements should be made.



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**Step three:**

**The captain takes responsibility**

Often problems start at matches when individual players are abusive towards the referee, which escalates into several players confronting the referee at the same time – then it's anarchy.

Respect aims to stop this cycle before it starts. Only the captain can challenge decisions made by the referee and the captain needs to manage his/her team to ensure this is always observed. However, this does not mean the referee will only speak to the captain. Referees remain free to talk to any player if this means they can manage the game better.

**The advice to captains is:**

As a captain, you have no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game, but you do have a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of your team.

To promote Respect the referee will work with you, as the team captain, to manage the players and the game effectively.

Even if you are some way away from an incident when the referee feels he/she needs you involved in a discussion with a player, the referee will call you over. This will ensure that, as the team captain, you remain the point of contact for the referee.

In some cases a referee will proceed directly to a caution if he deems an offence to be serious enough, and is not obliged to call a captain forward for every incident – only those that will assist him/her in the management of the game.

The type of behaviour that often gives rise to problems in matches, and where captains and referees need to work together, can be described as 'harassment and challenging behaviour' towards the referee'.

Referees will also make use of captains to deal with persistent offence from a team-mate where there is a real possibility of further offending resulting in a caution or a dismissal. Captains will also be called forward where additional support is required to calm a player down who is likely to immediately re-offend.

Here are some examples of each of these types of behaviour;

**Harassment:**

- Running towards the referee in an aggressive manner.
- Players surrounding the referee to protest a decision.
- Repeatedly asking questions about decisions in an attempt to influence the referee or undermine his/her responsibilities.

**Challenging:**

- Passing comment to other players about a referee's decision-making.
- Repeatedly moaning at the referee about decisions.
- Gestures that obviously are made in a derogatory manner, such as a shaking of the head or waving of the hand.

**Captains have been asked to:**

- Ensure they wear a Respect captain's armband. These will be provided by your league to your club.
- Together with the opposition captain, make themselves known to the referee before the game. He/she will ask if the captains if they are clear about your responsibilities.
- Ensure all players understand what they can/cannot do in relation to the referee and what is meant by 'unwanted behaviour'. No-one's trying to curb enthusiasm – just instil more discipline. This can only benefit the specific match and football as a whole.
- Ensure the vice-captain (who should be appointed if there isn't one) is aware of these rules, in case the captain is unavailable for a game or has to leave the pitch.
- Ensure every player in the team has signed the Respect Code of Conduct.
- Visit [www.TheFA.com/Respect](http://www.TheFA.com/Respect) for further updates and tips.

**Step four:**

**The referee manages the game**

Clearly, this step already applies, but it is included in the Respect programme as a timely reminder to emphasise the role and powers of the referee.

**The instructions given to referees are:**

You are expected to work with the team captains to manage the players and the game effectively. You must control the game by applying the Laws of the Game and deal firmly with any open show of dissent by players. (e.g. not move away from the incident, but stay and deal with it).

While recognising that players may on occasions make an appeal for a decision (e.g. a throw-in, corner or goal-kick), it is important you distinguish these from an act of dissent which should be punished with a caution.

**You should use a stepped approach, where appropriate, to managing players:**

1. Quiet word.
2. Free-kick with quiet word.
3. Free-kick with public admonishment (this is the time referees should consider using the captain to emphasise the message).
4. Yellow card.
5. Red card

The stepped approach does not negate the fact that as the referee, you have the authority within the Laws of the Game to issue disciplinary sanctions without recourse to the captain(s), including issuing a yellow or red card where the Laws require it.

Even if the captain is some distance from an incident, but you feel you need him/her involved in a discussion with a player, you should call the captain over. This will ensure the captain remains your point of contact during the game.

These guidelines are an additional preventative/supportive tool for referees to manage games effectively. The key is for referees to use captains in a more visible way.



**The Respect programme also introduces a pre-match handshake protocol, which referees have been asked to apply where possible before kick-off:**

1. The starting 11 from both teams together with the three match officials (excluding fourth official) should take part in the handshake.
2. Each team should line up on the same side of the pitch.
3. The home team, led by their captain, then walks to shake hands with the match officials, and then the away team's players. Once each home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player they disperse to their favoured end to kick-off.

