

## **The FA 'RESPECT' Programme – Pilot Results and Implementation Plan**

### **1. Background – the top issue in grassroots football**

The FA National Game Strategy research and consultation process identified that RESPECT towards officials and better spectator behaviour towards young players were the top two issues grassroots football stakeholders want addressed. 20,000 participants – players, coaches, referees, club and league officials voted RESPECT above better facilities and more money into grassroots clubs.

This was supported by the recent CFA Questionnaires involving over 17,000 participants who also identified RESPECT as the number one priority.

The FA is not alone in attempting to tackle behaviour, a number of sports are looking at this issue and the Government introduced its own RESPECT agenda to tackle anti social behaviour and try to create a culture of RESPECT. UEFA has also recently launched a Respect campaign.

Creating a better environment is critical in three key areas of the game

- Growth and retention: parental pressure is a major factor in player drop out.
- Better players: parental pressure is prohibitive to young player development, having a significant impact on young players' confidence and willingness to try new skills.
- Workforce: Referee recruitment and retention - grassroots football is losing 7,000 referees a year. There is a critical shortage. Abuse is the biggest factor in drop out.

The purpose of this paper is to review the national game pilots and make recommendations on the roll out of the RESPECT programme for the 2008/2009 season.

### **2. RESPECT - Purpose**

To create a RESPECT programme across the game to

- Reduce abusive behaviour towards referees – and improve retention
- Improve sideline behaviour and abuse towards young players

### **3. Whole game approach**

It is widely accepted that the promotion of RESPECT requires a whole game approach. The FA has initiated discussions via the PGMO with the FAPL, FL, Conference, PFA and LMA on the roll out across the professional game. More information will follow.

### **4. National Game Pilots**

Following the NGS research findings, The FA has been working with its partners to create a campaign and programmes that will improve on-pitch and sideline behaviour within the national game.

The FA, in partnership with the CFAs, conducted an audit of good practice regarding current interventions attempting to address these issues. After initial consultation, it was agreed to pilot and test three interventions to measure the impact on behaviour:

- 'Captain only'
- Codes of conduct
- Designated spectator areas.

The pilots took place over a ten week period (from Feb-April 08) in 7 County Football Associations. This involved 15 leagues, 345 teams, 166 referees, 345 coaches, approximately 4,500 players and 3,500 spectators. The leagues included mini soccer, youth and adult football.

#### **4.1 Captain Only**

This concept is used in other team sports e.g. Rugby. The scheme encourages the referee to use the captains to help manage the game. It elevates the responsibility of the captain – but the captain is not immune to being dealt with by Law 12 if his/her behaviour is inappropriate. (See Appendix 1 Aide Memoir for Referees)

#### 4.2 Codes of conduct

Managers, players and parents were asked to agree to and sign up to a code of conduct, with appropriate and consistent sanctions. In a review of sporting behaviour programmes across the world, codes and education are the most popular tactic.

#### 4.3 Designated Spectator Areas

The concept came from existing good practice in the game, most notably 'Don't Cross the Line' in Liverpool. The campaign works in partnership with the police and aims to eradicate aggressive behaviour from players and spectators. It uses touchline barriers, referee report cards that monitor behaviour and reward fair play, parent reports and guidelines for behaviour.

The FA's designated spectator area, pictured below, was marked off at two metres from the side of the pitch, using tapes and short posts. Guidance was given to spectators as to the purpose of the scheme and the sanctions for not complying with it. Spectators were kept at separate sides of the pitch with only the coach/ manager on the other side of the pitch.



#### 5. Monitoring and evaluation

The critical factor in the pilots was the development of robust monitoring and evaluation to ensure the interventions had a real impact on behaviour prior to any nationwide rollout. The FA employed Celia Brackenridge, a highly respected researcher in youth sport to lead the monitoring and evaluation of the pilots. The researchers and The FA agreed to monitor active groups (those carrying out the three interventions) and control groups (whose behaviour was monitored but had not carried out the three interventions) to test the impact.

