



FOR ALL



THE FA
REFEREE COURSE
INFORMATION FOR NEW REFEREES

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INTRODUCTION

Having completed the FA Referee Course, you should now be looking forward to refereeing some matches and officially qualifying as an FA Referee!

We hope you found the online learning and the face to face training useful and that you now have some new skills and knowledge that will help you when you start out.

This document reinforces the key points covered during the Referee Course and you can refer back to it should you need to remind yourself of anything.

Thank you for getting involved as a referee. You will play an important role in the game and we wish you every success.

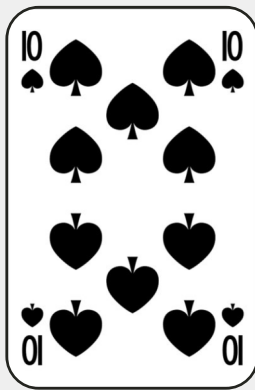


PRE-MATCH (AT THE GROUND)

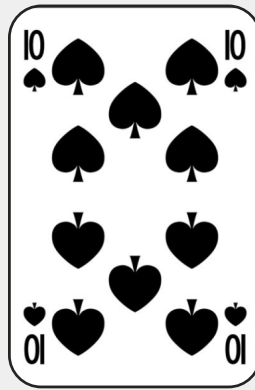
CREATING A POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSION

Before the match starts, you may meet captains, players, coaches, managers, the club secretary and your mentor or observer. Creating a positive first impression will help generate a level of trust and confidence in the other person's perception of your ability to do a good job.

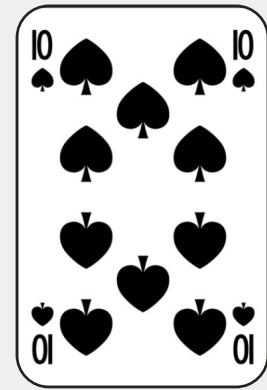
The '3 10s' will help you remember how to create a positive first impression.



How you look to the other person from **10** feet away



The **10** inches from the top of your head to your chin



The first **10** words you say

The First 10

How you look to the other person from 10 feet away:

- You should dress professionally and appropriately for the match
- Your body language should be positive and confident

The Second 10

The 10 inches from the top of your head to your chin:

- Make and maintain eye contact
- Smile!
- Look genuinely interested in what the other person has to say

The Third 10

The first 10 words you say:

- Make sure that what you say when you meet someone is positive and purposeful

PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

Before the match starts, you must check what the players are wearing. Players must not wear anything that is dangerous, so any item of jewellery is not allowed and must be removed.

All players must wear shinguards, a shirt with sleeves, socks, suitable footwear and shorts (goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms).

Hearing aids and sports glasses can be worn. In youth football, players may wear glasses that are not sports glasses although, if you think they might be in any way dangerous (e.g. they have sharp edges), then you have the authority to say that the glasses cannot be worn.

THE COIN TOSS



The coin toss will always take place immediately before the match starts, on the field of play. The procedure is as follows:

- The referee tosses the coin (the home team are heads, the away team tails)
- The team that wins the toss decides which goal to attack in the first half, or to take the kick-off

BRIEFING CLUB ASSISTANT REFEREES (ARs)

In your early matches, your ARs are likely to be parents, spectators or substitutes. Thank them before the game (and after it) for taking on the AR role and confirm what you want them to do. Generally, you should limit their duties to:

- Indicating when the ball is out of play (at throw ins, goal kicks and corner kicks) and
- Indicating when a player is in an offside position (tell your ARs that you will then decide whether to penalise that player for an offside offence)

- The team that decided which goal to attack in the first half takes the kick-off to start the second half

