

SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Match Officials & Clubs Information The FA Respect Programme

The Spartan South Midlands Football League has opted into The FA Respect Programme from 1st September 2008 onwards. Clubs and Match Officials are asked to read the following information:

The FA Respect Programme

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

As part of the Respect Programme, for **ALL** SSMFL fixtures in **both the senior and reserve sections** it has been decided to introduce the following initiatives:

- Team captains being present at the exchange of team sheets
- Referees working with team captains to successfully manage the game
- Pre-match fair play handshake

The League would like your help in implementing these protocols in every fixture.

The following guidelines are provided as an **AIDE MEMOIRE** for referees.

Working with the Team Captain

1. The **team captain MUST** be present at the exchange of team sheets along with the relevant club official at least 45 minutes before kick off in order for the referee to outline how he / she will work with the captains to manage the game.

2. The referee will work with the team captain in order to manage the players and the game effectively. Note the IFAB Guidelines for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials which 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.**

3. 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).

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

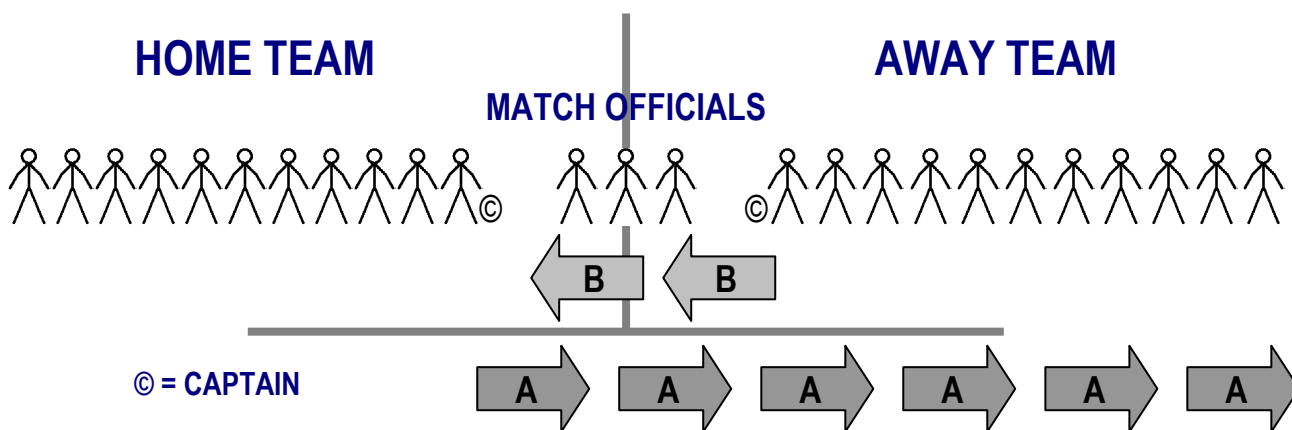
8. These guidelines should be seen as an additional preventative/supportive tool in order for referees to manage the game effectively. The key to the above is using the captains in a more visible way, where appropriate.

Fair Play Handshake Protocol

The following protocol should be applied:

1. The **starting eleven** from both teams together with the three match officials (excluding fourth official) should take part in the handshake.
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.
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 A below). Once each Home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player they disperse to their favoured end to kick-in.
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 B below) before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.
5. Once the handshakes have been completed the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

Whilst we understand that it may be difficult to implement this protocol in every case, we would ask that referees do what they reasonably can to ensure its implementation.



Referees will need to play a leading role in the implementation of the Programme at all levels of the game to ensure that it is a success and the authority and respect for match officials is reinforced.