



PASS A BALL, MAKE A FRIEND – SPORTSMANSHIP TRAINING MANUAL



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BARCEL'HONA SPORT EVENTS – SPAIN

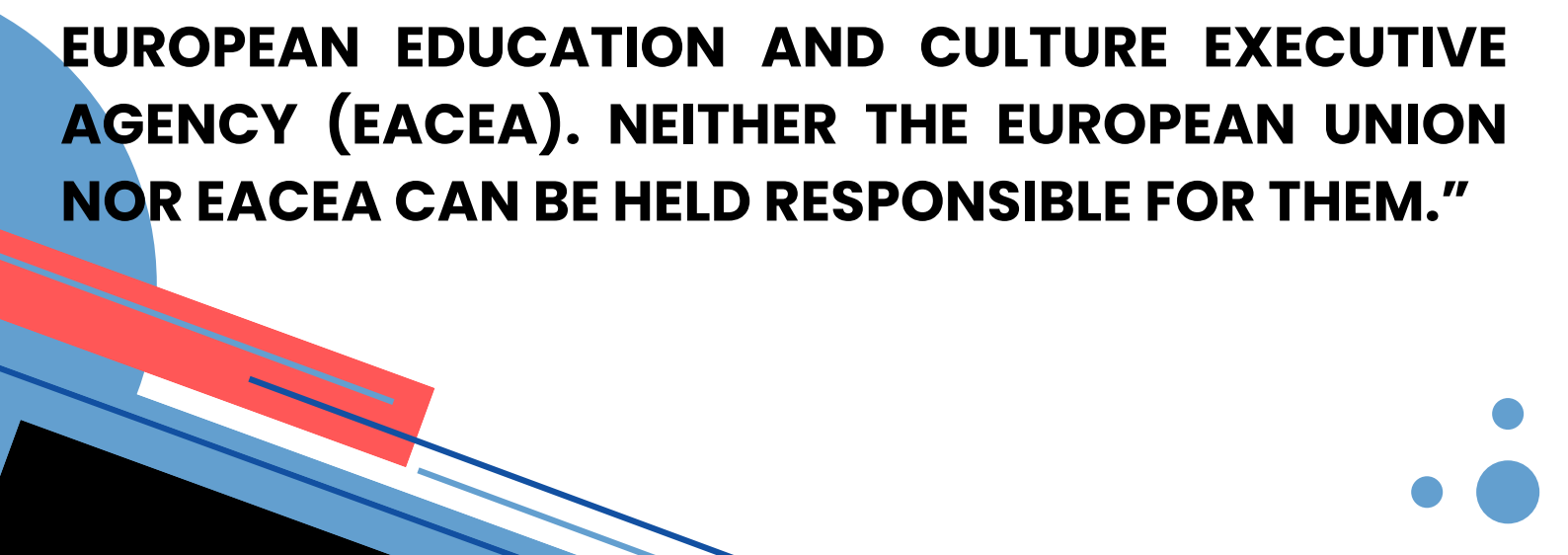
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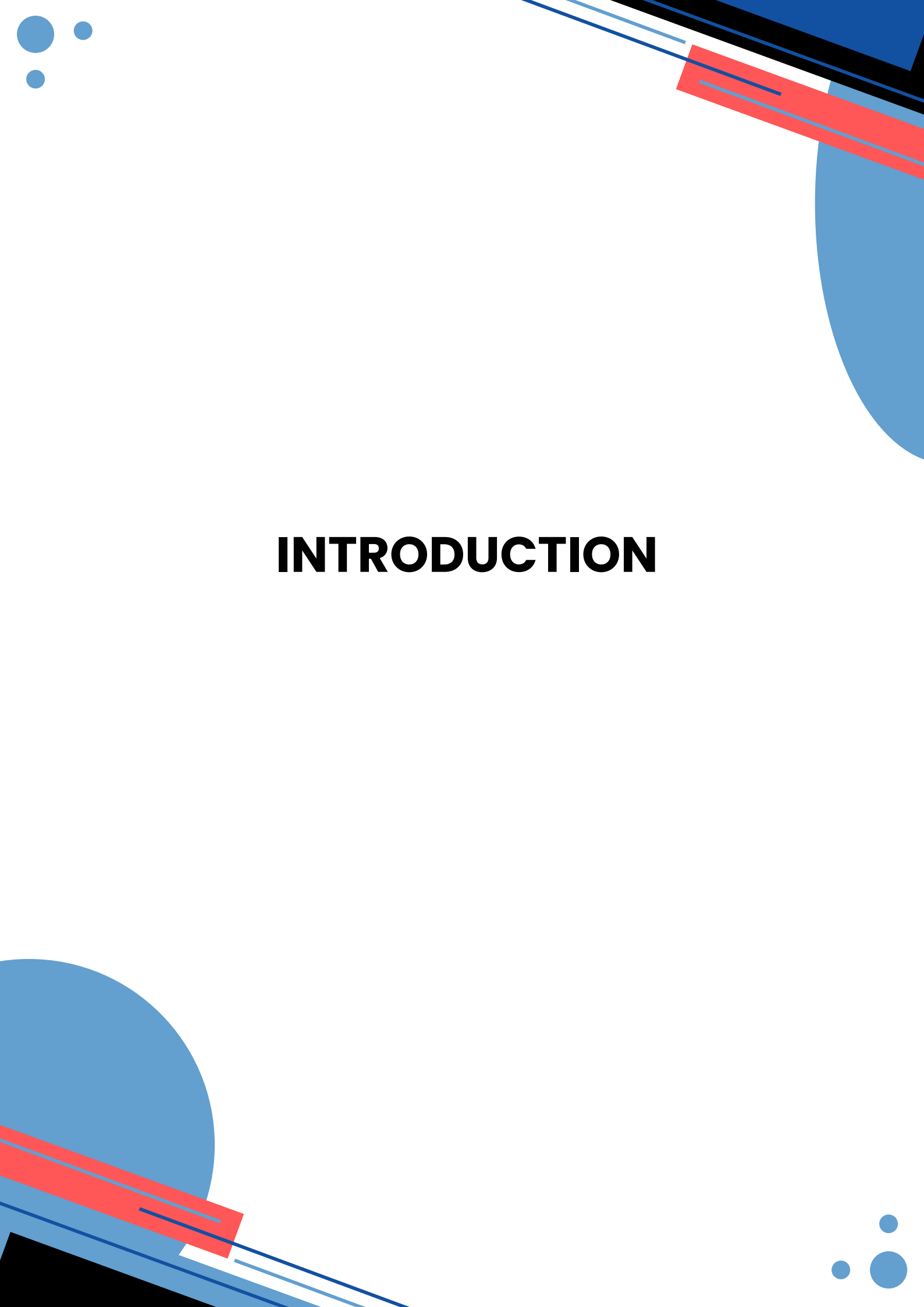
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The background features abstract geometric elements. In the top-left corner, there are three blue circles of varying sizes. In the top-right corner, there are overlapping blue and red rectangular shapes with thin blue lines. In the bottom-left corner, there is a large blue semi-circle and a red rectangular shape. In the bottom-right corner, there are three blue circles of varying sizes, mirroring the top-left corner.

INTRODUCTION

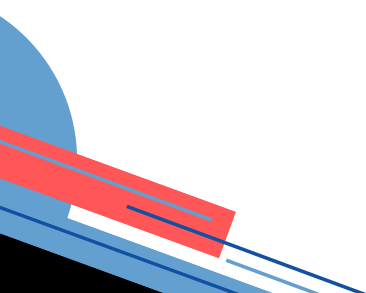


INTRODUCTION

A ball can be much more than a piece of sports equipment. It can start a conversation, create a friendship, build trust, and bring together people from different backgrounds. Every pass on the field represents an opportunity for connection, cooperation, and mutual understanding. This simple idea lies at the heart of the Pass a Ball, Make a Friend project. Sport is one of the most powerful tools for social inclusion. It creates opportunities for young people to meet, communicate, learn from one another, and develop a sense of belonging. Regardless of language, nationality, gender, ability, religion, or social background, sport provides a common space where people can work towards shared goals and experience the values of respect, teamwork, solidarity, and fair play. At the same time, sport environments are not immune to the challenges that exist in wider society. Stereotypes, discrimination, bullying, exclusion, hate speech, and unequal participation opportunities can negatively affect young people's experiences and wellbeing. Creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive sport environments therefore requires deliberate effort from coaches, youth workers, peer leaders, volunteers, parents, and young people themselves.

This manual has been developed within the framework of the Pass a Ball, Make a Friend project to support those working with young people in sport and youth settings. Its purpose is to provide practical tools, activities, and educational resources that promote inclusion, equality, wellbeing, positive leadership, and active participation through sport. The manual is based on non-formal education principles and experiential learning methodologies.

Rather than focusing solely on theoretical knowledge, the activities encourage participants to learn through experience, reflection, teamwork, discussion, role-play, and problem-solving. Through these methods, young people are encouraged to explore real-life situations, challenge prejudice and stereotypes, develop empathy, strengthen communication skills, and become active contributors to positive team cultures.





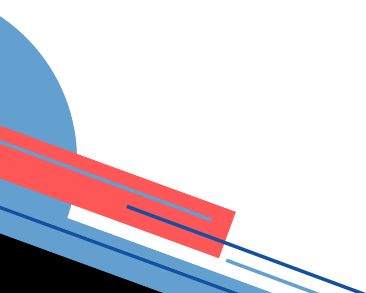
INTRODUCTION

The workshops included in this manual address several key themes that are essential for creating safe and inclusive sport environments:

- Understanding stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech;
- Promoting mental wellbeing and emotional safety in sport;
- Strengthening teamwork, inclusion, and intercultural dialogue;
- Developing active bystander skills and responding to harmful behavior;
- Creating Codes of Conduct that promote respect and fair play;
- Empowering coaches, youth workers, and peer leaders to act as positive role models and inclusion ambassadors.

The activities are designed for young people, coaches, youth workers, volunteers, peer leaders, and grassroots sport organizations. They can be adapted to different age groups, sports disciplines, cultural contexts, and levels of experience. While each workshop can be delivered independently, together they form a comprehensive educational journey that supports participants in building more inclusive, respectful, and supportive sport communities. Ultimately, Pass a Ball, Make a Friend is built on the belief that meaningful social change often begins with simple human connections. When young people feel welcomed, valued, respected, and included, sport becomes more than a game—it becomes a powerful platform for friendship, learning, personal growth, and social cohesion.

We hope this manual will inspire facilitators, coaches, youth workers, and young people to use sport not only as a tool for physical activity, but also as a vehicle for creating stronger communities where everyone has the opportunity to participate, belong, and thrive.





INTRODUCTION

Who can use this manual?

The manual has been designed for a wide range of individuals and organizations involved in grassroots sport, youth work, education, and community development. While the activities were developed within the framework of the Pass a Ball, Make a Friend project and are primarily tailored to football environments, they can easily be adapted to other sports and youth settings. The manual is particularly suitable for:

Coaches and sports trainers

Coaches play a central role in shaping team culture and influencing young people's attitudes and behaviors. The activities in this manual provide practical tools for promoting inclusion, preventing discrimination, managing conflicts, encouraging teamwork, and creating positive learning environments within sports clubs and teams.

Youth workers and youth leaders

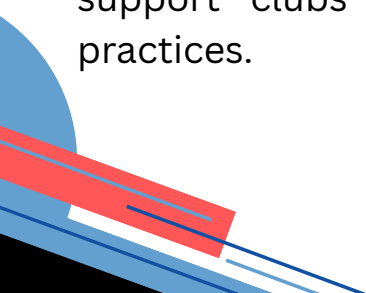
Youth workers can use the workshops to address topics such as diversity, social inclusion, active citizenship, empathy, communication, and respect. The activities complement youth work methodologies and can be implemented both within and outside sport settings.

Peer leaders and team captains

Young people often influence one another more than adults realize. Team captains, peer mentors, and youth leaders can use the exercises to strengthen their leadership skills, support teammates, challenge harmful behavior, and promote a positive team atmosphere.