4. Once the last home team player has completed the handshake, the away team then follow their captain passing in front of the match officials to shake hands before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.
5. Once the handshakes have been completed the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

Whilst we understand that it may be difficult to implement this protocol in every case, we would ask that referees do what they reasonably can to ensure its implementation.



## The first season of Respect

### Throughout the first season of Respect 2008-09, its impact was monitored. Below are the headline findings:

- In the professional game player behaviour has improved. There have been 44% fewer cases of mass confrontation and a 50% decline in cases of reported harassment of referees. Referees report an improved relationship with players but feel that some managers could set a better example to players and spectators.
- There has been an increase in the volume of dissent cautions in all leagues apart from the Premier League. The Professional Game Match Officials believe this to be a result of more referees dealing with on-field dissent, instead of tolerating it, as in previous seasons.
- The use of a team captains to assist the referee to manage player behaviour is considered to be of value.
- Compared to the same period for season 2007-08 there has been an 8% rise in referee numbers. There are 53% more student referees (Level 9) in training and a 3% increase in Levels 1 – 8 trainees.
- The FA is ahead of its recruitment targets for referees and currently has over 26,000 registered referees.
- The number of serious assaults on referees declined by 10% in 2008-09 but disappointingly over 500 referees still reported being subject to physical abuse.
- In the amateur game, cautions for dissent have risen by 3% but there has been a decline in charges for misconduct and the number of dismissals.
- The FA had a considerable impact in youth football with the promotion of adverts and educational courses dealing with the problem of abusive touchline parents. This will continue to be a focus for the work of The FA.

- The use of a Designated Spectators' Area marked by barriers, a painted line or cones is an effective way of improving spectator barriers in youth football.
- The vast majority of those involved in football agree that the Respect programme is definitely needed. It has to be a long-term programme that requires constant reinforcement and reinvention.

The Respect programme is an ongoing commitment by the football authorities to tackle poor behaviour and we will seek to improve this position season on season.





## How to introduce Respect to your club

Fundamentally, we need you to accept and understand the four steps to **Respect** outlined on the previous pages - and then impart them to everyone at your club.

To get everyone on board, we suggest the following actions.

### **Attend a league information session**

If your league decides to sign-up to Respect, your league officials will hold an information session on the programme and the role your club will be expected to play. It's important your club is absolutely clear about what your involvement entails. Your league will hand out Respect resources at this session.

### **Organise a club Respect session and inform your members**

We would recommend you organise an information session for your club members, along the lines of the one you will be asked to attend by your league.

However it's organised, you need to ensure that all the members of your club read, understand and sign the relevant Codes of Conduct.

### **Members include:**

- Club officials, Coaches and Team Managers, including volunteers
- All players
- Welfare Officers.

### **Communicate with your spectators**

This may not apply at your club, but if your matches attract spectators, they have a key influence on standards of behaviour: their own and others.

It's accepted that spectators are not under a club's direct control, but you and your players have a responsibility to lead by example and set the standards of behaviour you expect from spectators - and then maintain these standards.

So, depending on the size of your club, you may want to include spectators in your club information session(s).



### **Ensure your club officials understand Respect**

Players and spectators will often take their lead from the management of a team. If a manager or coach is bawling at match officials it is likely that players will do so too. Managers and coaches have a responsibility to behave themselves in a way which reflects the Respect Codes of Conduct

### **Take action to make the Respect Codes of Conduct meaningful**

Get all club participants – whatever their role – to sign up to a Code of Conduct and then the management of the club should ensure that they are obeyed. In some cases this may mean that additional education or advice is required. For more serious cases a warning may be administered or a temporary withdrawal of club privileges. For serious or persistent cases the Club Committee may need to consider suspending or even withdrawing an individual's club membership.

### **Respect education programme**

Central to The FA's commitment to the Respect programme is the need to build upon the physical measures – such as the Codes of Conduct and Designated Spectators' Area – with an education programme.

The programme will be delivered by The FA's educational arm, FA Learning.