DURING THE MATCH

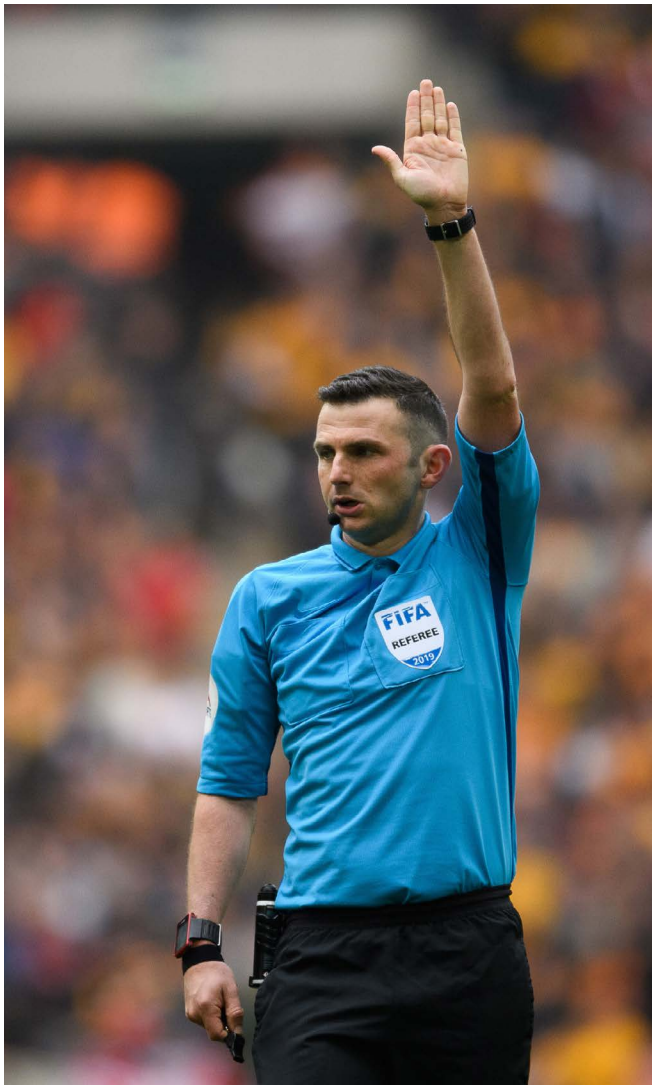
DECISION COMMUNICATION

You can communicate your decisions with your whistle, signal and voice.

Crisp, strong, purposeful signals and whistle will convey your conviction and authority, as well as inspiring confidence in your decision making.

You can indicate the type and severity of an offence by altering the duration and 'loudness' of your whistle.

And, if appropriate, you can also use your voice to confirm the reason for a decision you've made.



FREE KICKS AND FOUL CHALLENGES

There are two types of free kick.

You would generally award an indirect free kick when there has been no contact (e.g. when a player is penalised for being offside or a goalkeeper is penalised for picking up a back pass).

You would award a direct free kick (or penalty kick) if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner you consider to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip

A careless challenge is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. It's just a foul and does not result in a caution or sending off.

[Click here to see an example](#)

A reckless challenge is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent. You must caution the player.

[Click here to see an example](#)

Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent. You must send the player from the field of play.

[Click here to see an example](#)

THE STEPPED APPROACH TO MANAGING PLAYERS

There will be occasions when you might choose to 'manage' a player who offends, in an attempt to prevent them from re-offending. For example, if a player commits a careless foul, you might choose to have a 'quiet word' with them; if the same player then commits another careless foul, you might give them a 'public rebuke' (and possibly involve the offending player's captain); if this approach doesn't work and the same player commits the same offence again, then you should caution them.

Remember, though, you do not have to go through these steps. If the offence warrants it, you can caution the player or send them from the field of play without any warning.

Also, once a player has been cautioned, you can then start the process again at any of the previous steps.

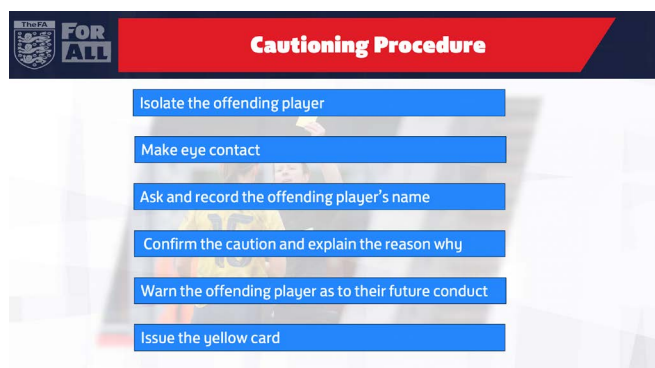


Managing Players

- Step 1**
A 'quiet' word
- Step 2**
Public rebuke
- Step 3**
Bring in the captain
- Step 4**
Disciplinary action

CAUTIONING PROCEDURE

Here's the procedure you should follow when cautioning a player.