Grassroots sport clubs and community organizations

Sport clubs and community-based organizations can integrate the workshops into their regular activities, seasonal programs, training camps, educational events, or volunteer development initiatives. The manual can support clubs in strengthening safeguarding, inclusion, and fair play practices.





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Teachers and educators

Many activities can be adapted for use in schools, physical education classes, extracurricular programs, and non-formal learning environments. The themes explored in the manual contribute to citizenship education, personal development, and social-emotional learning.

Parents and volunteers

Parents and volunteers are important stakeholders in creating positive sport experiences for young people. Selected activities and discussion exercises can help raise awareness about respectful behavior, inclusion, and the role adults play in shaping sport environments.

Project coordinators and trainers

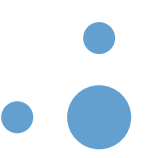
The manual can also serve as a resource for organizations implementing Erasmus+, sport-for-development, inclusion, or youth participation projects. Trainers and facilitators may use the workshops as standalone activities or combine them into broader educational programs.

How to use the manual

The workshops can be delivered individually or as part of a longer educational program. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt activities according to:

- participants' age and experience;
- group size;
- local cultural context;
- available time and resources;
- specific learning objectives.

No advanced expertise in discrimination, inclusion, or youth work is required. However, facilitators should create a safe and respectful learning environment and be prepared to guide discussions on potentially sensitive topics. The ultimate goal of this manual is to support everyone involved in sport in creating environments where young people feel respected, valued, included, and empowered to participate fully—both on and off the field.





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Learning objectives

Pass a Ball, Make a Friend manual aims to support coaches, youth workers, peer leaders, volunteers, and young people in creating safer, more inclusive, and more respectful sport environments. Through the activities and workshops presented in this manual, participants will develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that contribute to positive team cultures and equal participation in sport.

By completing the activities included in this manual, participants should be able to:

Knowledge

- Understand the concepts of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and hate speech.
- Recognize how harmful behaviors can appear in sport environments, both offline and online.
- Understand the impact of discrimination, bullying, and exclusion on individuals, teams, and communities.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of coaches, youth workers, peer leaders, parents, and participants in promoting inclusion and respect.
- Understand the importance of Codes of Conduct, safeguarding measures, and positive leadership in sport.

Skills

- Recognize and challenge discriminatory behavior, stereotypes, and exclusionary practices.
 - Communicate respectfully and effectively with teammates, coaches, officials, and opponents.
 - Apply conflict prevention and conflict resolution techniques in sport settings.
 - Demonstrate active bystander skills when witnessing discrimination, bullying, or hate speech.
 - Work collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
 - Contribute to the development of safe, welcoming, and inclusive team environments.
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INTRODUCTION

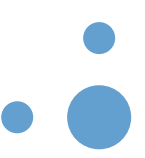
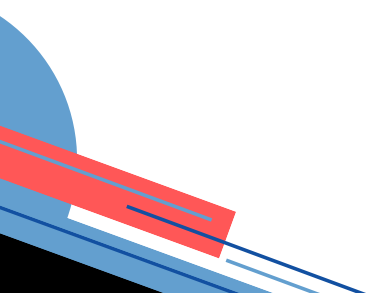
Attitudes and values

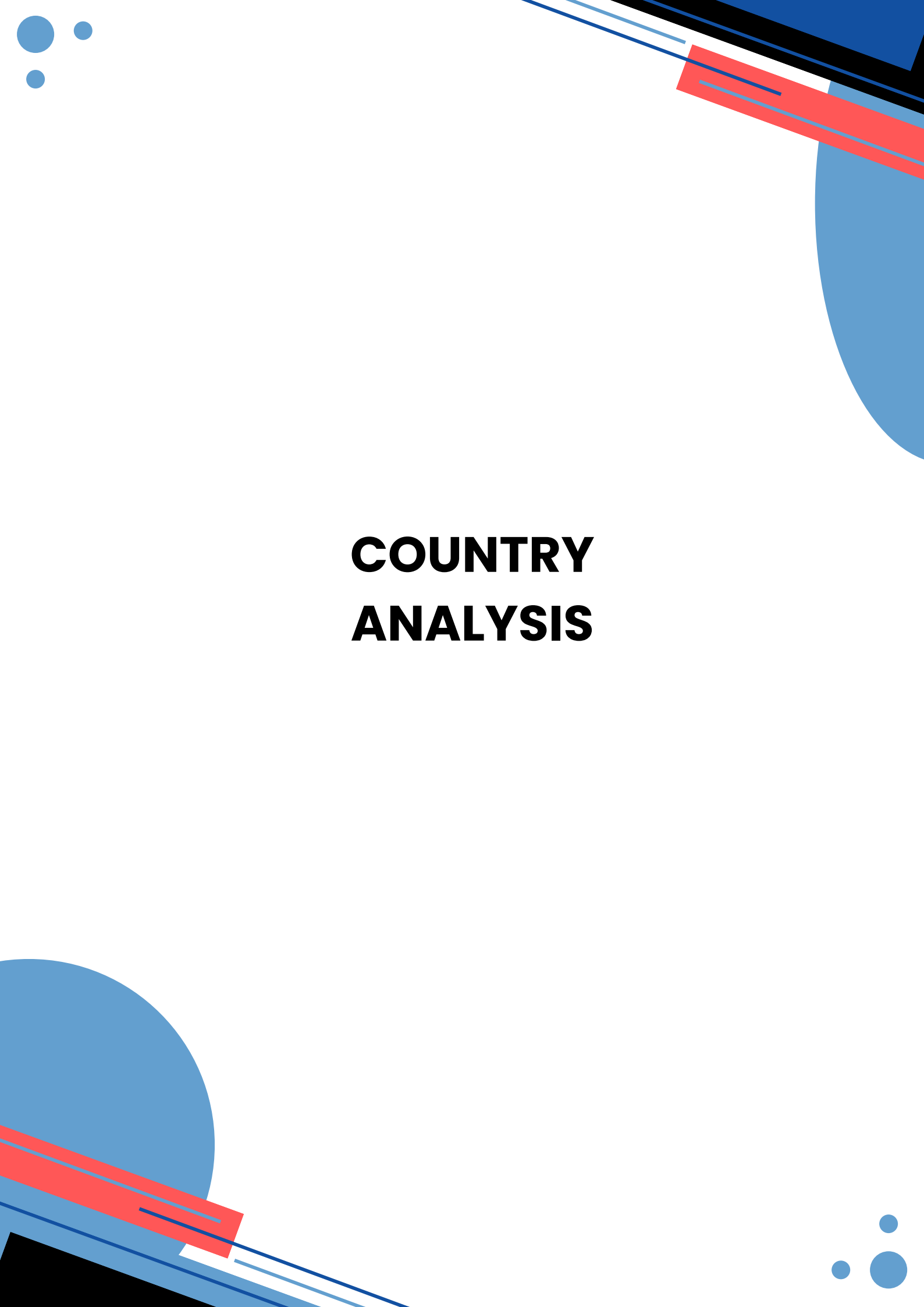
- Develop empathy and respect for people with different backgrounds, identities, experiences, and abilities.
- Value diversity as a strength within teams and communities.
- Promote fair play, solidarity, inclusion, and equal opportunities in sport.
- Take responsibility for personal behavior and its impact on others.
- Demonstrate commitment to creating positive sport environments where everyone feels welcome, respected, and able to participate.

Competences

- Act as ambassadors of inclusion, respect, and fair play within their teams and communities.
- Support teammates who experience exclusion, discrimination, or harmful behavior.
- Encourage positive team culture through leadership, cooperation, and mutual support.
- Contribute to building sport environments that prioritize wellbeing, participation, and belonging for all.

Ultimately, the manual seeks to empower participants not only to recognize challenges within sport environments but also to become active contributors to positive change. Through sport, young people can learn valuable life skills, build meaningful relationships, and help create communities where everyone has the opportunity to participate, develop, and thrive.





COUNTRY ANALYSIS

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Country Analysis – Serbia

1. General context

Football in Serbia has a strong social and emotional importance, but it also remains one of the sports most exposed to verbal aggression, discriminatory chanting, local rivalries and conflict situations. Hate speech and conflicts are most visible in professional and national-team football, but similar patterns are also present at amateur, grassroots and youth level, where they are usually less systematically monitored and less publicly reported. At grassroots level, the problem is often expressed through insults between players, pressure on referees, aggressive behavior by parents and coaches, and hostile reactions during emotionally tense matches. The issue can be assessed as stable to growing, especially because national football institutions have recently warned that sanctions for discriminatory behavior and extremist messages have become increasingly frequent and financially damaging. ([source](#)) The main difference is that elite-level incidents usually involve organized supporters and public sanctions, while youth and amateur football more often involve informal conflicts that are handled internally by clubs or competition bodies. This makes the problem partly hidden, although it directly affects children, young players, young referees and coaches. Broader social polarization, normalization of hate speech in public and online spaces, and unresolved ethnic and political tensions also influence the football environment. ([source](#)) For that reason, sportsmanship education in Serbia should address both open hate speech and everyday conflict behavior that can quickly escalate into verbal or physical violence.

2. Most common forms of hate speech and conflict

The most common forms of hate speech in Serbian football are ethnic and national insults, especially connected to regional rivalries and narratives about Albanians, Croats, Bosniaks and Roma. These forms are often linked with political or historical references, flags, symbols, chants or online comments. Racist insults can also appear towards Black players or foreign players, although these incidents are less visible at grassroots level unless they become public.

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Gender-based and homophobic comments are also present, particularly towards female players, female referees, girls in football, LGBT persons, and boys who are mocked as “weak” or “not masculine enough”. Club rivalry is another frequent trigger, especially when local clubs have a long history of competition or when matches decide promotion, relegation or tournament placement. Typical conflicts include players against players, players or coaches against referees, parents against referees, supporters or parents against other supporters, and verbal pressure from the sideline towards young players. At youth level, a large part of the conflict comes from adults, especially parents and coaches who transfer pressure to children. Conflicts most often occur during matches, immediately after controversial referee decisions, after goals, after fouls, or at the end of tense games. Training sessions are usually less exposed, but verbal humiliation can still happen through teasing, exclusion, shouting or discriminatory jokes. Online spaces are increasingly relevant, especially club pages, comment sections, local sport portals, Instagram and TikTok content, where insults after matches can continue and become more aggressive. Hate speech in online spaces is especially dangerous because young players can be targeted outside the field and because comments are often shared without any educational follow-up.

3. Key actors involved

Hate speech in football setting harms everyone, The actors most commonly involved are players, coaches, referees, parents and supporters, depending on the level of competition. In grassroots and youth football, parents and coaches often play a decisive role because their behavior sets the emotional tone of the match. Referees, especially young and less experienced referees, are one of the most exposed groups to verbal abuse and, in some cases, physical attacks. ([source](#)) Young players are also vulnerable because they may copy adults’ behavior or become targets of insults related to ethnicity, gender, physical appearance, social background or perceived mistakes during the match. Minority players, Roma children, foreign players, girls and young women in football, and LGBT youth or youth perceived as LGBT can be more exposed to discriminatory comments.

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Female referees and female players are additionally exposed to sexist stereotypes and questioning of their competence. Coaches can be both risk actors and prevention actors: when they tolerate insults, the problem escalates; when they intervene early, they can calm the situation and protect young players. Club representatives and competition delegates are important because they decide whether incidents will be reported, minimized or addressed properly.

4. Main causes and triggers

The main trigger is competitive pressure, especially in matches that are perceived as important for ranking, local prestige, selection or future opportunities for young players. A second major trigger is dissatisfaction with refereeing, where a single decision can lead to shouting, insults, threats or pressure from the bench and the audience. Poor emotional control by adults is a serious factor, because children often reproduce the language and behavior they see from coaches, parents and senior players. Local rivalries can also turn normal competition into hostility, especially in smaller communities where clubs, schools and families know each other personally. Lack of education is another major cause: many grassroots clubs have rules on competition but do not have practical tools for preventing hate speech, calming conflict, or setting clear behavior standards before matches. Broader social factors also influence football, including nationalism, discrimination against minorities, sexism, homophobia, and tabloid or online narratives that normalize insults and enemy images. Social media can intensify conflicts by keeping the argument alive after the match and by giving visibility to humiliation, accusations and discriminatory comments. Another cause is weak follow-up after incidents: sanctions may exist, but clubs often lack restorative or educational measures that would help players and adults understand what happened and change behavior. In youth football, the pressure to win sometimes becomes stronger than the educational purpose of sport, which creates a climate where aggressive behavior is justified as “passion” or “fighting spirit”.

