



# **FFSA Respect Program Guidelines**

**Your Guide to the FFSA's Respect Program**



## WELCOME TO RESPECT

Football Federation SA is pleased to launch the **RESPECT** campaign at the beginning of the 2012 season. **RESPECT** is designed to be an ongoing program for Football in South Australia and we encourage all clubs and associations to support the initiative for the good of the game in South Australia.

**RESPECT** will create an enjoyable and safe playing environment for all participants in Football including players, spectators, coaches, volunteers and officials. The education program will create a level of awareness outlining the effect abuse, criticism, bullying and physical assault can have on all involved in the beautiful game. The ongoing program of **RESPECT** will over time address some of the issues listed above and will enhance the sport of Football in South Australia.

The **Respect** programme will provide practical information and guidelines for improving behaviour

both on and off the field across all age groups and levels of Football in South Australia. Clubs will be provided with four practical steps to implement and follow.

A number of information sessions will be conducted by Football Federation SA staff to outline further details of **RESPECT**. The **RESPECT** campaign will be accompanied by a range of materials provided and funded by Football Federation SA. The promotional material will be provided to clubs and associations to display at club rooms and during match days.

Through this program all participants will have the opportunity to understand and implement **RESPECT** and that if you **GIVE IT**, you will **GET IT! RESPECT**.

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## RESPECT GUIDE

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## WHY FOOTBALL NEEDS RESPECT

**Respect** is an ongoing programme that the Football Federation SA will implement in all of its competitions and with all Affiliated Associations. It also invites all non-Affiliated Associations to implement **Respect**. This is not a one-off initiative but a long-term program to develop attitudes that will become embedded in Football.

The aim of **Respect** is to create an enjoyable and safe playing environment that enables all participants and spectators to partake in our wonderful game free from abuse, criticism, bullying and physical assault. Additionally for young players and officials, it will create opportunities to play and officiate without being placed under undue pressure by parents and spectators.



Football needs to address the ever-increasing poor behaviour that is contributing to an:

- Annual 20% drop-out rate of match officials.
- Increase in physical assault on match officials - up by over 50% on 2010.
- Increase in the number of Disciplinary Hearings conducted - a 57% increase from 2010.

Football is a very passionate game. At times people get caught up in the emotion of a match. It is important for everyone to acknowledge and remember that:

- People react better to encouragement and realise that verbal abuse and criticism will only result in a negative outcome.
- Everyone who participates in sport has the intention to do the best they can; they do not start out to play poorly.
- Children are not little adults; they are still learning to play and enjoy Football. Continual abuse and pressure from the sideline can easily damage the confidence of children and this can result in them not enjoying the game and consequently dropping out.

To ensure we can achieve **Respect** throughout our game a collective approach is required from everyone involved in Football. People need to take responsibility for their actions. Did you know that it is a criminal offence to verbally abuse and/or physically assault a person? This is not action that you would normally take in everyday life and just because it occurs at a sporting event doesn't make it less of a criminal act. Such action should not be accepted, regardless of where it occurs.



## WHAT OUTCOMES DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH RESPECT?

The purpose of the **Respect** program is to ensure that everyone can enjoy themselves and feel safe when participating. From this broad outcome the following benefits will be gained:

- Increase in and retention of the number of registered referees sufficient to meet the demands of the game at every level.
- Increase in and retention of the number of players playing Football.
- Increase in the number of spectators.
- Zero tolerance to abuse of and/or assault on match officials.
- An improvement in on-field player discipline and a reduction in the number of disciplinary hearings conducted.
- Education of spectators and parents on what is acceptable behaviour and the application of good behaviour at all games.
- Better understanding by coaches that junior players play to enjoy the game and that both coaches and players will gain a better outcome through the use of positive messages and behaviour.





## WHAT IS RESPECT?

The **Respect** programme will provide practical information and guidelines to improving behaviour both on and off the field across all age groups and levels of football in South Australia. Clubs will be provided with four practical steps to implement and maintain the **Respect** Program. These steps will improve the behaviour of everyone involved in the game.

They are:

- STEP 1:** Implementation of Codes of Conduct
- STEP 2:** Provision of clearly designated Spectator Areas
- STEP 3:** The captain leads the team
- STEP 4:** The referee manages the game



## STEP ONE - RESPECT CODES OF CONDUCT

The Football Federation SA will issue Codes of Conduct for participants and spectators covering the following groups:

- Junior Players and Parents/Carers
- Senior Players
- Spectators
- Team Officials including Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials
- Referees

The purpose of these Codes is to clearly outline the expectations and responsibilities of each group and to explain the consequences that may arise if the Code is not followed.