The FA established a monitoring tool on Full-Time, its league administration software, enabling referees and club officials (RESPECT Monitors) to provide weekly feedback on the behaviour of players and spectators. The feedback has been supplemented by pre and post pilot questionnaires and focus groups.

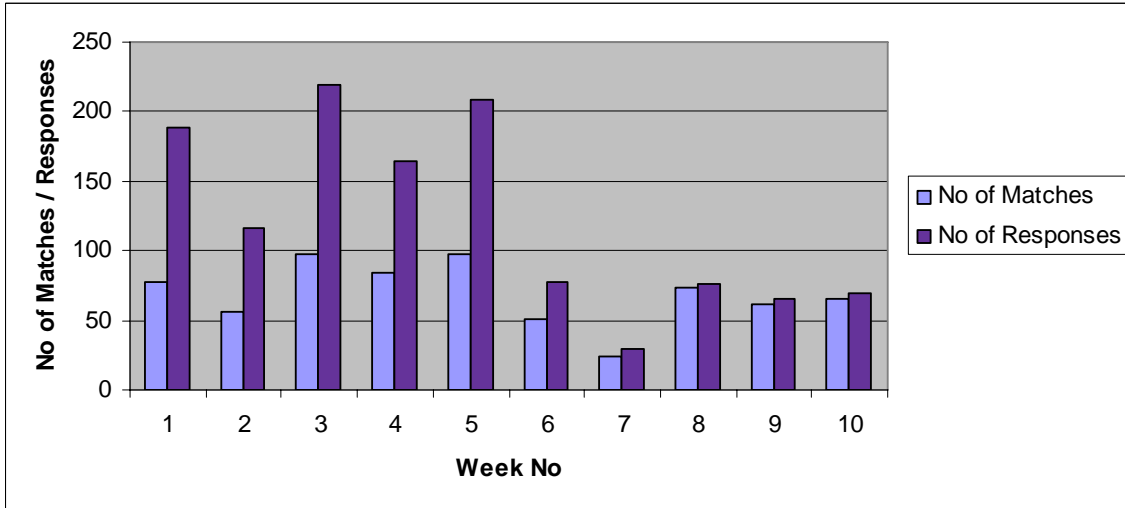
## 6. Results

The results demonstrate that all three interventions have had a positive impact on improving behaviour. In summary the headlines are:

- Referees & club officials reported reduction of negative behaviour (on/off pitch).
- Spectator barriers & Codes of Conduct worked across whole game, but specifically in youth matches.
- 'Captain-only' worked well as a concept across the game but referee briefing / clarity critical.

The fig 1 chart outlines the number of respondents who used the Full-Time monitoring and evaluation tool to provide feedback on the interventions.

Fig1



The respondents were asked to rank 1-5 with 5 being excellent, the impact of the three interventions. The results of the three interventions are outlined below.

Fig 2 outlines the response to the question of the designated spectator area's effectiveness in addressing spectator behaviour