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5. Existing measures and gaps

Serbia has a legal framework for preventing violence and misconduct at sports events. The **Law on Prevention of Violence and Misbehavior at Sports Events** defines obligations of organisers and includes measures related to physical attacks, objects thrown onto the field, symbols that insult national, racial, religious or other feelings, pyrotechnics, alcohol, high-risk matches, security services and cooperation with public authorities. The Criminal Code also recognises violent behavior at sports events or public gatherings, including behavior or slogans that incite national, racial, religious or other hatred or intolerance when this leads to violence or physical conflict. Football structures also have internal rules, disciplinary procedures and reporting systems, while FSS (Football Association of Serbia) documents refer to respect, fair play, avoidance of discrimination and prohibition of hate speech. Internationally, UEFA and FIFA standards include anti-discrimination rules, sanctions, awareness programs, and the three-step procedure for racist behavior during matches: stop the match, suspend the match, and abandon the match if the behavior continues. (source) FSS has also supported campaigns such as “Be a referee”, which is relevant because referee protection and respect for officials are central issues in youth football.

However, several gaps remain. Existing measures are stronger at elite and national-team level than at grassroots and youth level. There is not enough systematic education for coaches, parents, young players and club volunteers on how to recognize hate speech and how to react before a situation escalates. Reporting procedures exist, but in practice many smaller clubs treat incidents informally or avoid reporting them because of fear of consequences, local pressure or lack of confidence that anything useful will happen. Sanctions alone are not enough, because they often come after the damage has already been done and do not necessarily change behavior. Grassroots clubs need simple, practical tools: match-day behavior rules, conflict de-escalation steps, parent codes of conduct, role-play scenarios, short educational sessions for players, and post-incident reflection methods. Another gap is the limited protection of young referees, who need both institutional support and a culture where coaches and parents immediately stop abuse from the sideline. Finally, there is a lack of structured work with online behavior, even though online insults increasingly continue the conflict after the match.

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6. Practical example

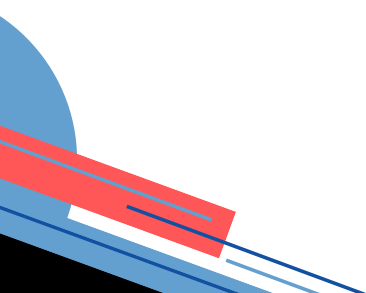
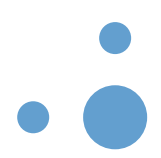
A relevant regional example took place in January 2023 during the children's football tournament "Šampion Junior Kup" on Ilidža, near Sarajevo, which gathered youth teams from the region. During one of the matches, a group of boys reportedly chanted "Ubij Srbina" ("Kill the Serb"), while standing together near the field. According to the organizers, the team involved came from Split and was immediately removed from the tournament, while the coach reportedly apologized for the behavior. On the same tournament, a separate serious incident also occurred when parents of young players from FK Zvezdara from Belgrade were attacked near the hotel, and one person was injured with a knife. Although these two incidents were reported as separate, together they show how children's football can become a space where hate speech, national hostility and adult aggression enter sport environments that should be safe, educational and focused on fair play. ([source](#))

This example is important for the Sportsmanship Training Manual because it shows that hate speech in youth football is not only a problem of professional stadiums or organized supporter groups. It can appear among children, during regional tournaments, and can be reinforced or normalized if adults do not react immediately and clearly. The reaction of the organizer, including removal from the tournament, was important as a disciplinary step, but the case also shows the need for stronger preventive education before competitions. Coaches, parents and tournament organizers need practical tools for setting behavior rules, explaining why discriminatory chanting is unacceptable, reacting immediately when hate speech occurs, and organizing follow-up discussions with children after such incidents. For Serbian grassroots football, this example is particularly relevant because young players from Serbia may participate in regional tournaments, while similar patterns of nationalism, rivalry and discriminatory language can also appear in local youth competitions.



COUNTRY ANALYSIS

7. Key needs for improvement

- Practical training for coaches on recognizing hate speech, stopping discriminatory language and calming conflict before escalation.
 - Clear grassroots behavior rules for players, coaches, parents and spectators, explained before matches and repeated during the season.
 - Specific tools for protecting young referees, including immediate coach intervention when abuse starts from the bench or sideline.
 - Short educational activities for young players on respect, diversity, fair play, emotional control and responsible online behavior.
 - Parent-focused guidance on positive support, pressure, communication with referees and consequences of aggressive behavior.
 - Simple reporting and follow-up templates for clubs, including incident description, response taken and lessons learned.
 - Restorative post-incident methods, such as team reflection, apology processes and agreed behavior commitments, in addition to sanctions.
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COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Country Analysis – Bulgaria

1. General context

In Bulgaria, hate speech and conflict in football are visible not only at professional level, but also in amateur, youth and grassroots settings. The issue is not always systematically monitored at local level, which makes it difficult to measure its real scale. However, disciplinary cases, media reports and incidents involving referees, players and supporters show that verbal aggression, discriminatory language and conflict behavior remain a practical problem. The Bulgarian Football Union formally bans discrimination and declares zero tolerance towards racism and other forms of discrimination in its statutes. At the same time, its disciplinary rules include offences such as insulting language, offensive gestures, poor conduct, discrimination and racism, which shows that these behaviors are recognized as relevant risks in the football system. At grassroots level, the problem can be described as stable, with signs of growth when matches are emotionally charged or when conflicts continue online after the game. The strongest tensions are usually linked to referee decisions, local rivalry, aggressive behavior from parents or supporters, and lack of practical education on respect and self-control.

2. Most common forms of hate speech and conflict

The most common forms of hate speech in football in Bulgaria include racist or ethnic insults, insults based on nationality, club rivalry abuse, sexist comments and offensive language towards referees or opponents. In youth football, hate speech is often mixed with general verbal aggression, mocking, provocation and humiliation rather than clearly separated as a “hate speech case”. Typical conflicts include players arguing with referees, players confronting each other after fouls, coaches protesting decisions, parents shouting from the sidelines, and supporters provoking opposing teams. The Bulgarian Football Union’s disciplinary rules explicitly list insulting or offensive language and gestures, discrimination and racism, and breaches of order and security as disciplinary violations. These situations most often occur during matches, immediately after the final whistle, near dressing rooms, around the pitch, and later in online spaces. In youth football, parents and spectators can become a serious trigger, especially when young players are under pressure and coaches do not intervene early.

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3. Key actors involved

The main actors involved are players, coaches, referees, parents, local supporters and club officials. In youth football, parents and coaches have a very strong influence because their reactions often shape how young players understand acceptable behavior. Referees are one of the most exposed groups, especially young referees or referees working in amateur and youth matches with limited security or institutional support. A 2025 case from a children's tournament in Sofia showed this clearly, when the Bulgarian Football Union publicly condemned an assault on a match official during a game involving children born in 2014. Young players from minority backgrounds, Black players, Roma players, foreign players and female players or referees can be more exposed to discriminatory comments and humiliation. Coaches and team leaders are key actors because they can either stop escalation early or, if they react aggressively, make the conflict worse.

4. Main causes and triggers

The main triggers are perceived unfair referee decisions, aggressive play, local rivalry, strong pressure to win, and lack of emotional control during key moments of the match. Many conflicts start with a foul, a penalty decision, an offside decision, a red card, or accusations that the referee is biased. In one amateur match in the Pleven region in 2024, a referee was attacked after a foul decision, and the match was stopped. Another common cause is the normalization of shouting and insults from the sidelines, especially when adults behave as if pressure and verbal aggression are part of the game. Broader social factors also matter: discrimination, nationalism, local tensions and online hate can enter the football environment. The Council of Europe's work on combating hate speech in sport also treats discrimination, exclusion and hate speech in sport as issues that require practical educational responses, not only sanctions.

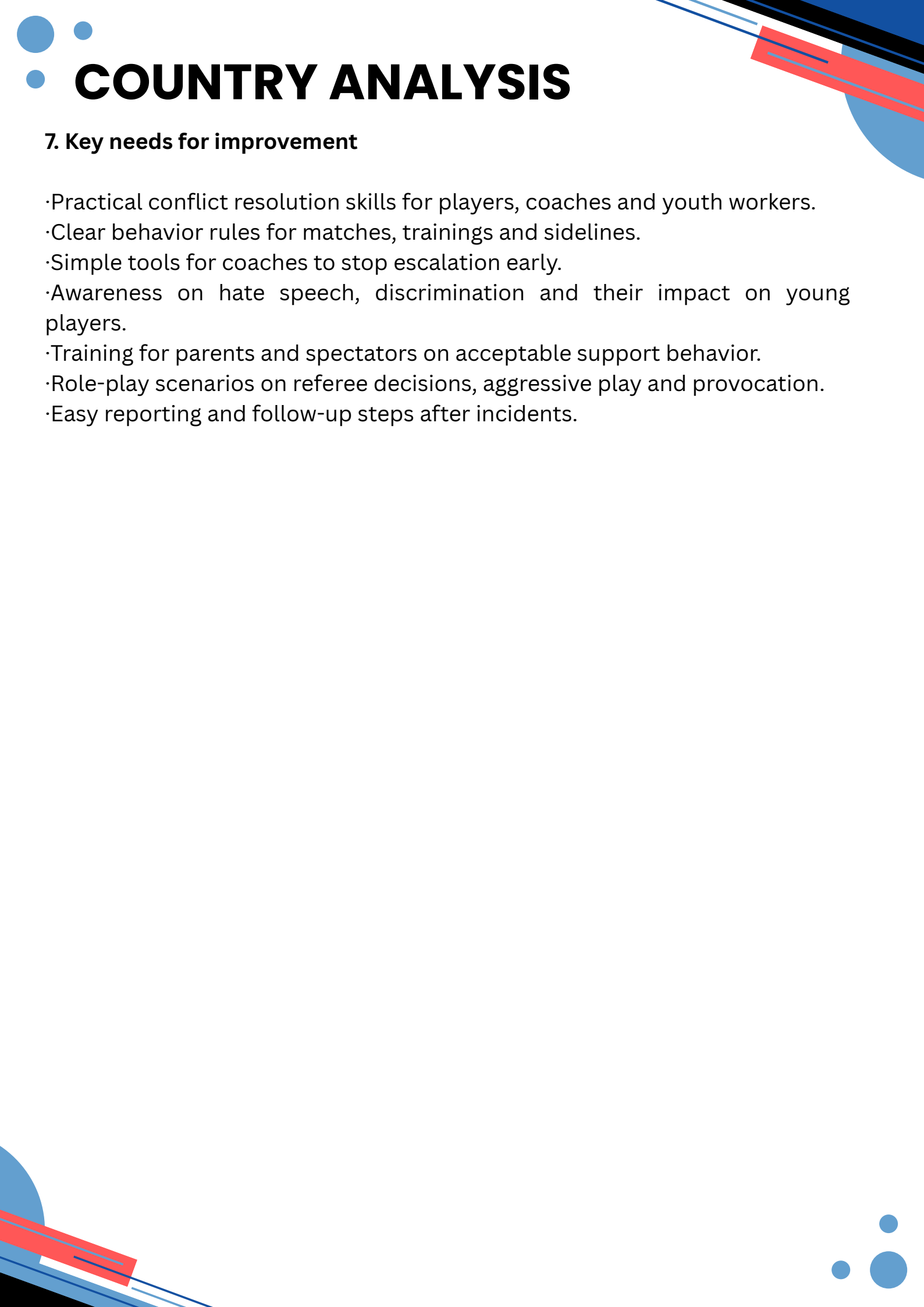
COUNTRY ANALYSIS

5. Existing measures and gaps

Bulgaria has formal rules against discrimination in football. The BFU statute (2026 CHANGES) prohibits discrimination based on race, nationality, sex, origin, ethnicity, religion, political or other affiliation and declares zero tolerance towards racism and other forms of discrimination. The BFU disciplinary regulations also provide a framework for sanctions and procedures when violations occur, including offensive language, discrimination, racism, poor conduct and breaches of order and security. There are also public anti-racism messages and campaigns, including BFU statements that racism has no place in football. The main gap is that the response is still mostly reactive: sanctions come after the incident, while coaches, parents, young players and local clubs often lack simple tools for prevention. Grassroots clubs usually do not have enough resources for structured education on hate speech, conflict resolution, communication with referees and safe sideline behavior. There is also a gap in reporting and follow-up: minor incidents are often treated as “normal football tension” and are not discussed as learning moments. The training module should therefore focus on practical behavior rules, role-play, de-escalation, coach leadership and simple match-day protocols.