Codes are useful tools if implemented correctly. An effective Code of Conduct will clearly outline the conduct that is expected of participants as well as the possible consequences that may be applied if the Code is breached. This way all participants are held accountable for their actions.



### Your Club's Responsibilities

A number of clubs may already have existing club Codes of Conduct in place. To ensure that there is consistency across Football all clubs will be required to adopt **FFSA's RESPECT CODES OF CONDUCT**.

They will also be required to undertake the following actions to implement these Codes:

1. All players who register direct on line with [www.Myfootballclub.com.au](http://www.Myfootballclub.com.au) agree to abide by all FFSA Rules and Regulations and Codes of Conduct. Players can access these on line and clubs can provide a copy.
2. Players and club officials who do not register direct on line must be provided with a copy of the relevant Code, which they are required to read and sign. By signing this Code, they agree to abide by it and accept the consequences that may be applied if they breach the Code.
3. The signed area of the form is to be collected by the club and provided to the FFSA at the time of registering the players; or, if the players have already completed registration, submitted separately to FFSA.
4. Player and team official Codes of Conduct are to be displayed in all changing rooms. The Referee Code of Conduct is to be displayed in all referee changing rooms.
5. The Spectator Code of Conduct is to be clearly displayed at all games in the following areas:
  - At all ground entrances
  - In all club rooms and canteens
  - In all public facilities

Club officials must ensure that they deal with any behaviour that is in breach of the Codes in accordance with the consequences that are outlined in those relevant Codes. All breaches must be handled in a fair and consistent manner.

It is imperative that clubs recognise that they have a vital role to play in ensuring that their members are aware of the standard of behaviour that will be accepted. Clubs that do not implement appropriate and required standards of behaviour could run the risk of losing members and creating a poor image for their club and the sport. In serious circumstances they may face legal action.

If members do breach a Code, club officials can implement sanctions. In doing so they should be guided by the following principles:

- Ensure that the club implements a process whereby the person is notified of the alleged breach and that an opportunity is provided to that person to respond.
- The implementation of any sanctions should be fair and consistent and applied in the same manner regardless of the person's position within the club.
- Sanctions should be progressively more serious for repeat offenders.
- All breaches and sanctions should be documented by the club.

### Football Federation SA's Responsibilities

The Football Federation SA will assist as follows:

- All Codes of Conducts will be made available on the FFSA website.
- If requested the Codes will be forwarded electronically to clubs and associations.
- Where a report that outlines an alleged breach of a Code of Conduct is referred to the Football Federation SA, the matter will be reviewed and action implemented in accordance with the Codes, the Football Federation SA Disciplinary Process and the Rules and Regulations.



## STEP TWO - DESIGNATED SPECTATOR AREAS

Each club will be required to provide a defined spectator area in which spectators must remain. Where venues do not have fencing separating spectators from the field of play, spectator areas are to be marked back from the touchline. The purpose is to encourage parents and spectators to move well back from the field and support the teams in a more responsible manner.



The Designated Spectator Areas are targeted at venues with many spectators located close to the touch lines. In these cases the clubs should take the following actions:

- A Designated Spectator Area is to be marked on the opposite side of the pitch to team officials, coaches and managers. Placing team officials on the opposite side of the field to the spectators will enable players to better distinguish the advice from their team officials.
- The Designated Spectator Area should start two metres from the touchline on one side of the pitch and should run the full length of the pitch. No-one should be watching from behind the goals.
- The Designated Spectator Area can be marked out by using line marking paint, cones, or bunting; or by roping off an area. Prior to marking out an area please ensure that the required approval is gained from the council or land owner.
- At venues hosting Senior Men's fixtures, spectator areas are clearly identifiable by the ground fencing and grandstand areas. Clubs are strongly encouraged to designate family friendly areas at these venues. Families can then enjoy the game in an area free of smoking, alcohol and foul language.

Designated Spectators' Areas clearly identify an area in which spectators must remain and, by definition, other areas they should not cross. Research has demonstrated that having these designated areas has a beneficial influence on the behaviour of spectators and their impact on players and match officials.