Fig 2

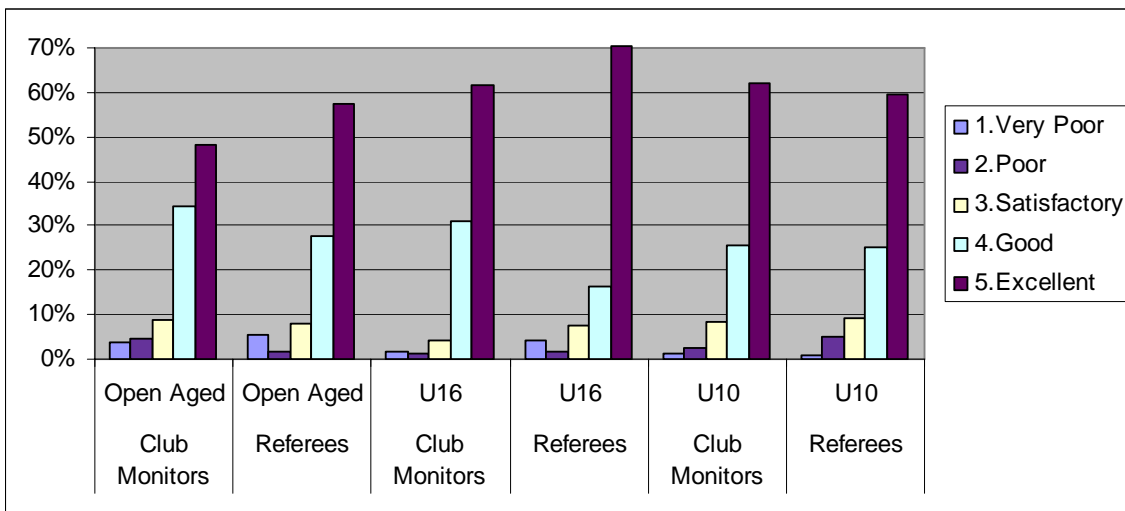


Fig 3 outlines the response to the question of the effectiveness of the 'captain only' initiative in addressing spectator behaviour

Fig 3

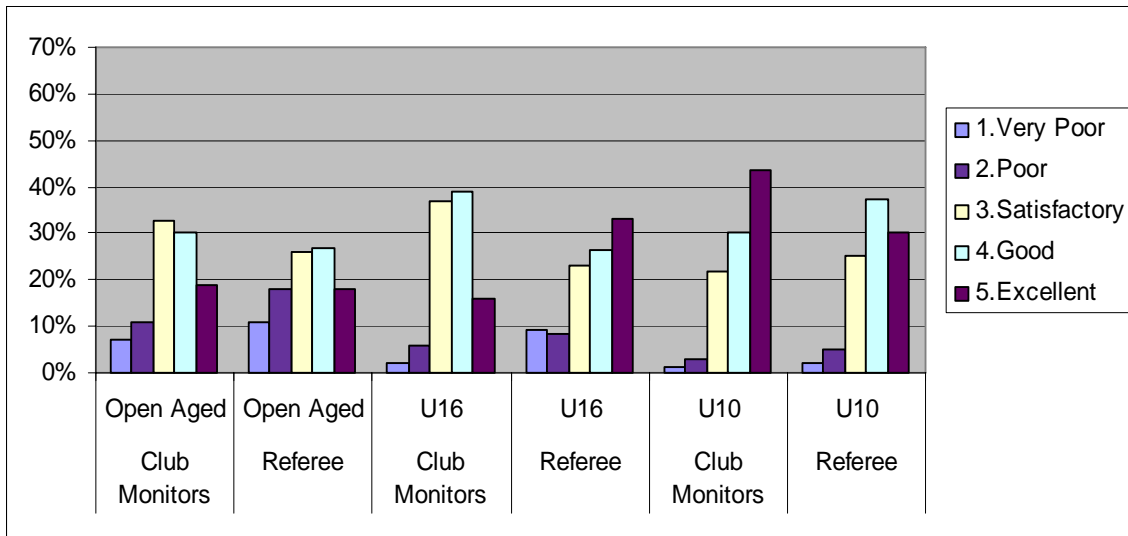
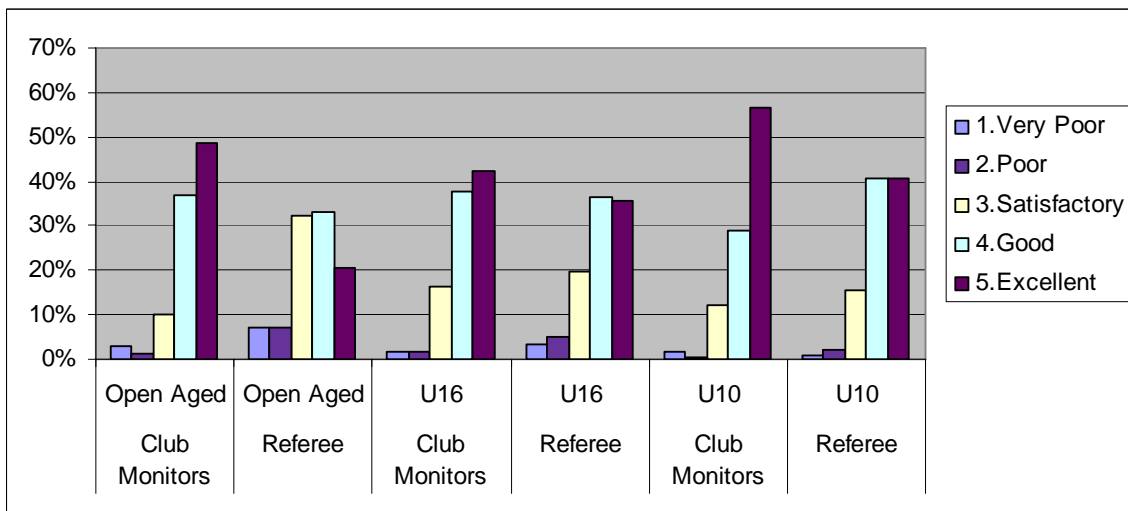