6. Practical example

A typical youth football scenario in Bulgaria is a close match between two local teams where the referee gives a controversial decision near the end of the game. Players start shouting, one coach protests loudly, parents from both sides join in, and the opposing players begin insulting each other. The conflict moves from the pitch to the sideline, and after the final whistle parents continue arguing near the dressing rooms. In some cases, such situations have escalated into physical confrontation, as shown by reported incidents involving youth matches and children's tournaments. Usually the case is handled through disciplinary action or public condemnation after the incident. What is often missing is a clear educational follow-up: a short team discussion, apology process, behavior reflection, and practical agreement on how players, parents and coaches should react next time.



COUNTRY ANALYSIS

7. Key needs for improvement

- Practical conflict resolution skills for players, coaches and youth workers.
- Clear behavior rules for matches, trainings and sidelines.
- Simple tools for coaches to stop escalation early.
- Awareness on hate speech, discrimination and their impact on young players.
- Training for parents and spectators on acceptable support behavior.
- Role-play scenarios on referee decisions, aggressive play and provocation.
- Easy reporting and follow-up steps after incidents.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Country Analysis - Italy

1. General context

In Italy, hate speech and conflict in football are a documented and persistent issue at professional, amateur, youth and grassroots level. In Southern Italy, and specifically in Puglia where we operates in Orta Nova, Province of Foggia, the problem is particularly visible due to strong local territorial identities, high youth unemployment and limited access to structured civic education. The issue is widely described by coaches and club officials as stable or slowly growing, especially in emotionally charged matches and in online spaces after the game. The FIGC Statuto Federale formally prohibits any form of discrimination and declares a commitment to equal dignity and respect in football. Its code of sports justice identifies insulting language, discriminatory conduct and violent behavior as sanctionable offences. At grassroots level, however, sanctions are rarely applied and behavioral change remains modest. The Osservatorio Nazionale Sulle Manifestazioni Sportive, operated by the Ministry of the Interior, monitors incidents nationally but focuses primarily on professional and high-visibility events, leaving grassroots monitoring largely absent.

2. Most common forms of hate speech and conflict

The most common forms of hate speech in Italian grassroots football include territorial insults based on town or neighborhood of origin, which are widely normalized as competitive banter, and ethnic or racial insults directed at players of foreign origin, particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. In the Foggia province, where immigration has gradually diversified youth football teams, racially charged language has become a recurring concern reported by clubs working with mixed-background youth. Gender-based insults and mockery are frequent in settings involving female players or referees. Club rivalry between teams from neighboring municipalities generates intense verbal confrontations, especially in local derby matches. The most documented conflict pattern involves players and coaches aggressively contesting referee decisions, a behavior that young players quickly internalize and reproduce. Conflicts between parents on the sidelines have become more frequent at youth level, escalating from shouting to threats and occasionally physical confrontation.

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Online spaces, particularly WhatsApp group chats shared among parents and players, have become a secondary arena where match-day conflicts continue and intensify after the final whistle.

3. Key actors involved

The main actors involved in incidents are players, coaches, referees, parents and local supporters. Young male players between the ages of 12 and 17 are most frequently identified both as perpetrators and as targets. Referees are one of the most exposed groups: volunteer referees operating at youth and amateur level report high rates of verbal abuse and threats, which directly contributes to a growing shortage of officials willing to work in grassroots competitions. Coaches occupy a decisive role, as their behavior sets the tone for the whole team: when they model and enforce respect, incidents decrease significantly, but many grassroots coaches in Puglia have received no formal education in values-based coaching or conflict management. Parents and family members watching from the sidelines are the least-reached and most structurally disruptive group. Players from minority ethnic backgrounds, female players, and young players with disabilities are disproportionately exposed to discriminatory language and exclusion. The Unar has documented the exposure of ethnic minority communities in Southern Italy to discrimination in public life, including sport contexts.

4. Main causes and triggers

The most immediate triggers are contested referee decisions, physical fouls, and competitive pressure in matches where winning carries strong social significance in communities with few other outlets for public recognition among young people. In the Province of Foggia, where youth unemployment consistently exceeds 40%, football functions as one of the only accessible arenas for achievement and belonging, which inflates the emotional stakes of every match. Strong territorial identity and the historical rivalry between neighboring Apulian towns create a social context in which hostility toward rival communities is considered a legitimate expression of local pride, and these attitudes enter the football pitch directly. The normalization of aggressive behavior is reinforced when adults, particularly parents and coaches, react to incidents with aggression themselves rather than modeling regulation and restraint.

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Media coverage of professional football, which frequently dramatizes confrontation between players and officials, provides behavioral scripts that young players import into amateur settings. Broader social factors also play a role: racial prejudice, nationalism and the stigmatization of immigrants in parts of Southern Italian public discourse translate into discriminatory attitudes on the pitch toward players of foreign origin. According to the Council of Europe's resource centre on combating hate speech in sport combating practical educational responses targeting coaches and youth workers are more effective than reactive sanctions alone in changing the culture of grassroots sport.

5. Existing measures and gaps

Federation structures at the provincial level have insufficient resources to implement preventive programs. Minor incidents are routinely treated as normal football tension and ignored rather than addressed as teaching moments. Reporting mechanisms exist on paper but are not communicated clearly to clubs, players or families, and victims, particularly those from minority backgrounds, often distrust formal complaint processes. The FIGC provides sanctions for discriminatory conduct, offensive language and violent behavior and its school youth sector integrates fair play principles into youth football guidelines and coaching license programs. The UEFA football and social responsibility program promotes values of respect through communication materials distributed to clubs, nominally adopted by affiliated Italian clubs; the CONI also promotes fair play values within the national sport system. The main gap is that the existing response remains almost entirely reactive: sanctions are applied after incidents, while coaches, parents and young players lack simple, practical tools for prevention. Grassroots clubs in Puglia typically have no budget for structured education and no access to scenario-based training. Many coaches at this level have never attended any form of values education or conflict management training. The Rispetta il Gioco campaign relies on posters and slogans rather than interactive methods that produce behavioral change.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

6. Practical example

A typical scenario in youth football in the Province of Foggia involves an under-14 match between two rival town teams in which a player of African origin on the home team receives repeated ethnic insults from opposing players during the second half. The referee hears one comment but does not stop play, uncertain about the correct procedure. The targeted player reacts in frustration and receives a yellow card for protesting. The home coach does not formally contest the decision to avoid further escalation. After the match, no incident report is filed. The visiting club is not informed, no disciplinary procedure is initiated, and the targeted player stops attending training for the following two weeks. The behavior of the opposing players is not addressed. No structured conversation takes place within either team about what happened or how to respond differently next time. This scenario illustrates the cumulative effect of referee unpreparedness, absence of club-level protocols, reluctance to use formal reporting mechanisms, and lack of support for affected players.

7. Key needs for improvement

- Practical conflict resolution skills for coaches and youth workers, including real-time de-escalation and post-incident guidance;
- clear and shared behavior rules for matches, trainings and sidelines that all actors, including parents, understand and accept. Simple tools for coaches to recognize, name and stop hate speech and discriminatory language early;
- awareness on hate speech, racial discrimination and their specific impact on young players from minority backgrounds;
- role-play and scenario-based training tools grounded in the Southern Italian grassroots football context;
- structured training for parents and spectators on acceptable support behavior and its effect on young players;
- easy and accessible reporting and follow-up steps that clubs can apply after incidents without needing institutional support.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Country Analysis - Portugal

1. General context

The situation in Portugal in 2026 reflects a contrasting scenario: while overall physical incidents in stadiums show a downward trend, hate speech and new forms of organized violence have required increasing vigilance from the authorities. The Report on the Analysis of Violence Associated with Sport (RAVID) for the 2024/2025 sports season, produced by the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD) and the Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP), indicates the following:

- The two categories of incidents with the highest figures during the season under analysis were “possession/use of pyrotechnic devices” (4213 cases) and “insults or threats” (625 cases). Both categories recorded a decrease compared to the previous sports season, following the overall trend of a reduction in the total number of incidents;
- Football continues to account for the highest number of occurrences, similarly to previous seasons. Youth football competitions were among those registering the highest incidence of infractions;
- In Youth Football, the Ponto Nacional de Informações sobre Desporto (PNID) recorded 368 incidents during the 2024/2025 sports season and 595 incidents during the 2023/2024 sports season, across all age groups. These figures indicate a decrease in the number of incidents.

RAViD 24-25

2. Most common forms of hate speech and conflict

The profile of conflict in Portuguese football is evolving from traditional ultra supporter groups to more fragmented groups. According to the Report on the Analysis of Violence Associated with Sport (RAVID) for the 2024/2025, published by the the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD) and the Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP), In general, including football and youth football, the two most significant categories of incidents during the sports season under analysis were:

- Possession/use of pyrotechnic devices (4213);
- Insults or threats (625).

RAViD 24-25

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

3. Key actors involved

The Report on the Analysis of Violence Associated with Sport (RAVID) for the 2024/2025 Definitive sanctioning, produced by the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD) and the Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP), indicates the following:

- Decisions issued by the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD) across various sports, including football – meaning decisions for which all avenues of appeal had been exhausted and which had therefore already produced legal effect – concerned legal entities in 5.5% of cases (mostly offences committed by sports event organizers) and natural persons in 94.5% of cases, the majority of whom were male (94.5%).
- The statistically most significant categories of offences leading to sanctioning decisions were as follows:
 1. “Failure to comply with the duty of correctness, moderation, and respect” (334 definitive sanctioning decisions);
 2. “Introduction or use of pyrotechnics in sports venues” (180);
 3. “Pitch invasion during a sporting event or access to restricted areas of a sports venue not accessible to the general public” (41).
- By analysing the group of supporters subject to stadium access bans imposed by the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD) and enforced during the period under analysis (462 individuals), including those connected to Football and Youth Football, the following conclusions can be drawn:
 - a) The supporters concerned were predominantly male (97.4%) and mainly residents of the districts of Lisbon (30.3%), Porto (22.1%), and Braga (12.8%). Regarding age distribution, 25.4% of the supporters were between 21 and 25 years old, followed by the 16–20 age group, representing 19.3%;
 - b) 61.9% of the supporters subject to banning measures imposed by the APCVD were members of Organized Supporters Groups (GOA);
 - c) 67.9% of the ancillary sanctions involving bans from sports venues that came into force related to prohibition periods ranging from 10 to 18 months;

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

d) The main administrative offences for which these stadium access bans were imposed were: “introduction or use of pyrotechnics in sports venues” (72.9%); “throwing objects” (9.3%); “failure to comply with the duty of correctness, moderation, and respect” (9.1%); “pitch invasion or access to restricted areas not accessible to the general public” (5.2%); and “the commission of acts or incitement to violence, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance at sporting events” (3.5%).