For more information on the educational services available go to [www.TheFA.com/Respect](http://www.TheFA.com/Respect) or call the FA Learning hotline on 0870 850 0424.



Respect





Respect Codes of Conduct



**Respect**



## Adult Players

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.

Players tell us they want a referee for every match, yet thousands of match officials drop out each season because of the abuse and intimidation they receive on and off the pitch.

Respect your referee today and you may just get one for every match this season.

Play your part and observe The FA's **Respect Code of Conduct** for players at all times.

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### On and off the field, I will:

- Adhere to the Laws of The Game
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour
- Promote Fair Play
- Always respect the match officials' decisions
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials
- Never engage in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Never engage in bullying, intimidation or harassment
- Speak to my team-mates, the opposition and my coach/manager with respect
- Remember we all make mistakes
- Win or lose with dignity. Shake hands with the opposing team and the referee at the end of every game.

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**I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club, County FA or The FA**

### I may:

- Be required to apologise to team-mates, the other team, referee or team manager
- Receive a warning from the coach
- Receive a written warning from the club committee
- Be required to attend an FA education course
- Be dropped or substituted
- Be suspended from training
- Not be selected for the team
- Be required to serve a suspension
- Be fined
- Be required to leave the club.

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### In addition:

- The FA/County FA could impose a fine and/or suspension on the club.



## Match Officials

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.

The behaviour of the match officials has an impact, directly and indirectly, on the conduct of everyone involved in the game – both on the pitch and on the sidelines.

Play your part and observe The FA's **Respect Code of Conduct** for match officials at all time.

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### I will:

- Be honest and completely impartial at all times
- Apply the Laws of the Game and competition rules fairly and consistently
- Manage the game in a positive, calm and confident manner
- Deal with all instances of violence, aggression, unsporting behaviour, foul play and other misconduct
- Never tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour from players and officials

- Support my match official colleagues at all times
- Set a positive personal example by promoting good behaviour and showing respect to everyone involved in the game
- Communicate with the players and encourage fair play
- Respond in a clear, calm and confident manner to any appropriate request for clarification by the team captains
- Prepare physically and mentally for every match
- Complete and submit, accurate and concise reports within the time limit required for games in which I officiate.

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**I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club, County FA or The FA.**

### I may be:

- Required to meet with The FA/County FA Refereeing Official
- Required to meet with The FA/County FA Refereeing Committee.

# Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.

In The FA's survey of 37,000 grassroots participants, behaviour was the biggest concern in the game. This included the abuse of match officials and the unacceptable behaviour of over competitive parents, spectators and coaches on the sideline.

Play your part and observe The FA's **Respect Code of Conduct** in everything you do.

### On and off the field, I will:

- Show respect to others involved in the game including match officials, opposition players, coaches, managers, officials and spectators
- Adhere to the laws and spirit of the game
- Promote Fair Play and high standards of behaviour
- Always respect the match official's decision
- Never enter the field of play without the referee's permission
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour.

### On and off the field, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning
- Explain exactly what I expect of players and what they can expect from me

- Ensure all parents/carers of all players under the age of 18 understand these expectations
- Never engage in or tolerate any form of bullying
- Develop mutual trust and respect with every player to build their self-esteem
- Encourage each player to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance
- Ensure all activities I organise are appropriate for the players' ability level, age and maturity
- Co-operate fully with others in football (e.g. officials, doctors, physiotherapists, welfare officers) for each player's best interests.

**I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club, County FA or The FA.**

### I may be:

- Required to meet with the club, league or County Welfare Officer
- Required to meet with the club committee
- Monitored by another club coach
- Required to attend a FA education course
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave or be sacked by the club.

### In addition:

- My FACA (FA Coaches Association) membership may be withdrawn.







Lose Respect  
Lose the game



**The Football Association**  
Wembley Stadium,  
Wembley,  
Middlesex HA9 0WS

**Postal address:**  
The Football Association,  
Wembley Stadium,  
PO Box 1966,  
London SW1P 9EQ

T **+44 (0) 844 980 8200**  
F **+44 (0) 844 980 8201**  
E **Respect@TheFA.com**



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**TheFA.com/Respect**