

Respect

the ref. the players. the game.



Your guide to the Respect programme for clubs with junior & youth teams



Football West would like to acknowledge the support of the The FA in reproducing this Respect Guide.

The FA Respect programme is the Football Association direct response to a clear message from the grassroots that the game needs Respect. This is echoed by Football West here in Western Australia with our Respect Programme for junior and youth clubs.

We must improve standards of behaviour both on the field and off the field.



Department of Sport and Recreation



CHARLESTON PRINT
GRAPHIC COMMUNICATORS



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1. Why football needs Respect

Football West is responding to the plea from grassroots football to tackle elements of the unacceptable behaviour in our game.

Respect aims to tackle the need for all members of our football family to have a better understanding of each other role, which will help reduce the drop-out rate of referees from football due to abuse.

Respect also aims to bring the fun back to football for young players. Parents and coaches pushing too hard and pressuring impressionable children for three points is having a negative impact on their development and enjoyment of the game.

- An English FA study show that 98% of referees are verbally abused; a similar number applies in our games here.
- One in four grassroots matches is now played without a qualified match official.
- Parents and coaches want role models in the elite game to provide a positive example for young players.



2 What is Respect?

Respect is the collective responsibility of everyone involved in our game, 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 Football West programme, not a one-off initiative

What do we want to achieve with Respect

1. Ensure enough registered referees in Western Australia 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.
4. There will be an improvement in the conduct of coaches towards the referee.
5. There will be a 'step change' in junior & youth football on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from parents and spectators.
6. We will work with clubs/coaches to create an enjoyable learning environment for children's football.



3. How do we achieve Respect?

For clubs, the Respect programme includes four steps to improve behaviour - on the field of play and on the side lines - in all matches throughout the state.

- Step 1:** Codes of Conduct
- Step 2:** Designated Spectators Area
- Step 3:** The Captain taking 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. Some are successful, some are forgotten and 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:

- Junior/youth players
- Adult players
- Spectators and Parents/Carers
- Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials
- Match Official

Each Code explains that actions can be taken if the Code is broken. Although Football West will deal with cases of reported misconduct, clubs also have a role to play in dealing with poor behaviour from their players, officials and spectators. This can range from education, mentoring, official warnings, suspensions or even exclusion from the club.

All the Respect Codes of Conduct can be downloaded from the Football West web site www.footballwest.com.au.

Respect works on placing responsibility for their actions on individuals: break your Code, and bear the consequences. Each Respect Code of Conduct explains that action can and will be taken if the Code is broken.

Your Club has Two main responsibilities around the Codes:

1. To ensure everyone within the club (members), whatever their role, has read & agreed to their relevant Code - and understands the actions which could be taken if codes are broken.
2. 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 - then this needs discussion, so your members understand how the Codes work and what their responsibilities are. Football West can provide guidance in this area.

Clubs which already have their own 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 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 understands and appreciate what can happen if Codes are broken. That way, there should no subsequent debate because they didn't understand the consequences of breaking the Code.

Imposing Sanctions

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

Whilst Football West will deal with reported misconduct, clubs also have a role to play in educating its members 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 actions 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 repeated offenders.
- Follow a process which 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**

One of the key elements of **Respect** in junior football is the creation of designated areas for spectators. This area can be marked by the use of a temporary spectator's barrier.

The areas literally draw the line which parents and spectators should **NOT CROSS** and research in the UK has shown it to have a beneficial impact on the behaviour of spectators and their impact on players and match officials.

If using the Respect barriers endorsed by Football West, the ideal arrangement is to mark out a Designated Spectators' Area on one side of the field for fans and parents/carers from both sides to stand behind.

This allows the coaches of both teams to stand on the other side of the field, meaning players get instructions from just one side of the field with any interruptions from the spectators etc.

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. Football West strongly recommends you obtain formal agreement from the facility/field provider about which method of marking is most suitable for the field, 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, Football West has endorsed a Respect Barrier Kit, which we hope will be available from the Football West office later in the year and comprises the following:

- 120 meters 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 Spectators' Area should start two metres from the touchline on both sides of the field. Each area should run the full length of the field. It is recognised however that the alignment of some public fields does not allow for this arrangement, in which case other appropriate arrangements should be made.



Step three: **The captain taking responsibility**

Often problems start at games when individual players are abusive towards the referee, which then escalates into several players confronting the referee at the same time- then its anarchy.

Respect aims to stop this cycle before it starts. Only the captain may talk to the referee about the decisions he/she has made, the captain then needs to manage his/her players to ensure that they do not approach the referee.

The advice to captains is:

As 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**- I as the referee will work with you, as the team captain, to manage the players and the game effectively.

Even if you are some distance from an incident, when the referee feels he/she needs you as captain to be involved in a discussion with one of your players, the referee will call you over. This will ensure that, as the team captain, you remain the point of contact with the referee.

The type of behaviour which often gives rise to problems in games, and where referees and captains need to work together, can be described as ‘harassment and challenging behaviour’ towards the referee. Here are some examples of each type 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 attempt to influence the referee or undermine his/her authority.

Challenging:

- Passing comment to other players about the 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 arms and hand.

Captains have been asked to ensure they wear the Football West **Respect** captain’s armband. These armbands will be available from the Football West office. 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 their responsibilities.