Parte superior do formulário

RAViD 24-25

4. Main causes and triggers

Parte inferior do formulário

The Information Sheet “Violence Against Children and Young People in Sport” published by the Associação de Apoio à Vítima (APAV) states the following:

Violence in sport, including football and youth football, is linked to several recurring factors, such as:

- A culture of winning at all costs, where the result of the game is valued more highly than the well-being of children and young people;
- Pressure for sporting success, often driven by external expectations;
- Frustration following defeats, poor performances, injuries, and/or situations perceived as unfair, which may lead to aggressive reactions;
- The behavior of adults, when they display aggressive or disrespectful attitudes either on the field or in the stands;
- Direct encouragement of aggressiveness as a way of motivating and/or “toughening” athletes;
- The emotional and financial investment of families in their children’s sporting careers, increasing tension and pressure regarding athletic performance;
- The digital environment, where offensive comments or situations of cyberbullying related to sporting performance may arise.

folha desporto 2025Parte superior do formulário

Parte inferior do formulário

Pitacho, L. (2015), in the article “Parents, Pressure and the Crisis of Values in Youth Sport”, published in the sports newspaper A Bola, states the following:

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

- From a sociological perspective, Anomie Theory offers an illuminating lens. In contexts where social norms are weakened, or where the value system that should regulate behavior is replaced by a purely competitive logic, anomie emerges: the absence of clear references. In youth sports venues, where the line between support and pressure is often crossed, many parents feel entitled to act as coaches, referees, and even moral judges, replacing the spirit of sportsmanship with a tribal logic of winning at all costs.
- In youth development sport, including youth football, there is a setting conducive to social anomie, as there is a clear fragility of moral norms, given that values such as respect, cooperation, and learning are often replaced by an obsession with results and excessive competition. As a result, the “moral map” that should guide the behavior of all those involved — parents, athletes, coaches, and referees — is lost. Furthermore, the absence of clear sanctions or effective intervention by sports organizations contributes to increasingly invasive behaviors: parents criticize referees, insult opposing players, pressure their children with unrealistic expectations, invade pitches, and even assault referees and other participants.
- In addition, the Frustration–Aggression Theory argues that aggression is often a direct consequence of frustration, that is, the blocking of an expectation or desire. In the sporting context, especially in youth development categories, this theory helps explain the origin of many violent behaviors displayed by parents. When parents project onto their children their own sporting dreams — often unrealized — any obstacle in the young athlete’s path, such as a technical mistake, being substituted by the coach, or a defeat, is interpreted not merely as a sporting setback, but as an attack on their own personal worth. The resulting frustration generates intense negative emotions, which frequently manifest themselves through aggressive behavior.

Pais, pressão e a crise de valores no desporto jovem | A Bola

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

5. Existing measures and gaps

In Portugal there are entities that work to predict and combat violence in the context of sport. \The Authority for the Prevention and Combat of Violence in Sport (APCVD) develops projects and campaigns in this area. APCVD has carried out several awareness-raising and prevention actions, promoting values such as tolerance, solidarity, fair-play, respect and inclusion, in addition to training actions for professionals linked to the safety of sporting events. APCVD has been developing 2 campaigns:

a) “Feel at Home” Campaign: it is a symbolic campaign, which has highlighted the foundations of the European security model for sporting events, in which the HOSPITALITY component contributes decisively to reducing tensions and hostilities, thus increasing security levels. APCVD, Liga Portugal and associated Federations intend to raise awareness among promoters (clubs) of sporting events to create a welcoming environment. By promoting a climate of hospitality, sports promoters increase the chances of fans feeling welcome, valued and safe at sports events, helping to attract more families to sports venues and a healthy interaction among fans. This campaign aims to inspire and encourage clubs and fans to foster a mutual feeling of hospitality, a reciprocal pride in welcoming, so that everyone feels welcome, valued and safe during sporting events.

b) “Zero Violence” Campaign: is a national campaign to prevent and combat violence in sport, which aims to raise awareness of the phenomenon of violence, promoting the ethical values of sport, such as cooperation, respect, solidarity, fair play and tolerance. This campaign has a strong digital component and promotes the dissemination of initiatives and educational resources within the scope of the National Plan for Ethics in Sports (PNED), as well as the sharing of good examples, in Portugal and around the world, of news and good practices in the field of sports ethics.

Projetos e Campanhas – APCVD

The National Sports Ethics Plan (PNED) is a government initiative implemented by the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth IPDJ since 2012. With a preventive and educational mission, it is aimed at entities that promote sporting activities and structures directly or indirectly linked to sport such as clubs, federations, associations, schools, city halls, the media and prisons, with the target audience being: children, athletes, managers, coaches and referees, among others.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

The plan consists of a set of initiatives that aim to promote and disseminate ethics and values inherent to the practice of sports, and its objectives are framed within five strategic axes:

- Training/education;
- Sports practice/events;
- Publications/research/information and communication technologies;
- Competitions;
- Campaigns.

Plano Nacional de Ética no Desporto PNED - IPDJ

Início - ipdj-pned

It is worth noting that this plan also includes the “Ethics Flag Award”, which aims to distinguish entities that develop good practices in this area. whose regulations are published in the Official Gazette.

noticia - ipdj-pned

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The sanctions imposed by the Federação Portuguesa de Futebol (FPF) include fines, matches played behind closed doors, and stadium bans, with stricter penalties scheduled for the 2026/27 season due to concerns over violence. The FPF Disciplinary Regulations provide sanctions for improper conduct by clubs, sporting agents, and spectators, including joint liability for payment between clubs and offenders.

Main Disciplinary Sanctions (FPF):

- Fines: A principal or ancillary sanction consisting of the payment of a fixed monetary amount.
- Matches Behind Closed Doors: A prohibition on spectators attending official matches, while television broadcasting remains permitted.
- Stadium Ban (Interdição de Recinto): Prohibition on the use of a stadium, which in beach football may be replaced by a fine ranging from 30 to 50 UC (Units of Account).
- Suspension from Exercising Functions: Applicable to directors, coaches, and other sporting agents.
- Points Deduction / Relegation: Applicable in serious disciplinary cases.

Updates and Increased Penalties (2026/2027)

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

- Harsher Sanctions: The Federação Portuguesa de Futebol (FPF), together with the Associação Portuguesa de Árbitros de Futebol (APAF), approved tougher sanctions, particularly regarding violence against referees.
- Regulatory Amendments: More than 84 amendments were introduced into the Disciplinary Regulations for the 2026/27 season.
- Combating Violence: In May 2026, nine measures were proposed to the Government aimed at increasing supervision and preventing banned supporters from entering sports venues, focusing on the types of incidents that accounted for most recent sanctions.

Decisions and deliberations concerning these matters are published on the official website of the [Federação Portuguesa de Futebol](#). Sanctions become time-barred after 1, 2, or 4 years, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

The Board of the Federação Portuguesa de Futebol recently presented a package of measures under the new Program for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in Sport, which requires ongoing monitoring by all organizing entities and by the Government in order to ensure an integrated and effective approach.

Among the proposed measures, the following stand out:

- 1.The creation of a centralized access-control platform for competitions where technically feasible, ensuring traceability, effective entry control, and the exclusion of banned individuals;
- 2.The introduction of nominative tickets (Fan ID) in competitions where viable, eliminating anonymity and strengthening individual accountability;
- 3.The effective enforcement of the ancillary obligation requiring banned supporters to report to a police station, ensuring the real effectiveness of sanctions;
- 4.Strengthening security searches by law enforcement authorities at higher-risk events, preventing the introduction of pyrotechnics, weapons, and prohibited objects;
- 5.The creation of mechanisms enabling law enforcement authorities to identify supporters involved in disorder in the stands, where technically possible, ensuring individual accountability;

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

6. Socio-educational prevention initiatives promoted by the Autoridade para a Prevenção e o Combate à Violência no Desporto (APCVD), event organizers, and law enforcement authorities in cooperation with district and regional associations, professional associations, and clubs;

7. Mechanisms aimed at increasing procedural speed and the effectiveness of penalties, particularly in matters related to violence in sport, in coordination with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the courts;

8. Reinforcement of regulatory measures to combat violence, while raising awareness among clubs of the importance of sanctioning supporters for inappropriate behavior;

9. The enhancement and continuous training of security managers, further professionalizing this essential role within the sporting context.

Notícia | FPF

The Federação Portuguesa de Futebol (FPF) has also recently promoted the “Stop Violence” campaign, an initiative aimed at raising awareness and condemning all forms of violence in sport, and in football in particular. The campaign includes a range of awareness-raising activities and initiatives carried out within FPF competitions.

Notícia | FPF

6. Practical example

During an Under-17 match, two players from Académica de Coimbra were victims of xenophobic comments and discriminatory racist insults from an opposing player of Sanjoanense. The situation became so serious that the referee interrupted the match and spent several minutes speaking with the captains and coaches.

Juvenis: Académica denuncia insultos racistas e xenófobos | MAISFUTEBOL

At the Porto International Cup tournament, the match between the youth team of Sporting Clube de Cruz and the Swiss side Meyrin FC was marked by assaults carried out by supporters associated with the Portuguese club against two players from the Swiss team, who required medical assistance. The referee suspended the match due to a lack of safety conditions, and the police were called to the scene.

VÍDEO: cenas de violência mancham torneio juvenil no Porto - CNN Portugal



COUNTRY ANALYSIS

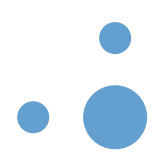
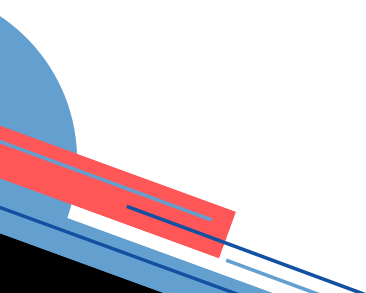
7. Key needs for improvement

It is essential to train sports officials and stakeholders to manage the “mutation of aggressiveness,” where physical violence decreases but verbal hate increases. Training should focus on identifying sources of tension and applying techniques that prevent digital provocations from escalating into physical confrontations in stadiums.

There is an urgent need to deconstruct the narrative that racist insults are “part of football folklore.” The module should provide legal clarification on what constitutes a hate crime, distinguishing it from ordinary insults, while also raising awareness of the destructive impact caused by racism and xenophobia.

It is necessary to train match delegates and organizers in the rigorous application of protocols, such as the FIFA/UEFA “Three-Step Protocol” for interrupting matches in cases of racism. At the same time, the use of educational tools such as the White Card should be encouraged, as it rewards fair play and reinforces positive values from the early stages of development and training.

Coaches play a vital role in the informal education of young people and should be empowered to serve as role models. They need tools to actively promote tolerance and respect.



COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Country Analysis - Spain

1. General context

The situation regarding hate speech and conflict in youth and amateur football in Spain has evolved unevenly in recent years. In the 20th century, conflict and hate speech were very common and, on many occasions, very violent. At the beginning of the 21st century, these conflicts decreased, but in recent years there has been a worrying escalation of verbal and physical aggression, with most violent incidents being provoked by parents, relatives, and other adults in the stands.

2. Most common forms of hate speech and conflict

- Adult Violence in Youth Football: There is a growing concern about aggression in matches involving children aged 10 to 13, with insults and threats often coming from family members, reflecting excessive pressure to achieve sporting success.
- Focus on Hate Speech: There is a constant presence of racist, xenophobic, and homophobic hate speech, which not only occurs on the field but is also amplified through social media, according to reports from the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE).
- Conflicts with Referees: Verbal abuse towards referees in amateur football has become normalized, leading referee associations to demand urgent measures to eradicate insults from the pitch.
- Recent High-Profile Incidents: Despite being amateur/grassroots football, the tension extends to friendly matches and lower-level games, with serious incidents such as racist and Islamophobic chants in international friendly matches, which were already under investigation in April 2026.

3. Key actors involved.

A study conducted by LaLiga and the sports equipment brand Puma among more than 1.200 families has revealed that 57% of violent incidents in youth football originate from adult behavior. Parents, chaperones, and fans are involved in insults, arguments, and fights that disrupt the sporting environment for children. Furthermore, 45% of those surveyed admitted to witnessing hateful situations at these types of competitions.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

4. Main causes and triggers.

According to most of the stakeholders involved (coaches, players, sporting directors, club officials, and fans), the main cause lies with the adults closely connected to the sport; in most cases, these are the players' parents. "Many parents believe their children will become future elite footballers," "parents think they have Maradona, Messi, or Ronaldo and that they 'know more than a coach,' and they put excessive pressure on their children from the stands." Football is also considered an outlet for "bitter and repressed people."