Fig 4 outlines the response to the question of the effectiveness of the codes of conduct in addressing spectator behaviour

Fig 4



General Observations:

- The overall picture is positive - Responses may reflect the 'Hawthorne Effect' whereby people chosen to participate on trials feel special and adapt their behaviour accordingly
- The behaviour scores were consistently better among the active groups
- The active group ranked all of the interventions highly over the ten week period with the most popular intervention being the designated spectator area, followed by codes and then the captain only (see Fig 5)
- The designated spectator areas were not formally 'policed' but spectators were subject to peer pressure to adhere to them. Similar to drink driving and smoking campaigns, the RESPECT programme will aim to make bad behaviour culturally unacceptable. The reinforcement of the message on the tape was also beneficial.
- Enjoyment amongst the active teams was considerably higher than in the control teams

Fig 5

In the face to face interviews, the participants were asked for other ideas on how to address behaviour. These included:

- Sin-bins
- 10 yard rule
- Increase fines to act as a deterrent
- Tougher implementation of Law 12 / zero tolerance
- Three card system-one as a warning before the yellow card
- Tougher sanctions- Points deductions

(some of these interventions are within FIFA's jurisdiction)

#### **Pilot CFAs - Feedback meeting**

The CFAs involved in delivering the pilots were invited to the FA for a review meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April. The feedback was positive. Issues to be taken forward include the quality of the designated spectator area product and clarity regarding on the 'captain only intervention. The minutes of the meeting are attached in appendix B.

### **6. National Game Implementation Plan**

#### **Objectives**

1. To create a high profile national campaign in conjunction with the football bodies to promote RESPECT.
2. To agree with the professional game, interventions that can be cascaded through the national game e.g. captain only
3. To reduce the abuse towards referees by players, coaches and spectators by implementing codes of conduct and agreed sanctions
4. To reduce the abuse of parents towards young players by promoting & aiding access to spectator barriers in the season 2008-09.
5. To improve parental behaviour through 100,000 people completing an online education programme.

#### **Key Success measures**

- **Reducing verbal abuse by 25% by 2012 (FA Corporate Strategy).**  
(baseline no of cautions for dissent by word or action (C2) for 2006/7 104,787 (CAS) and 3,182 (FA), total 107,969.  
A 25% reduction would be a reduction of 26,992 C2 cases
- **Reducing poor behaviour by parents/spectators.**  
There is no current national baseline. To date the pilots tracked behaviour improvement through the FA Full Time monitoring tool. The proposal going forwards would be to conduct sample research in leagues using the interventions. The FA will also establish baselines for FA and CFA case management re poor behaviour practice and abuse from spectators/parents towards young players.

