



THE RESPECT PROGRAMME



The Western League, by an overwhelming vote at the recent meeting of clubs, agreed to adopt the FA Respect Programme in its entirety.

The full programme will be implemented in the Toolstation Western League as from 1 November 2008.

You will be aware that the Respect Programme is being introduced by The Football Association for season 2008/2009 to help raise standards of behaviour and address the problem of abusive behaviour in the game. The Respect Programme is a key aspect of the FA's Vision for the next 4 years and it is hoped that, as well as improving behaviour in the game at all levels, it will assist with the recruitment and retention of referees.

The Programme sets out a number of objectives, which cover both the Professional and National Game. However The Football Association seek your assistance with the introduction of two of the objectives that deal with the referee **working with the team captain** on the day to effectively manage the game and the **pre-match fair play handshake**.

Set out below are guidelines applicable to both objectives. Match officials at this level of the game are aware of these.

1 Working with the Team Captain

1.1 The referee will work with the team captain in order to manage the players and the game effectively. It should be noted that the International Football Association Board (IFAB) Guidelines for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials state that the captain has **no special status or privileges** under the Laws of the Game **but he has a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of his team**.

1.2 The referee 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).

1.3 The referee should use a stepped approach where appropriate to managing players e.g. 1) free kick, 2) free kick with quiet word, 3) free kick with public admonishment (this is the time referees should consider using the captain to more visibly get the message across), 4) yellow card.

1.4 The stepped approach does not negate the fact that the referee has the authority within the Laws of the Game to issue disciplinary sanctions without recourse to the captain.

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

1.6 Even if the captain is some way away from an incident when the referee feels he needs him involved in a discussion with a player, the referee will call the captain over rather than using any other senior player. This will ensure that the captain remains the point of contact for the referee.

1.7 These guidelines should be seen as an additional preventative/supportive tool in order for referees to manage the game effectively. The key to the above is using the captains in a more visible way, where appropriate.

2. Fair Play Handshake Protocol

This will be discussed at the Western League Board meeting on 14 August and, if approved, it is proposed to introduce it the following week. However, clubs are welcome to to adopt the protocol if requested by the match referee.

The Fair Play Handshake is to be adopted by the FA Premier and Football Leagues, the Football Conference, Isthmian, Northern Premier and Southern Leagues from the commencement of the season.

2.1 The starting eleven from both teams together with the three match officials should take part in the handshake.

2.2 Each team should line up on the same side of the half-way line that they exit the tunnel, with the match officials in the middle.

2.3 The Home team, led by their captain, then walks to shake hands with the match officials, and then the away team's players (see 1 at Appendix A). Once each Home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player they disperse to their favoured end to kick-in.

2.4 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 (see 2 at Appendix A) before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.

2.5 Once the handshakes have been completed the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

HANDSHAKE FORMATION

AWAY TEAM
HOME TEAM