Some stakeholders go a step further and point to structural flaws within the sports system itself. Responsibility is shared among management, coaches, referees, and federations, who are accused of a lack of decisiveness: "Without a doubt, the Federation needs to be tougher." Along these lines, several users are demanding stricter measures, such as the immediate suspension of matches in the event of insults or violence, or even lifetime bans for those who do not respect the rules.

The lack of education and values also appears as a recurring factor among the general opinions. The lack of education among adults leads to a loss of the essence of sport, especially in contexts where children participate.

Furthermore, some link these situations to a general increase in violence in society, not limited to the football environment, but present in all areas. There are also those who point to external factors such as security at matches or the lack of police presence, as well as opinions that highlight political or social elements in the debate.

5. Existing measures and gaps.

- Faced with this reality, LaLiga and Puma have launched the "Here We Play" campaign, aiming to recapture the true spirit of the sport and foster a healthy and educational environment in children's football.

The Dragones de Lavapiés club, known for its inclusive and social approach, will spearhead this initiative, which will benefit more than 4,000 children and families throughout Spain. In addition, six other teams will participate in the program, receiving exclusive kits, values training, and opportunities to meet with professional footballers.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

During the project's presentation, figures such as professional footballers Fernando Morientes and Miguel Ángel Moyá endorsed the initiative. "Parents should go to the stadium to cheer, not to pressure. The children go there to play, not to have a bad time," stated Morientes, emphasizing that respect, camaraderie, and enjoyment should be the cornerstones of grassroots sport.

- FARO System: The Spanish Government, in collaboration with LaLiga, has implemented the FARO System, an artificial intelligence tool to improve the monitoring of and response to hate speech.

- Actions by the Catalan Government and LaLiga: Agreements have been signed, such as the one between the Catalan Government and LaLiga in April 2026, to combat hate speech at sporting events and ensure neutrality.

- Anti-Violence Protocols: Regulations are being strengthened to prosecute ultra groups and violent behavior, including the possibility of stricter administrative sanctions.

6. Practical example

Last March 2026, grassroots football in Malaga experienced a regrettable weekend, overwhelmed by serious cases of violence that completely tarnished the competition. Two matches in the fourth cadet division, featuring boys just 14 and 15 years old, have become the shameful epicenter of brawls, assaults, and threats that required police intervention and forced the suspension of both games.

The first incident occurred on Saturday at the Churriana field, during halftime of the match between the home team and Campanillas. A fight broke out, prompting a father to go down to the locker room area to protect his son from the threats. The police had to be called to the field, and the match was suspended. Both clubs offered conflicting accounts, with Churriana accusing the father of a Campanillas player of assaulting their equipment manager.

The disgrace continued in the same division at the Cortijillo Bazán field, where the home team was playing for promotion against Pizarro Atlético. The disallowed goal that would have tied the game for the home team sparked a pitched battle with kicks, punches, and insults. Once again, the police had to intervene, and the match was suspended. In response, Cortijillo Bazán issued a statement announcing that it will sanction two of its members for the incident.

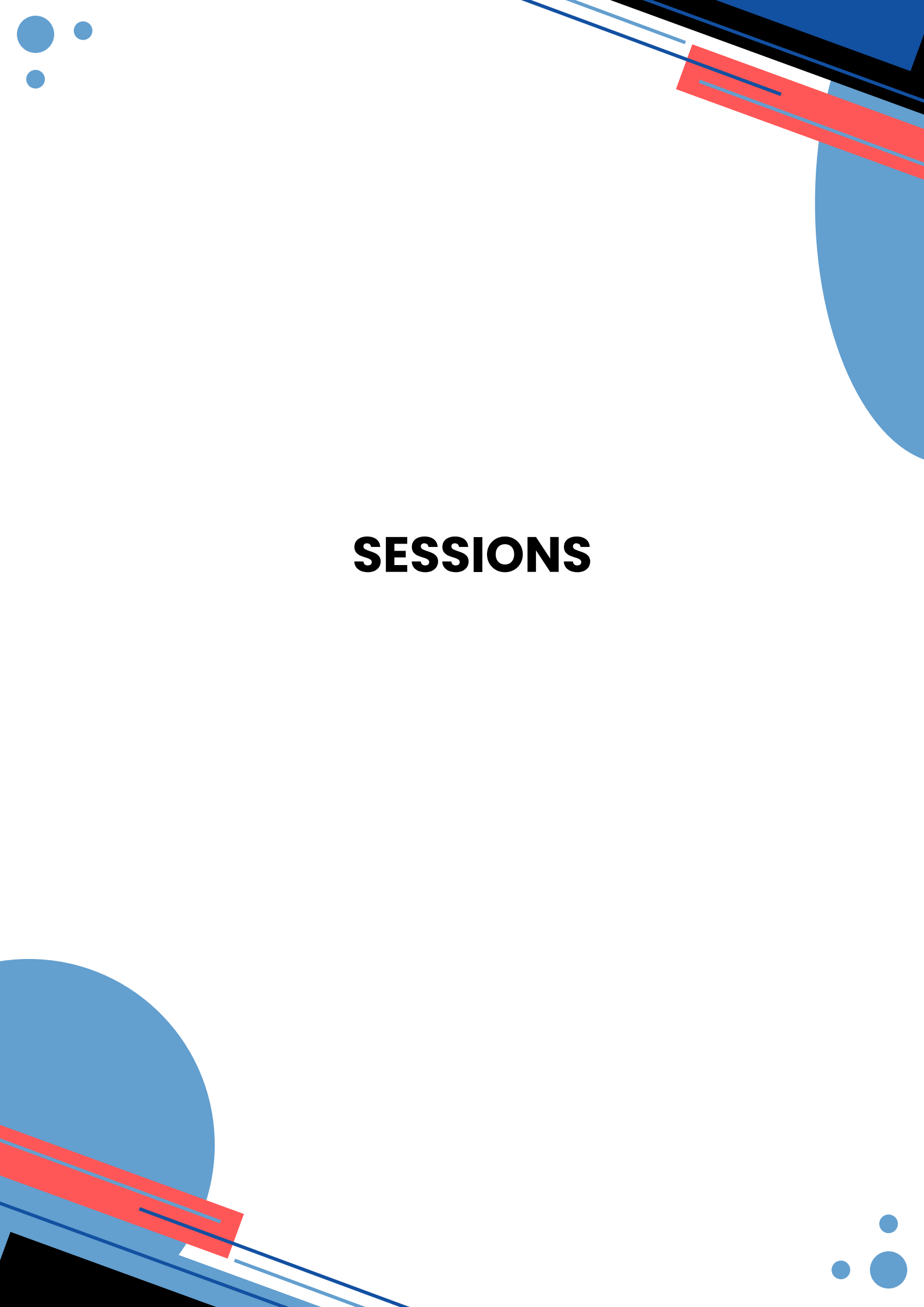
COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Faced with this escalation of violence, the words of veterans like Manuel Gámez Villalba, "Lato," president of Club Athletic Puerta Blanca, who had already denounced the situation on COPE Málaga Sports, are resonating. Lato lamented that many parents "come to the football fields predisposed to be angry" and highlighted the contradiction in their behavior.

The president was emphatic in his statement: "You, who come to the field, go away to insult, to attack coaches, spectators, referees... the officials who are exposed every weekend to someone coming up and hitting us in the face. What are you even doing at football fields? Stay home." His reflection points to a scourge that, far from disappearing, seems to be becoming entrenched in youth sports.

7. Key areas for improvement

- The most important is a general awareness campaign for all of society and, for those involved in football in particular, about the existence of this significant increase in conflicts and hate speech in youth/amateur football.
- Parent education and development of conflict resolution skills. They are harming their children!
- Education for coaches and managers to prevent conflicts.
- Education for players, especially the youngest ones.
- Promotional and educational measures by public administrations and federations.
- Collaborations between clubs to reduce hate speech (regular meetings, fun festivals to foster unity between clubs, etc.).



SESSIONS

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Session: What fair play looks like

Theme: Understanding the basic meaning of sportsmanship and fair play.

Time: 45 minutes.

Overview: Fair play is often mentioned in football, but not everyone understands what it means in real situations. This session helps participants move from general words like “respect” and “fairness” to concrete football behavior. Participants will discuss what fair play looks like before, during and after a match. The aim is to show that fair play is not only about following rules. It is also about attitude, respect and self-control.

Objectives of the session

- To understand the meaning of fair play in football.
- To identify examples of sportsmanlike behavior.
- To connect fair play with real match situations.
- To help participants reflect on their own behavior.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, sticky notes, printed Fair Play Situation Cards (Hand out 1), pens, Fair Play Reflection Sheet

Preparation

Facilitators should print the Fair Play Situation Cards and the Fair Play Reflection Sheet. They also need to prepare a flipchart with the question: “What does fair play look like in football?”

Instructions

Facilitators open the session with the question: “When you hear the words fair play, what do you think of?”. Participants should write one idea per sticky note. Facilitators place the notes on the flipchart and group them into categories:

- respect;
- honesty;
- self-control;
- teamwork;
- accepting rules;
- helping others.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Facilitators should explain that fair play is not only a slogan. It is behavior people can see during a match. After that facilitators divide participants into small groups and give each group one Fair Play Situation Cards. The task for the groups is to discuss:

- Is this fair play or not?
- Who is affected?
- What would be better behavior?
- What does this situation teach us?

Each group should present one situation. Close the session by creating a group definition of fair play in one sentence.

Example: Fair play means playing to win while respecting the rules, the opponent, the referee, teammates and the spirit of the game.

Debriefing and evaluation

Following questions can be used for debriefing:

- Which situation was easiest to judge?
- Which situation was more difficult?
- Can a team be competitive and still show fair play?
- What is one fair play action you respect when you see it?
- What behavior destroys fair play?

Evaluation sentence that can be used: “For me, fair play means...”

Each participant should complete the sentence verbally.

Tips for facilitator

Keep the discussion practical. Do not allow fair play to remain an empty word. Ask participants to give examples from real football. If participants say “everyone cheats sometimes”, ask: “*Would you accept the same behavior if it was used against your team?*”. This helps them see fairness from both sides. Fair play is not only about obeying rules. It includes respect, honesty, self-control and responsibility. In football, fair play is visible in small actions: accepting decisions, avoiding insults, helping injured players, admitting mistakes, respecting opponents and controlling reactions after emotional moments. The facilitators should help participants understand that fair play does not mean playing without ambition. A player can be strong, fast, determined and competitive without being aggressive or disrespectful. The key message is: fair play protects the game. Without it, football becomes conflict instead of sport.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 1: Fair play situation cards

Situation 1: Helping the opponent

A player falls after a tackle. The ball is still in play, but the player looks hurt. One opponent stops and calls for help.

Discussion point: Is this fair play? Why?

Situation 2: Hidden handball

A player touches the ball with his hand, but the referee does not see it. The player continues playing and his team scores.

Discussion point: Is winning still fair if the player knows the action was not permitted? What would be fair play in this situation?

Situation 3: Blaming a teammate

A goalkeeper makes a mistake, and the team concedes a goal. Several teammates shout at him.

Discussion point: Is this useful for the team? What would be a fair play reaction?

Situation 4: Respect after defeat

A team loses an important match. Some players are angry, but they still shake hands with the opponents and thank the referee.

Discussion point: Why does behavior after defeat matter?

Situation 5: Mocking the opponent

A player scores and celebrates by laughing at the opposing goalkeeper.

Discussion point: Is this the way to celebrate or disrespect? What would be fair play response?

Situation 6: Honest throw-in

The ball goes out. The referee gives the throw-in to your team, but you know you touched the ball last.

Discussion point: What would integrity look like here?

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 2: Fair play reflection sheet

Participants' task is to complete the sheet individually.

1. One fair play behavior I already show:

.....

.....

.....

2. One behavior I need to improve:

.....

.....

.....

3. One thing I respect in opponents:

.....

.....

.....

4. One thing I should not do, even when I am angry:

.....

.....

.....

5. My fair play sentence:

Fair play means:

.....

.....

.....

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Session: Respect everyone in the game

Theme: Respect for opponents, referees, teammates and spectators.

Time: 60 minutes.

Overview: Football involves many people, not only the players on the pitch. Opponents, referees, coaches, teammates, parents and supporters all shape the football environment. This session helps participants understand that respect is not selective. It is easy to respect a teammate after a win. It is harder to respect an opponent who plays strongly, a referee who makes a difficult decision, or a teammate who makes a mistake. This is where sportsmanship is tested.