Ensure all players understand what they can/cannot do in relation to the referee and what is meant by ‘unwanted behaviour’. No one is trying to curb enthusiasm- just instil more discipline. This can only benefit the game and football as a whole.

Every player in the team needs to read the Respect Code of Conduct and abide by it.

Step four: **The referee manages the game**

There is a separate **Respect** information guide for referees, which incorporates the following main information in relation to the above.

As the referee, 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 kick, goal kick), it is important you as the referee distinguish these from an act of dissent which should be punished with a caution.

Referees are encouraged to use the stepped approach (road block theory), where appropriate to manage the players.

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.



4. How to introduce Respect at 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.

Organise a club Respect session and inform your members.

We would encourage your club to organise an information session for your members, Football West Referees would be happy to offer assistance in delivering the session to ensure that the club officials, players, parents are absolutely clear about what their involvement entails.

Communicate with your spectators, although not under your direct control, spectators, whether regulars or not, have a key influence on standards of behaviour; their own and that of others.

Your club has the responsibility to lead by example and set the standards of behaviour you expect from spectators, parents etc - and then maintain these standards.



5. Communicating the Respect message to young players

The Code of Conduct for junior players differs for the Adult Code of Conduct in its language and tone to ensure that the junior player understands the meaning.

Your club needs to ask these players to read the Code of Conduct before that start of the season. We have suggested that all players in the team sign up to the same form to show that it is a team effort as well as an individual promise.

However, if you really want young people to engage fully with the Respect programme, here is a suggested way to embed their minds. Perhaps you should repeat it before every game, and in time, get them to say it together before they go out?

Referee is in charge

Encourage team- mates

Shout, but don't criticise

Play fair

Enjoy the game

Captain only may speak to the referee

Try, whatever the score

Other ways of encouraging good behaviour and Respect in young players could include:

- Respect posters in the changing room
- Introduce a club award for the 'Respect player of the season' at each age group(Fair play award)
- Introduce a club award for the 'Respect team of the season' within the club (the team with the best disciplinary record)

It is important to let the players know that everyone within the club will have their own Code of Conduct. That means their parents/carers and other supporters, the coaches, team managers and club officials. Help them understand it is about making everyone responsible for their individual actions and ensuring they not only Respect others, but they Respect the game of football itself.

Club Member Protection Officers

Safeguarding children is an integral aspect of the Respect programme. It is about raising the awareness that bullying and verbal, emotional and physical abuse will not be tolerated in football. Club Member Protection Officers play a key role in this safeguarding work, and should encourage their players to follow the Respect programme and to advise them of any issues that may arise.

6. Respect Code of Conduct

Young Players:

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game. As a player, you have a big part to play. That's why Football West is asking every player to follow a **Respect Code of Conduct**.

When playing football, I will:

- Always play to the best of my ability
- Play fairly – I won't cheat, complain or waste time
- Respect my team-mates, the other team, the referee or my coach/manager
- Play by the rules, as directed by the referee
- Shake hands with the other team and referee at the end of the game
- Listen and respond to what my coach/team manager tells me
- Talk to someone I trust or the club member protection officer if I'm unhappy about anything at my club.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club or Football West. I may:

- Be required to apologise to my team-mates, the other team, and the referee
- Receive a formal warning from the coach or the club committee
- Be dropped or substituted
- Be suspended from training
- Be required to leave the club.

In addition:

- My club, Football West may make my parent or carer aware of any infringements of the Code of Conduct
- Football West could impose a fine and suspension against my club.



7. Respect Code of Conduct

Spectators and parents/carers:

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

This club is supporting Football West Respect programme to ensure football can be enjoyed in a safe, positive environment. Remember children's football is a time for them to develop their technical, physical, tactical and social skills. Winning isn't everything.

Play your part and observe Football West's **Respect Code of Conduct** for players at all times. **I will:**

- Remember that children play for FUN
- Applaud effort and good play as well as success
- Always respect the match officials' decisions
- Remain outside the field of play and within the Designated Spectators' Area (where provided)
- Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do
- Encourage the players to respect the opposition, referee and match officials
- Avoid criticising a player for making a mistake – mistakes are part of learning
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club or Football West. I may:

- Be issued with a verbal warning from a club or Football West official
- Be required to meet with the club, Football West
- Be required to meet with the club committee
- Be obliged to undertake a Football West education course
- Be obliged to leave the match venue by the club
- Be requested by the club not to attend future games
- Be suspended or have my club membership removed
- Be required to leave the club along with any dependents.

In addition:

- Football West could impose a fine and/or suspension on the club.

8. Respect Code of Conduct

Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials:

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game. The biggest concern in the game is the abuse of match officials and the unacceptable behaviour of over-competitive parents, spectators and coaches on the sideline. Play your part and observe Football West'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 else
- 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
- Ensure all activities I organise are appropriate for the players' ability level, and age
- 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, or Football West. I may be:

- Required to meet with the club, or Football West
- Required to meet with the club committee
- Monitored by another club coach
- Required to attend a Football West education course
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by Football West
- Required to leave or be sacked by the club.

In addition:

- Football West could impose a fine and/or suspension on the club.

9. Respect Code of Conduct

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 Football West’s **Respect Code of Conduct** for match officials at all times. **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.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club, or Football West I may be:

- Required to meet with Football West Refereeing Official.
- Required to meet with Football West Technical Committee.