## STEP THREE - THE CAPTAIN LEADS THE TEAM

We have all witnessed the situation during a game where a player feels that a tackle was unfair and as a consequence responds in an aggressive manner towards the player and/or the match official. This situation has the potential to escalate and involve more players and therefore threaten the control of the game. The role of the captain is to help stop this and to ensure that **Respect** is afforded to all players and match officials.

Only the captain may approach the referee in regards to the decisions that have been made. Captains must lead from the front and ensure that their players observe this requirement. This does not mean that the referee can only speak to the captain. On the contrary, the referee is able to address any or all players when taking steps to manage the game.

The role of the captain will be to work with the referee to manage the players and the game effectively. When required the referee will involve the captain in discussions. Of course this will not be required for every incident that occurs in the game.

Behaviours during the game that could be seen as threatening or harassing towards a match official might include:

- Players surrounding a referee to protest a decision.
- Continual questioning of a referee to influence the referee or undermine the referee's authority.
- Making remarks to other players about decisions made by the referee.
- Continual complaining about decisions.
- Making derogatory gestures.
- Running towards the referee in an aggressive manner.

Such behaviour can give rise to further problems in a game. The captain's role is to assist the referee in managing the players and curbing such behaviour. The captain may be requested to assist the referee in the following ways:



- The referee may request the captain to speak to a player who is continually offending and runs the risk of being cautioned or dismissed.
- The referee may request the captain to calm a player down who has been involved in a challenge and is agitated.
- The referee may request both captains to speak to their players about the poor behaviour of players.

### Actions to be taken by Captains

- Introduce themselves to the referee prior to the game.
- Ensure that all players are aware of and understand their responsibilities.
- Wear the **Respect** Captain armband provided to the club by Football Federation SA.
- Follow the direction of the referee.
- Deal to the best of their ability with any poor behaviour that is shown by team mates

A vice captain should be appointed and made aware of the role of the captain in case the appointed captain is not on the field of play.

## STEP FOUR - THE REFEREE MANAGES THE GAME

We know that it is the role of the referee to manage and control the game. **Respect** reinforces the role of the referee and influences game management.

Obviously the referee is required to control the game by applying the Laws of the Game. Referees will be instructed to work with the captains to manage the game. However, independently of the captains they also deal firmly with any acts of dissent or abuse that players display.



Through the coaching and development of referees, a sequenced approach will be implemented to player management. However not all elements may be applied to all circumstances. Broadly they are:

- Speak to the player.
- Award free kick and again remind the player of the inappropriate action.
- Free kick, strong word [might include the captain in discussion].
- Yellow Card [might include the captain in discussion].
- Red Card.

The referee will operate within the Laws of the Game and will issue disciplinary sanctions when required. However the referee will be encouraged to use the captain where possible to manage the situation. Even if the captain is some distance from an incident, if the referee needs the captain's involvement in a discussion with a player the referee should call the captain over. This will ensure the captain remains one of the referee's points of contact during the game.

## OVERALL ROLE OF THE CLUB

The role of the club will be to communicate and apply the program's steps throughout your club.

- STEP 1:** Implementation of the Codes of Conduct
- STEP 2:** Provision of clearly designated Spectator Areas
- STEP 3:** The Captain leads the team
- STEP 4:** The Referee manages the game

It is essential that the club's officials take a leading role. A club cannot expect its players and spectators to show Respect if the coach or club officials are seen abusing a referee or opposing players.





### Respect Program - Club Implementation

To implement the **Respect** program a club should have its appropriate office bearers and officials:

- ✓ Attend all information seminars conducted by the Football Federation SA.
- ✓ Conduct an information seminar with its players and club officials. The Club may request that a Football Federation SA official be in attendance.
- ✓ Distribute information about **Respect** through club newsletter and websites.

- ✓ Ensure all players and club officials sign their **Respect** Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Ensure your club implements a fair and consistent process when imposing sanctions for breaches of the Code.
- ✓ Display all **Respect** resources provided at your club.

**IF EVERYONE IN FOOTBALL WORKS  
TOGETHER *RESPECT* WILL FLOURISH.**



**REMEMBER!  
GIVE RESPECT,  
GET RESPECT.**

# Who will you be today?



## Show some Respect

**GIVE IT!  
GET IT!**

# RESPECT



**FOOTBALL  
FEDERATION  
AUSTRALIA**



**Respect**

The FFSA  
acknowledges  
the FA in the  
development  
of this material



**FFSA  
RESPECT**



*Community way of life!*



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*"Go the Red Lichties!"*