Objectives of the session

- To understand that everyone in football deserves respect.
- To identify disrespectful behavior towards different actors in the game.
- To discuss how disrespect affects players, referees and teams.
- To practice better reactions in difficult situations.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, printed Respect Circle template, printed Respect Scenario Cards, pens.

Preparation

Facilitators should print the Respect Circle template and scenario cards. They prepare a flipchart with the title: “Who deserves respect in football?”

Instructions

Facilitators should ask participants: “Who is part of a football match?” and through brainstorming they write answers on the flipchart, such as:

- players;
- opponents;
- referees;
- coaches;
- teammates;
- parents;
- supporters;
- organizers;
- volunteers.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Facilitators explain that respect must include all of them, not only people from our own team. They give each participant or a pair a Respect Circle template. Facilitators give the task to participants to write one respectful behavior for each group:

- teammate;
- opponent;
- referee;
- coach;
- supporter/spectator.

After this, participants should be divided into small groups (4-5 persons per group) and given one Respect Scenario Card. Groups discuss:

- Who is being disrespected?
- What is the effect?
- What would a respectful reaction look like?
- Who can help change the situation?

Groups should present their conclusions. When all groups are done with the presentation of conclusions, facilitators should close with the message: Respect is easy when things go well. Sportsmanship shows when things are difficult.

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use the following questions:

- Who is most often disrespected in football?
- Why are referees often targeted?
- How should teammates react after mistakes?
- What does respect for opponents look like during a hard match?
- How can supporters show respect and still support their team?

Additionally, they can use this evaluation sentence:

“One group of people I should show more respect to is...”

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Tips for facilitator

Some participants may defend disrespect as “part of football”. Keep asking if disrespect helps the game, if it helps the player improve, if it makes young referees feel safe, if we would accept this behavior towards our own team. Facilitators should keep the tone calm, but do not soften the message. Respect is not optional in youth football. Respect in football is practical. It is shown through words, gestures, body language and decisions. Respect does not mean agreeing with everything. A player can disagree with a referee but still speak calmly. A coach can correct a player, but without humiliation. A team can lose and still shake hands. In grassroots and youth football, respect is especially important because young players learn behavior by watching adults and older players. If they see shouting, blaming and insults, they copy it. If they see calm reactions and fair treatment, they learn that this is the standard. The facilitator should make clear that respect is not weakness. It is part of discipline and team culture.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 1: Respect circle

Write one respectful behavior for each person/group.

Teammates:

.....

Opponents:

.....

Referees:

.....

Coaches:

.....

Supporters/spectators:

.....

My personal respect rule:

.....

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 2: Respect scenario cards

Scenario 1: Referee under pressure

A young referee makes a decision that one team dislikes. Players surround him and several supporters start shouting.

Discussion point:

What does respect for the referee look like here?

Scenario 2: Teammate mistake

A defender makes a mistake, and the team concedes a goal. Two teammates shout at him and blame him for the result.

Discussion point:

How should teammates react?

Scenario 3: Opponent injured

An opponent falls after a challenge and stays on the ground. Some players want to continue immediately because they have a chance to attack.

Discussion point:

What is the respectful decision?

Scenario 4: Supporters insulting players

Supporters from one side start mocking a young player after he misses a clear chance.

Discussion point:

How does this affect the player? What should adults or team leaders do?

Scenario 5: Coach humiliating a player

A coach shouts at a player in front of everyone: "You are useless today."

Discussion point:

Is this discipline or disrespect?

Scenario 6: Refusing handshakes

After losing, some players refuse to shake hands with the opponents.

Discussion point:

Why does respect after the match matter?

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Session: Rules make the game fair

Theme: Understanding rules, fairness and integrity.

Time: 45 minutes.

Overview: Rules are sometimes seen as something that limits players. In reality, rules make football possible. Without rules, there is no fair competition, no safety and no trust between teams. This session helps participants understand why rules matter and what integrity means when nobody is watching. The focus is not only on official football rules, but also on unwritten rules of honesty, responsibility and respect.

Objectives of the session

- To understand why rules are necessary in football.
- To connect rules with fairness and safety.
- To discuss integrity in situations where the referee does not see everything.
- To reflect on personal responsibility when making decisions.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, printed Rules and Integrity Case Studies, pens, Integrity Decision Sheet.

Preparation

Facilitators should print the case studies and Integrity Decision Sheet and prepare a flipchart with the sentence: “Without rules, football becomes...”

Instructions

At the beginning of the workshop, facilitators should ask participants to complete the sentence: “*Without rules, football becomes...*”

Facilitators write their answers on the flipchart. They should explain that rules are not the enemy of football and that the rules are there to protect the game.

After that facilitators ask: “*Can something be legal but still unfair?*” and explains that this will be discussed through small groups. Participants should be divided into small groups (4-5 participants per group). Each group should receive one Rules and Integrity Case Study.

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The task for the groups will be to discuss:

- What rule or value is involved?
- Who benefits from the action?
- Who is harmed?
- Is the behavior fair?
- What would integrity look like?

After 20-30 minutes, groups present their case.

After this, every participant should get and complete the Integrity Decision Sheet – they should do it individually.

Facilitators should close this part with the message: *Integrity is what you do when the referee, coach or crowd does not see everything.*

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use the following questions:

- Why do rules matter in football?
- Is fair play only the referee's responsibility? Who else is responsible?
- What does integrity mean in a match?
- What is worse: breaking a rule or pretending nothing happened?
- Can winning unfairly damage the team? In what way?

Tips for facilitator

Do not turn the session into a technical lesson on football rules. The focus is on values behind the rules: fairness, safety, honesty and trust. Participants may say: *"If the referee does not see it, it is not my problem."* Ask them: *"Would you respect an opponent who used the same behavior against you?"* This helps move the discussion from advantage to fairness. Rules exist so that both teams can compete under the same conditions. They protect players, referees and the meaning of the result. If rules are ignored, the match may still continue, but trust is damaged. Integrity means acting honestly even when it would be easier to take advantage. In youth football, this is very important because young players are still building habits. If cheating is treated as clever behavior, it becomes part of the team culture. The facilitator should help participants see that rules are not only external control. They are part of the agreement that makes football fair.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 1: Rules and integrity case studies

Case 1: The hidden handball

A player controls the ball with his hand before scoring. The referee does not see it. The goal is allowed.

Discussion point:

Is this only the referee's responsibility, or does the player also have responsibility?

Case 2: Time wasting

A team is winning and starts wasting time by pretending to be injured and delaying every restart.

Discussion point:

Is this clever football or unfair play?

Case 3: Dangerous tackle

A player knows he cannot reach the ball, but still makes a strong tackle to stop the opponent.

Discussion point:

What is the difference between tactical play and dangerous play?

Case 4: Admitting the ball went out

The referee gives a throw-in to your team. You know the ball touched you last.

Discussion point:

What would honesty look like?

Case 5: Pretending to be fouled

A player falls in the penalty area without contact and asks for a penalty.

Discussion point:

How does this affect trust in the game?

Case 6: Playing against a weaker team

One team is much stronger and keeps humiliating the opponent after every goal.

Discussion point:

What does fairness mean when the score is already decided?

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 2: Integrity decision sheet

Think about a difficult football situation and answer:

1. What happened?

.....

2. What was the easy choice?

.....

3. What was the fair choice?

.....

4. Who would be affected by the decision?

.....

5. What would I do next time?

.....

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Session 4: Strong competition or unsporting behavior?

Theme: Differentiating between competitive behavior and aggressive or unsporting conduct.

Time: 60 minutes.

Overview: Football needs energy, ambition and strong competition. Players should fight for the ball, defend strongly and try to win. But there is a clear line between competitive behavior and unsporting conduct. This session helps participants recognize that line. It gives them real situations where they must decide whether behavior is fair, borderline or unacceptable.

Objectives of the session

- To understand the difference between strong competition and aggression.
- To identify unsporting behavior during matches.
- To discuss difficult borderline situations.
- To reflect on how emotions influence decisions.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, printed Fair / Borderline / Unfair cards, scenario cards, pens, Behavior Line handout.

Preparation

Facilitators need to prepare three signs and place them in different parts of the room:

- Fair*
- Borderline*
- Unfair*

Also, facilitators should print the scenario cards and Behavior Line handout.

Instructions

Facilitators explain that not every strong action is unfair. Football allows physical competition, pressure and intensity. They also explain the three categories:

- Fair:** strong but respectful and within the rules.
- Borderline:** risky, unclear or depends on context.
- Unfair:** aggressive, dangerous, dishonest or disrespectful.

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After that, facilitators read one scenario aloud. The task for participants is to choose and move to the sign they agree with: Fair, Borderline or Unfair. Every group should explain their choice. Discussion should also include what would change the situation. Facilitators repeat several scenarios. This part of workshop should be closed by asking participants to create their own rules for staying competitive without becoming aggressive.

Debriefing and evaluation

The following questions can be used:

- Which scenarios were difficult to judge?
- What makes behavior competitive but fair?
- What makes behavior aggressive or unsporting?
- How does anger change decisions?
- What line should your team never cross?

Tips for facilitator

Do not force every answer too quickly. Some situations are genuinely borderline. Let participants explain their thinking. The important learning is not only the “correct answer”. The important learning is that players begin to notice the line between intensity and harm. If participants defend aggressive behavior as “part of winning”, ask: “Does this help you win, or does it risk cards, fights and loss of control?”

Comment: Competitive behavior is part of football. Players should not be told that ambition, strength or intensity are wrong. The key is whether the behavior respects the rules, safety and dignity of others. Unsporting conduct usually appears when the aim is no longer only to play and win, but to humiliate, hurt, provoke or cheat. This distinction is important for young players. They need to learn that strength and respect can exist together. The facilitator should keep the message balanced: football should remain competitive, but not hostile.

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 1: Scenario cards

Scenario 1: Strong shoulder challenge

A player uses his body to win the ball. The contact is strong, but he plays the ball and does not use his arms.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 2: Late tackle

A player arrives late and hits the opponent's legs after the ball is gone.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 3: Celebrating a goal

A player celebrates with his teammates after scoring.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 4: Celebrating in the opponent's face

A player scores and runs directly to the opponent's goalkeeper to laugh at him.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 5: Tactical foul

A player pulls an opponent's shirt to stop a counterattack.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 6: Verbal pressure

A player keeps saying to an opponent: "You are nervous, you will miss again."

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 7: Dangerous revenge

A player was fouled earlier and later makes a hard tackle to "send a message".

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 8: Playing until the whistle

An opponent falls, but the referee does not stop the game. The attacking team continues and scores.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 9: Respectful protest

A captain calmly asks the referee for an explanation after a decision.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

Scenario 10: Surrounding the referee

Five players run towards the referee and shout after a decision.

Question: Fair, borderline or unfair?

SESSIONS – CORE PRINCIPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

Handout 2: Behavior line

Place each behavior on the line.

Fair →

Borderline →

Unfair

Behaviors to place:

- Strong tackle on the ball.
- Late tackle.
- Shouting at a teammate.
- Helping an opponent stand up.
- Wasting time.
- Admitting the ball touched you last.
- Mocking an opponent.
- Calmly asking the referee.
- Surrounding the referee.
- Revenge foul.

Reflection:

One behavior I consider fair competition:

.....

One behavior I consider unacceptable:

.....

One behavior I need to be careful with:

.....

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Session: Where conflict begins

Theme: Common sources and early signs of conflict in football.

Time: 45 minutes.

Overview: Most football conflicts do not start with a fight. They usually start much earlier: a hard foul, a player shouting, a referee decision, a coach losing control, or pressure from the sideline. This session helps participants notice the first signs of tension before the situation becomes serious. The main idea is simple: the earlier we recognize conflict, the easier it is to stop it.

Objectives of the session

- To identify the most common sources of conflict in football.
- To recognize early warning signs before escalation.
- To help participants think about what they can do before conflict becomes physical.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, sticky notes, printed scenario cards, pens, early warning signs checklist.