#### **Developing the RESPECT Programme**

The campaign and promotional materials will be made available via The FA.com to all clubs and leagues wishing to adopt the RESPECT programme. Clubs will be encouraged to promote the three interventions as part of a commitment to RESPECT

- (1) Downloading and adopting the codes of conduct
- (2) Promoting the role of captain in managing on pitch behaviour
- (3) Purchasing designated spectator areas and promoting better spectator behaviour through workshops/parents briefings.

The FA has asked the Football Foundation to establish a grant aid scheme for designated spectator areas. The proposal is that leagues could apply on behalf of their clubs for the designated spectator areas. The Football Foundation does not have the administrative capacity to manage this on a club by club basis. The grant would cover 50% of the total costs, with the clubs or league meeting the shortfall. The FA would supply a RESPECT guide and codes of conduct in each pack. By working through the leagues, the CFAs would be able to offer support on a more strategic basis. The CFA support to leagues and clubs in

the pilot was critical in its success – league/club briefings, Full Time training (optional), referee briefings, encouraging leagues to promote and track the monitoring. This is also an opportunity to outline the role of clubs, leagues, CFAs and the FA re sanctions as there are concerns about ‘double jeopardy’.

### **Critical tasks to launch / roles and responsibilities**

#### **1. Launch a high profile national campaign**

- Launch the week of The FA Community Shield – perimeter boards, programme, video screen, match day programme, magazines, websites etc
- Develop RESPECT section on new FA.com– downloadable guides for clubs, leagues, referees, coaches and players; promotional posters; codes of conduct; video clips. How to run a parents evening with downloadable video and presentation. Clear guidance on sanctions.
- Maximise FA Partner promotional aspects
- Liaise with ITV and Setanta, new broadcast partners to access airtime

#### **2. Develop professional game interventions and commitment.**

- Revise paper (following initial PGM0 feedback) for the PGM0 meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May
- Liaise with the NGB regarding any whole game initiatives e.g. ‘Captain Only’
- Produce ‘captain only’ guidance notes for referees, clubs and leagues.
- Work with the Referees Dept and Committee regarding referee briefings through the new RDO network.

#### **3. Codes of conduct**

- Put the codes of conduct on-line and produce packs for participating leagues.
- Develop clear guidance regarding sanctions – meeting with Governance 15<sup>th</sup> May, update at NGB
- Standardise codes across The FA – one code of conduct (2008/9)

#### **4. Designated Spectator Areas**

- Develop funding application with the Football Foundation (paper to FF Board 14<sup>th</sup> May). Agree distribution process via league applications.
- Meet with product suppliers to address product quality and cost
- Work with the FF to promote the scheme to leagues
- Develop monitoring in conjunction with the FF to review the impact

#### **5. Education**

- Review all education courses and embed key RESPECT messages (FA Learning)
- Develop interactive 15 minute on-line module and quiz for August launch
- Promote the module to parents and coaches

### **Budget**

- A request has been made to the central budget for £1 million per annum into materials, education development, promotional campaign & monitoring
- A request for £1 million has been made to the Football Foundation to develop a grant aid programme for designated spectator areas
- UEFA has agreed a grant of £196,000 towards the programme

### **Constraints /risks**

- Timescales for appointing a Project Manager - project will need significant time resource from the workstream leaders to August to get this project to launch
- Short turnaround from pilot findings to launch
- Budget /FF grant request is approved
- FA budget is currently for two years only

### **Impact for the CFA**

The CFAs are asked to assist with the following:

- Promote the campaign via CFA website, magazines and other communication channels with members
- Promote the ‘3 tactics’ to leagues and encourage mini soccer and youth leagues to apply to the Football Foundation for assistance

- Contact league applicants to see what support they may require e.g. league/club briefings, guidance regarding sanctions, full time training, coach education courses etc.
- Provide a brief comment to the Football Foundation on each league application.

The FA is currently mapping the potential roles and responsibilities of the key CFA staff to assist them in the roll out.

If the NGB support this proposal in principle, I will attend the County Support Groups in July to engage the CFA CEOs in final consultation regarding the CFA role for the forthcoming season.

Kelly Simmons  
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