Cautioning Procedure

- Isolate the offending player
- Make eye contact
- Ask and record the offending player's name
- Confirm the caution and explain the reason why
- Warn the offending player as to their future conduct
- Issue the yellow card



SIN BINS

You can use the 'sin bin' to deal with players who are guilty of dissent in grassroots football.

[The FA's online Sin Bin guide can be found here](#)

[Some common questions and answers about sin bins can be found here](#)

Sin Bins

Temporary Dismissals - otherwise known as 'sin bins' - will become mandatory for matters of dissent across all of grassroots football from the 2019/20 season.



HOW DO YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE SIN BIN?



Players will only go in to the sin bin for dissent cautions



For use of words or gestures questioning or undermining the ref's decisions



EXAMPLES OF DISSENT

- Shouting at the ref
- Questioning ref's ability
- Slamming the ball in to the ground
- Sarcastically clapping a decision

DURATION OF A SIN BIN



For matches of 90 minutes, players spend 10 minutes in the sin bin



For matches of all other lengths, players spend 8 minutes in the sin bin



If the sin bin period has not expired at the end of:

- 1st half:** Continues into 2nd half
- 2nd half:** Continues into extra time
- Extra time:** Player can participate in penalties

THE MATCH DAY PROCESS



Dissent



Dissent caution: Ref issues a yellow card and directs the player to the touchline



Player can't be substituted until period expires and not if all subs have been made



Whilst in the sin bin, if the player commits a yellow or red card offence they can't take any further part in the game and can't be substituted



If the player commits a 2nd dissent caution and has already been booked, they will take no further part in the game and can't be substituted



If the player commits a 2nd dissent caution and no other offences, they will receive a 2nd sin bin. After which they can't take any further part in the game but can be substituted



If the player commits a yellow card offence on the field of play in addition to a period in the sin bin, they will continue to play



Ref decides when player returns to play

DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL-SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)

When deciding whether an offence has denied an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, consider:

- The distance between the offence and the goal
- The direction of play
- The location and number of defenders
- Whether the attacker is in control, or likely to gain control, of the ball



When a player commits an offence against their opponent within their own penalty area, which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (and you award a penalty kick), then you must caution the offender if they were attempting to play the ball.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

If the offender was not trying to play the ball (e.g. they were holding, pulling or pushing the player or there was no possibility of playing the ball), then you must send them from the field of play.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

Where a player denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence, then you must send the player from the field of play.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

If the offence which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity happens outside the penalty area resulting in a free kick, you must send the offender from the field of play.

VIOLENT CONDUCT

If a player uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball, then you must send them from the field of play.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

Remember, the offending player does not need to make contact e.g. an attempted headbutt.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

STOPPING A PROMISING ATTACK

If an attacking player is fouled, and a promising attack stopped as a result, then you must caution the offending player.

[Click here for an example.](#)

ATTEMPTING TO DECEIVE THE REFEREE

If a player attempts to deceive you by, for example, feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (known as 'simulation'), then you must caution the offending player.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

HANDBALL

Before a handball offence can even be considered, the ball must hit a player's hand or the arm below the armpit.

Generally speaking, it is a handball offence if a player deliberately touches the ball with their hand or arm by moving either towards the ball.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

It is not a handball offence if the hand or arm is close to the body and the ball is kicked at either.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

It's also not a handball offence if the ball touches a player's hand or arm directly from the player's own head or body.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

ADVANTAGE

You can play advantage when a player is fouled; however, they or their teammate must have possession and a clear opportunity to attack.

Unless there is a clear goal-scoring opportunity, you should not play advantage following a red card offence.

You can play advantage following a yellow card offence and you must then caution the offending player at the first opportunity.

[Click here to see an example.](#)

DROPPED BALL

You'll generally award a dropped ball if you stop the game when no offence has been committed e.g. if two players have clashed heads and appear injured.

If the ball is in the penalty area, or the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area when you stop play, then you'll drop the ball for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area.

If the ball is outside the penalty area when you stop play, then you'll drop the ball for one player of the team that last touched it, at the position where it was last touched.

All other players must be 4m away from the ball until it's in play.

