

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

MODULE FOR MATCH OFFICIALS TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY AND DEAL WITH RACIST ABUSE

Theme – Kicking Racism out of Football

Aims	
1	Help Match Officials identify racist language and/or gestures
2	Enable Match Officials to correctly deal with such offences

Objectives	
1	Identify racist language and gestures – actual words, phrases and context
2	Dealing correctly with such offences that we have witnessed
3	Managing the situation – players, coaches, spectators etc.
4	Reporting the offence and your actions
5	Dealing with offences that you have not witnessed

Proposed Programme	
Module as part of a basic course, continuation training courses for referees or Referees' Association meetings [Times can be adjusted to suit local circumstances]	
7.30pm	Aims of the module
7.35pm	Definitions of terms: racism, abusive, insulting and offensive
7.40pm	Identifying racist language and gestures (working in groups and tutor led)
7.55pm	Dealing with racist offences – the criminal law, Laws of the Game
8.00pm	Managing the behaviour of players and officials and possible consequences if this is not successfully achieved
8.05pm	Reporting racist offences and our actions
8.10pm	Racist incidents reported to you but which you have not witnessed
8.15pm	Summary

Aims and Objectives

Racism is an issue alive in the game today. Referees have a part to play in The FA's drive to 'Kick Racism out of Football'

Key Point

Need to dispense with the notion of individual referees setting their own "level of tolerance"

We only need to identify the act and what was meant, by the protagonist, not whether it achieved what was intended. We already do this in other parts of Law 12 e.g. Excessive Force – designed to maim or injure – not whether it actually did. It is what was intended that is the offence.

Definitions

Offensive

- Causing anger, displeasure, resentment, or affront

Insulting

- Treat with gross insensitivity, insolence, or contemptuous rudeness

Abusive

- Using or containing coarse language

Racism

- The belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability
- That a particular race is superior to others
- Discrimination or prejudice based on race

Identifying racist language and gestures

Exercise:

1. Split into groups – ideally 5-6
2. Individually try and come up with as many examples of words, phrases, actions or gestures which are abusive, insulting or offensive – record on post-it notes (if people start to work in pairs or a large group this is not to be discouraged)
3. Ask for Post-Its to be put up on group flipchart
4. Get the group to look at their suggestions that they have made
5. Get each group to look at least one other groups' output

Development of exercise:

- Together with all groups' input, determine which words, phrases, actions and/or gestures amount to racist abuse
- Probe to understand why -> Actual words, manner in which said, context
E.g. “..you lot..” “..black..” “..white..”
- Does it matter if person “abused” doesn’t feel abused, insulted or offended?

Key point 1 – bear in mind the following:

- Actual words or gestures
- Manner in which they were said or gestures executed
- Context of the words used

Key point 2 – Not there to make a judgement as to whether a person is racist or not – merely there to make a judgement on language and/or behaviour (actions) e.g. Ron Atkinson in the incident involving his comments about Marcel Desailly

Key point 3 – Acts of racism need to be dealt with quickly and effectively because potentially they can upset large numbers of people, not all of whom will be under the jurisdiction of the referee e.g. spectators. Failure to deal effectively with these acts can seriously undermine a referee’s control of the match

If at all possible, try and get the group to come naturally to both Key Points, and then stress them

Conclusion (recap):

- Cannot “script” racist language/actions – but can recognise it.
- Actual words/action
- Manner in which said/executed
- Context

Dealing with offences

Racist incidents that committed by players will be punished under Law 12 – Sending Off Offences – S6

We need to deal with these offences as:

- Racism contravenes the law of the land – i.e. a criminal act may have been committed
- Our duties as referee are to enforce the Laws of the Game

NOTE: Failure to deal effectively with the initial incident may lead to retaliation undermining our control of the game

Managing the situation

- Referees should be made aware that tensions may be running high after dealing with an incident of racism and extra vigilance is required so that retaliation does not occur.
- The same advice that we offer on management of the playing situations after a goal, sending off etc. needs to be emphasised here
- We need to be aware that spectators could also be agitated after such an offence with their anger causing us potential problems on the field of play.

Reporting offences

Racist incidents that you have witnessed and dealt with must be reported to the County FA.

- Submit on misconduct report form used for sending off offences
- Either;
 - “S6” if a player
 - or “Misconduct by.. team official/player after the match/spectator(s)”
- Fully describe the incident quoting the actual words used and the manner in which they were said
- Keep a copy for your own records

Dealing with offences that we have not witnessed

It is possible that people involved in the match may witness a racist incident that we have missed.

- Treat their concern sympathetically
- Advise them to report the full facts to the County FA (use of FA hotline)
- Prepare a report of the events as told to you and your actions
- Submit the report if requested to do so by the County FA

Summary

- The FA is committed to ‘Kicking racism out of football’
- Referees have to play their part
- Recognise racist language and/or gestures
- Not down to individual tolerance level
- Deal with appropriately – correct application of Law 12

NOTE: Can substitute the term racism with sexism or any other form of discrimination