[Click here to see an example of the dropped ball procedure.](#)

OFFSIDE

It is not an offence just to be in an offside position. To be penalised, a player in an offside position must then either:

- Play the ball ([click here to see an example](#)) or
- Interfere with an opponent ([click here to see an example](#)) or
- Gain an advantage by playing the ball ([click here to see an example](#)) or interfering with an opponent

A player in an offside position can also not be penalised:

- If they receive the ball directly from a goal kick, throw-in or corner kick or
- If they receive the ball directly from an opponent who has deliberately played the ball e.g. a defender might play the ball back to their goalkeeper without realising there's an attacker (in an offside position) between them and the goalkeeper

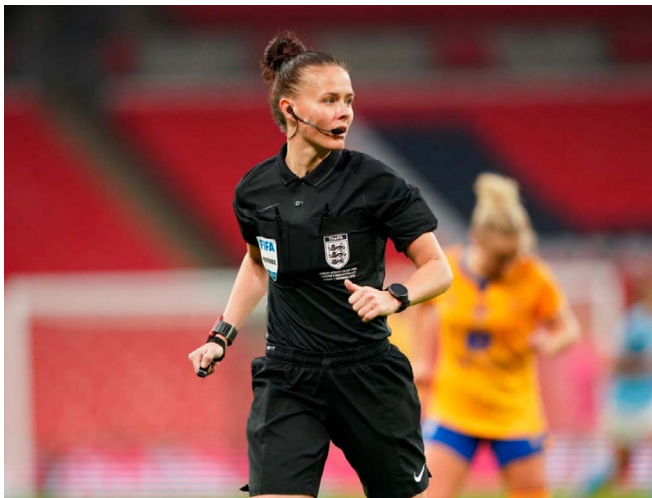


POSITIONING IN OPEN PLAY

It's important to be in a position where you can see what's happened so that you can make accurate decisions.

That means you need to be:

- Close enough to play (15 – 20 yards away), without getting in the way of the players or the ball
- At a decent angle (so not directly in front of, or behind, a challenge or contact) from which you have an unobstructed view of the incident



DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

There may be times when you encounter inappropriate behaviour (e.g. verbal abuse or aggression) from coaches, managers or spectators. This could happen because they think you've made the wrong decision or perhaps because they are too wrapped up in the pressure of the match situation.

If there is a Respect Marshal at the game, ask them to deal with any inappropriate behaviour they see or hear, so that you can concentrate on refereeing.

There are a few key things to remember:

- You can deal with coaches and managers in the same way as you can players. You have a range of management tools at your disposal (the STEPPED approach) and you can discipline (with yellow and red cards) and report them

- Spectators, on the other hand, cannot be disciplined. But they can be reported. You should not approach a spectator to deal with their inappropriate behaviour. Instead, try using the coach or manager to calm a spectator down

SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE

In youth football (and in some adult grassroots football), rolling substitutions are used. This means that, with the permission of the referee, a player who has been substituted can re-enter the field of play. Having rolling substitutions means that more players get to take part in a match and stoppages for substitutions are kept to a minimum.

Where 'normal' substitutions are used, the player being substituted can, with the referee's permission, leave the field of play at any point. The player coming on must do so, again with the referee's permission, at the half way line.

[Click here to see an example](#)

DISCRIMINATION

The use of threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting language or behaviour in reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability is unacceptable and has no place in football.

- If you see or hear it on the field of play, from a player, coach or manager, then you must issue a red card and report it to your County Football Association (CFA)
- If it is brought to your attention, but you have not seen or heard it, then you must let the player, coach or manager know that a complaint has been made and then report it to your CFA

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

REFEREE DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (RDOs)

The vast majority of County FAs have an RDO. They are responsible for the recruitment, retention and development of referees in their County and are your first point of contact should you have any questions.

[*The RDOs' contact details can be found here.*](#)



APPOINTMENTS

Before you become a 'qualified' referee, you must referee a minimum of five 9v9 or 11v11 matches. Your RDO will put you in touch with the appointments' secretaries for the Leagues and Competitions you will referee on. When you receive an appointment, it is important to confirm promptly and, if you are going to be unavailable, please let the appointments secretary know well in advance.

REGISTRATION

Once you have qualified, you will need to register each season as a referee with your County FA. If you are a member of HM Forces, then you will need to register with the appropriate Services Association. Referee registration costs £20 per season and opens on 1st June each year.



DBS CHECKS

If you are aged 16 or over and are planning to referee youth football, then you will need an enhanced FA DBS check. Your County FA will be able to organise this with you. DBS checks from other sports or organisations are not valid for your role as a football referee.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

You should have completed some safeguarding training before attending the FA Referee Course. If you are going to be refereeing youth football, then you'll need to refresh your knowledge every three years. Your RDO will let you know when and how to do this.

THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION (RA)

The RA can offer you a whole range development opportunities and welfare support, both online and face to face. There are more than 250 local

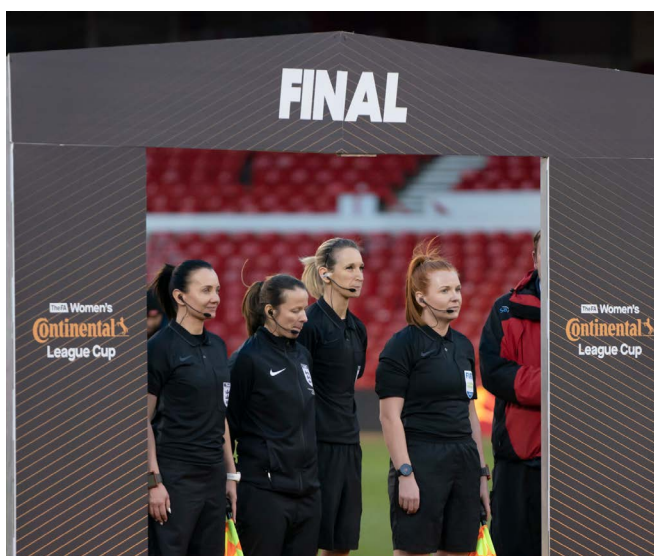
RA branches, which hold regular meetings where you'll get the opportunity to speak to, and learn from, more experienced referees.

Details of how to join can be found at the [RA website](#) and the RA can also be found on Facebook (@refereeassociation) and Twitter (@refsassociation).



THE NATIONAL YOUNG REFEREE DEVELOPMENT TEAM (NYRDT)

The NYRDT provides training content, advice and support exclusively for young referees. The team, a group of young referees, can be contacted at support@NYRDT.co.uk. You can also find follow them on Instagram and Twitter (@TheNYRDT).



MENTORS

Your County FA is likely to appoint a mentor to help support you, particularly during the first five matches that you referee. Your mentor will be a more experienced referee who will be able to guide you through the early stages of your refereeing career. In most cases, your mentor will come and watch you referee at least once and will be on hand at the end of a phone should you need to talk to them.

PRE-MATCH PREPARATION

Your preparation should begin in the week leading up to a match. You need to acknowledge receipt of your appointment, be familiar with where the ground is and plan your journey to arrive at least 30 minutes before kick-off.

You will also need to take the right kit with you to the game!

DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION

If you want to develop, then you should take advantage of the training your County FA and local RA have to offer. If you are part of the County FA's promotion scheme, then observers will be appointed to watch you referee. Their role is to offer written feedback designed to help you improve and to provide information to the County FA that will help promotion decisions to be made. The opportunity for promotion is available to every referee.

The FA's CORE programme is for referees who demonstrate that they have the potential and opportunity to progress.

[More details can be found here.](#)

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

With 1 in 4 adults (and 1 in 8 young people) suffering from a mental health problem at any given time, it is possible that you might need some help yourself.

A good start point is the FA's Mental Health Guidance for Referees, [*which you can take a look at on here.*](#)



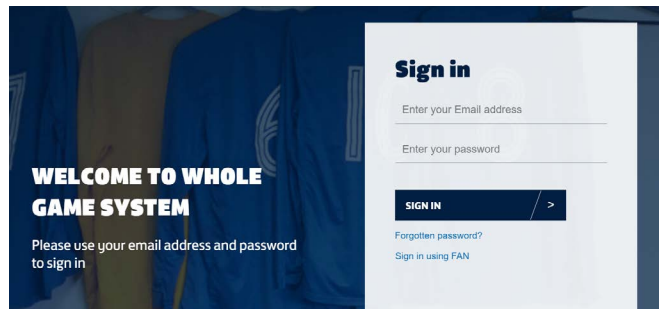
REPORTING MISCONDUCT ON WHOLE GAME SYSTEM (WGS)

The FA Regulations:

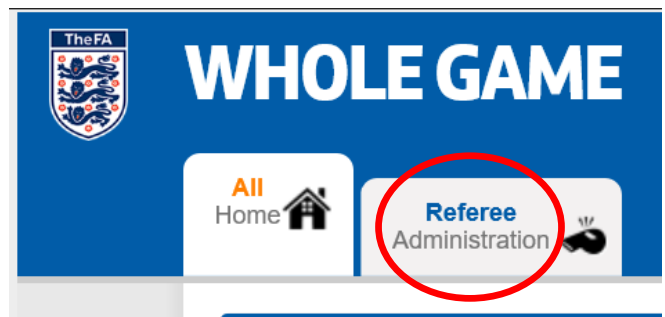
- Referees **must submit a report** to the relevant Affiliated Association **within two days** of the match (excluding Sundays), stating the cautionable, sending-off offences and/or extraordinary incidents
- In the case of sending-off offences and extraordinary incidents, the assistant referees may also submit a report

1 Log in to the Whole Game System using the link below:
<https://wholegame.thefa.com>

You will need the email address associated with your FAN and your password.

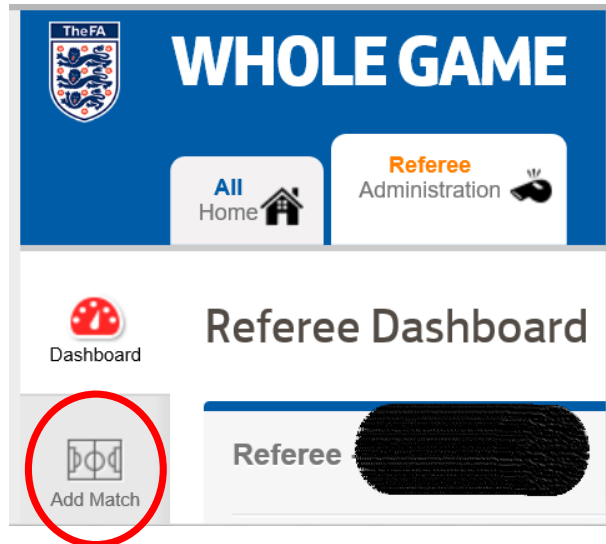


2 Click on the 'Referee Administration' tab at the top right hand side of the page.



3

Then click on the 'Add Match' tab on the left hand side of the page. the top right hand side of the page.



4

Enter the match details:

- **Season**
- **Your role** (referee or assistant referee)
- **Match date**
- **County Cup / League and League Cups / Other Competitions**
- **Name of the Competition** -if you cannot find the competition, then contact your County FA)

New Match Details

 A screenshot of the 'New Match Details' form. It contains several input fields: 'Season' (dropdown menu showing '2020 - 2021'), 'Select your role' (dropdown menu), 'Enter the Match Date' (text input with a calendar icon), and radio buttons for 'County cups', 'League and league cups' (selected), and 'Other competitions'. Below these is a search field for 'Select from league and league cup competitions' with the placeholder 'Start typing to find a competition'. A 'Save Match' button is at the bottom right.

5

If there are no teams found within the competition, then you will need to do a manual search for the club and then the team and press 'save match'

 A screenshot of the form showing a warning message. The 'Select from county cup competitions' dropdown is set to 'Sussex FA - Sussex Community Shield'. Below it, a red warning box says: 'No teams found for this competition. Proceed with the manual search below!'. There are two search input fields: 'Start typing to find a homeclub first' and 'Start typing to find an awayclub first'. A 'Save Match' button is at the bottom right.

 A screenshot of the form showing a dropdown menu. The 'Select from county cup competitions' dropdown is set to 'Sussex FA - Sussex Sunday Challenge Cup'. Below it, there are two more dropdown menus: 'Select the home team' and 'Select the away team', both with 'Select a team' as the placeholder. A 'Save Match' button is at the bottom right.

If there are teams found within the competition, then you can select them from the dropdown and press 'save match'

6

You can select add cautions and/or dismissals and/or misconduct by clicking on the relevant section(s)

Please note: 'Non Playing Participant' offences relate to Technical Area occupants only

The image shows five dashboard cards arranged horizontally. From left to right:

- Cautions**: Count 0. Link: "Click to see full cautions report".
- Cautions Non Playing Participant**: Count 0. Link: "Click to see full cautions report".
- Dismissals**: Count 0. Link: "Click to see full send-off's report".
- Dismissals Non Playing Participant**: Count 0. Link: "Click to see full send-off's report".
- Misconduct including Non Playing Dismissals**: Count 0. Link: "Click to see the extraordinary reports".

7

CAUTIONS

- Enter the **team**, **player***, **caution code**, **FA code** (for C1 cautions)
- Click '**Add**' and '**Save Cautions**' when they have all been added

If the player does not appear on the dropdown list, scroll to the bottom, click 'other**' and manually type their first name and last name*

The form has a header with four columns: **Team**, **Player**, **Caution Code**, and **FA Code**. Below the header are three dropdown menus, each with "Select" and a downward arrow. To the right of the dropdowns is an "Add +" button. Below the form are two informational messages in blue boxes:

- 1. Please don't forget to click "Save Cautions" after new caution added
- 2. To best aid with administration, please ensure that all the cautions are added in the order of occurrence.

 To the right of the second message is a "Save Cautions" button.

8

NON PLAYING PARTICIPANT CAUTIONS

- Enter the **team**, **participant*** and **offence**
- Click '**Add**' and '**Save Cautions**' when they have all been added

If the player does not appear on the dropdown list, scroll to the bottom, click 'other**' and manually type their first name and last name*

The form has a header with three columns: **Team**, **Participant**, and **Offence**. Below the header are three dropdown menus, each with "Select" and a downward arrow. To the right of the dropdowns is an "Add +" button. Below the form are two informational messages in blue boxes:

- 1. Please don't forget to click "Save Cautions" after new caution added
- 2. To best aid with administration, please ensure that all the cautions are added in the order of occurrence.

 To the right of the second message is a "Save Cautions" button.

9

DISMISSALS

- Enter the **team, player***, under **law 12 section** and advise if there is an assistant referee also reporting
- Click **'Add Dismissal'**
- If the player does not appear on the dropdown list, scroll to the bottom, click **'other'** and manually type their first name and last name.

**For S2 Violent Conduct the 'type' will need to be added; for S7 the 2 caution codes will need to be added*

Add New Dismissal

Team

Player

Under law 12 section

Also Reporting
 Tick if there's an assistant also reporting

Add Dismissal +

10

NON PLAYING PARTICIPANT DISMISSALS

- Enter the **team, participant, offence, name(s) of other(s)** reporting and **incident details**
- Click **'Add Dismissal'**
- If the player does not appear on the dropdown list, scroll to the bottom, click **'other'** and manually type their first name and last name.

Add New Non Playing Dismissal

Team

Participant

Offence

Name of others who may also report on this incident

Incident details

Add Dismissal +

11

MISCONDUCT

- Enter **linked to club**, if you deem the incident as **misconduct**, if the incident caused the **match to be abandoned, name(s) of others(s)** who may be reporting and incident details
- Click **'Add'**

Add new report

Linked to

Misconduct

Did this incident cause the match to be abandoned?
 Yes No

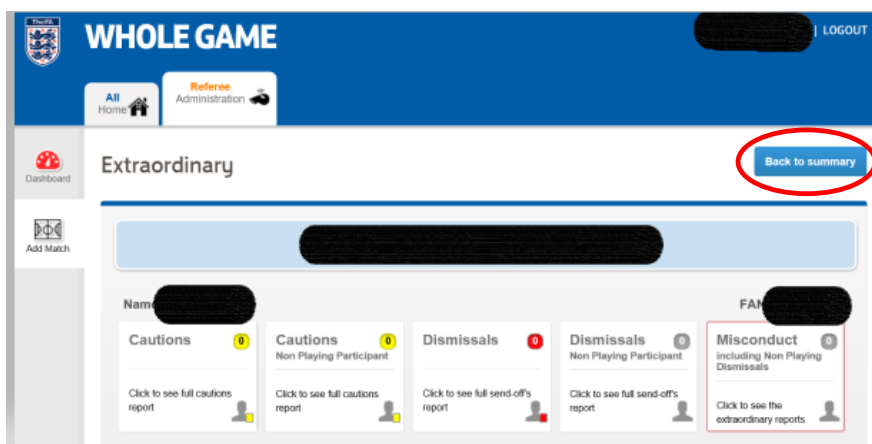
Name of others who may also report on this incident

Incident details

Add +

12

Once all the cautions and/or dismissals and/or misconduct have been added, scroll to the top and press 'Back to summary'



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- At the bottom of the summary page, tick if the game was abandoned or there were no cautions/dismissals/misconduct in the match
- Finally, click 'Submit Discipline Report' and this will go to the relevant County FA(s)

Tick if the game was abandoned

There were no cautions/sendings off/misconduct in this match.



FA Education

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DE13 9PD

Email:

Education@TheFA.com

Visit:

TheFA.com/Learning