Preparation

Facilitators should print the scenario cards and the Early Warning Signs Checklist. They need to arrange the room so participants can work in small groups. They also need to prepare one flipchart with the title: “Where does conflict start?”

Instructions

Facilitators open the session with a simple question: “*Where do conflicts usually start in football?*”

Facilitators should give participants sticky notes and ask them to write one short answer per note (one sticky note is given to each participant, but if they need more, facilitators should provide more). After this, facilitators collect the notes and group them on the flipchart under five headings:

- referee decisions;
- aggressive play;
- pressure from supporters or parents;
- player behavior;
- local rivalry or previous conflict.

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After a short discussion on the results of the work done, facilitators should divide participants into small groups. Each group receives one scenario card. The task of each group is to discuss following questions:

- What started the tension?
- Who is involved?
- What is the first warning sign?
- What could make the situation worse?
- What could stop the conflict early?

Each group has 15-20 min to respond to the questions and prepare presentations. Each group presents its case in 2 minutes. Together with the group, facilitators create a list of early warning signs. Close the session with the key message: *Conflict prevention starts before the fight, not after it.*

Debriefing and evaluation

Questions for debriefing:

- Which situation felt most realistic?
- Which warning signs are usually ignored?
- Who can stop conflict early?
- What can players control in these situations?
- What can coaches or team leaders control?

Tips for facilitator

Facilitators should keep the session close to real football. Participants may say “this always happens” or “this is normal”. Facilitators should not argue with them in a theoretical way but ask practical questions:

- Does this help the team?
- Does it make the match safer?
- What happens if nobody stops it?
- What would a younger player learn from this behavior?

If the discussion becomes only about bad refereeing, facilitators should bring it back to what participants can control: their reaction, their words, their body language and their influence on teammates. Conflict in football usually begins with a trigger and then grows through reactions. trigger can be a foul, a referee decision, a mistake, a goal celebration or pressure from outside the pitch. The important point is that the trigger alone does not always create conflict. Conflict grows when people react aggressively to the trigger. One shout leads to another shout. One push brings more players into the situation. One angry comment from the sideline can increase pressure on young players.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 1: Early warning signs checklist

Mark the signs you have seen in real football situations:

- Raised voice.
- Repeated protesting.
- Players surrounding the referee.
- Pushing after the whistle.
- Mocking or humiliating an opponent.
- Supporters shouting aggressively.
- Coach losing control.
- Players refuse to calm down.
- Teammates running towards an argument.
- Parents giving aggressive instructions.
- Refusal to shake hands.
- Provocative celebration.
- Accusations of cheating.
- Online insults after the match.
- Personal or identity-based insults.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 2: Scenario cards

Scenario 1: The hard foul

A player makes a hard tackle. The other player stands up quickly, walks towards him and starts shouting. Teammates from both sides begin to move closer.

Scenario 2: The penalty decision

The referee gives a penalty. The defending team believes the decision is wrong. The goalkeeper starts shouting at the referee, and the coach protests loudly from the sideline.

Scenario 3: The mocking celebration

A player scores and celebrates in front of the opponent's bench. He laughs and points at them. One opponent reacts angrily and pushes him.

Scenario 4: The angry parent

A parent shouts at their child: "Stop being weak! Hit harder!" Other parents start shouting too. The young players become nervous.

Scenario 5: The old rivalry

Two teams from nearby towns have had problems before. During the warm-up, players already exchange provocative comments.

Scenario 6: The online comment

After a match, one player posts a mocking comment about the other team. The replies become aggressive, and the conflict continues online.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Session 2: Conflict on the pitch mapping

Theme: Understanding who is involved in football conflicts and how conflicts escalate.

Time: 60 minutes.

Overview: Football conflicts rarely involve only two people. Even if the conflict starts between two players, others quickly become part of it: teammates, coaches, referees, parents, supporters or people online. This session helps participants map a football conflict step by step. They will identify the trigger, the people involved, the escalation points and possible solutions.

Objectives of the session

- To understand how conflicts develop in football settings.
- To identify the different actors involved in a conflict.
- To recognize escalation points.
- To find practical moments where someone can intervene.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, printed conflict map template, scenario cards, pens, sticky notes.

Preparation

Facilitators need to print the Conflict Map template and scenario cards and prepare a flipchart with the following simple structure:

Trigger → Reaction → Escalation → Intervention → Resolution

Instructions

Facilitators explain that football conflicts are not only about “who started it”. They are also about what happened next. They should present the conflict chain:

Trigger → Reaction → Escalation → Intervention → Resolution

They should give an example:

- Trigger:** hard foul.
- Reaction:** player shouts.
- Escalation:** teammates join.
- Intervention:** captain separates players.
- Resolution:** referee speaks with captains, coach calms the bench.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

After the explanation, participants should be divided into small groups (6 groups as there are 6 scenarios). Each group receives one scenario and one Conflict Map template. The task for the groups is to complete the map:

- What started the conflict?
- Who became involved?
- What made it worse?
- Who could have helped?
- What would be a fair resolution?

Each group has 15-20 min to respond to the questions and prepare presentations. Each group presents their conflict map. After each presentation, facilitators should ask the full group: *“Where was the best moment to stop this conflict?”*. Facilitators close this part of the session with the message: Every conflict has turning points. If we can see them, we can act earlier.

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use the following questions:

- Who was involved in the conflict?
- Who made the situation worse?
- Who could have helped calm it?
- What was the best moment for intervention?
- What would be a fair and realistic resolution?

Evaluation question: “What is one thing that can stop a football conflict before it grows?”

Tips for facilitator

Facilitators should not let groups focus only on punishment. This session is about understanding the conflict process. Sanctions may be needed in serious cases, but the main learning point is prevention and intervention. Participants should be encouraged to be specific. Instead of saying “the coach should do something”, facilitators should ask: “What exactly should the coach say or do?”. Conflict mapping is a simple way to help participants stop thinking only in terms of blame. Instead of asking only, “Who was wrong?”, the map asks, “How did the situation grow?”. This is important in football because conflicts are often collective. A single player may start shouting, but teammates, coaches and supporters can quickly add pressure. Mapping helps participants see that many people can either escalate or calm the situation. Once the group sees the steps clearly, it becomes easier to find a practical response.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 1: Conflict map template

1. What happened?

Short description of the situation.

2. Trigger

What started the tension?

3. People involved

Who was directly or indirectly involved?

4. First reaction

How did people react at the beginning?

5. Escalation point

What made the situation worse?

6. Possible intervention

Who could step in and how?

7. Resolution

What should happen to close the conflict fairly?

8. Follow-up

What should be discussed after the match or training?

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 2: Scenario cards

Scenario 1: Player versus player

A defender makes two hard tackles in a short time. The attacker becomes angry and tells his teammate: “Next time I will hit him back.” The next challenge becomes dangerous.

Scenario 2: Player versus referee

A referee does not give a foul. A player shouts at him. The captain joins. Then the coach starts shouting from the sideline.

Scenario 3: Supporters versus supporters

Supporters from both teams begin insulting each other after a goal. Young players hear the shouting and become more aggressive on the pitch.

Scenario 4: Coach pressure

A coach shouts at his players after every mistake. The players become nervous and start blaming each other.

Scenario 5: Parent pressure

A parent tells a young player to “play harder” and “not let anyone push him”. The player becomes aggressive and commits a dangerous foul.

Scenario 6: Online escalation

After a match, players from both teams continue arguing in a group chat. Screenshots are shared, and the next match between the teams starts with tension.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Session 3: Pause and react

Theme: De-escalation and quick decision-making during tense match situations.

Time: 45 minutes.

Overview: During a match, players do not have time for long discussions. When a foul happens, when someone insults them, or when the referee makes a difficult decision, they react in seconds. This session trains participants to create a short pause before reacting. That pause can prevent a fight, a red card or a bigger conflict.

Objectives of the session

- To practice self-control in tense football moments.
- To use a simple pause before reacting.
- To learn short de-escalation phrases.

Group size: 10–25 participants.

Material: Open space, whistle, printed role-play cards, cones or markers, pause and react handout, pens.

Preparation

Facilitators need to arrange a small open space for movement. They should print role-play cards and the Pause and React handout. They also need to place cones or markers to create a simple pitch area.

Instructions

At the beginning of the session, facilitators introduce the method:

Pause – Read – React

Pause: stop your first emotional reaction.

Read: quickly understand what is happening.

React: choose the action that helps the game continue.

Facilitators explain that the goal is not to ignore emotions. The goal is to avoid letting the first emotion control the next action. Facilitators demonstrate one bad reaction and one better reaction. After that they need to divide participants into groups of three:

- player;
- opponent/referee/teammate;
- observer.

Each group gets one role-play card.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

First round – instruction for the participants: act out the situation with an uncontrolled reaction.

Second round – instruction for the participants: repeat the situation using Pause – Read – React.

The observers give feedback:

- Did the player pause?
- Did the player use calm body language?
- Did the words help or escalate?
- Was the reaction useful for the team?

If time allows, the roles can be rotated within the group. Facilitators should close with a short list of phrases that participants can use in real matches (Handout 2).

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use the following questions:

- What was difficult about pausing?
- What kind of body language helped?
- Which words made the situation calmer?
- Which reactions protected the team?
- How can this method be used during a real match?

Evaluation sentence: *“Next time I feel provoked, I will...”*

Tips for facilitator

Facilitators should keep the exercise realistic. Participants may exaggerate the role-play or turn it into comedy, but facilitators should bring them back to the real match: *“What would this look like during an actual game?”*. Facilitators should not expect perfect reactions. The aim is practice. Even one second of pause is progress. De-escalation is not weakness. In football, self-control is a useful skill. A player who stays calm after provocation protects the team from cards, fights and loss of focus. Many conflicts grow because of the first uncontrolled reaction. A player is fouled, pushes back, and teammates join. A referee decision is disputed, one player shouts, then the coach and supporters join. The conflict grows quickly. This session trains the small moment between emotion and action. That moment gives the player a choice.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 1: Role-play cards

Role-play 1: Hard foul

You are fouled hard. The opponent says: “It was nothing.”

Task: Pause, read the situation and react without pushing or shouting.

Role-play 2: No foul given

You believe the referee missed a clear foul.

Task: React without insulting the referee.

Role-play 3: Teammate loses control

Your teammate starts shouting at an opponent.

Task: Calm your teammate before others join.

Role-play 4: Dangerous challenge

An opponent makes a dangerous tackle. Your team wants revenge.

Task: Stop the revenge reaction.

Role-play 5: Supporter pressure

Someone from the sideline shouts aggressive instructions.

Task: Decide how a player, captain or coach can respond.

Role-play 6: After the final whistle

The match ends, and one player refuses to shake hands.

Task: Help close the match respectfully.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 2: Pause – Read – React

When tension starts:

- Stop your first reaction.
- Take one breath.
- Look at what is happening.
- Ask yourself: “Will my reaction help or hurt the team?”
- Move one step back if needed.
- Use a short calm phrase.
- Let the captain, coach or referee manage the next step.

Useful phrases:

- “Step back.”
- “No revenge.”
- “Let the captain speak.”
- “We continue playing.”
- “Calm down first.”
- “Next action.”
- “We talk after the match.”
- “Respect the game.”
- “We play football, not fight.”

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Session: Talking the game down

Theme: Active listening and non-violent communication in football conflicts.

Time: 60 minutes.

Overview: Football conflicts often become worse because of the way people speak. Shouting, blaming, sarcasm and insults add pressure. Calm, clear and respectful communication can reduce it. This session helps participants practice simple communication tools they can use during conflict. It is not about being passive. It is about speaking in a way that helps solve the situation instead of making it worse.

Objectives of the session

- To understand how language can escalate or reduce conflict.
- To practice active listening.
- To use simple non-violent communication steps.
- To replace aggressive phrases with useful football language.

Group size: 12–25 participants.

Material: Flipchart, markers, printed communication cards, hot words / better words worksheet, pens.

Preparation

Print the communication cards and worksheet. Prepare a flipchart with two columns:

Words that escalate / Words that calm

Instructions

At the beginning of the sessions, facilitators should do the brainstorming and ask participants:

“What words make football conflicts worse?”

Facilitators write their examples under “Words that escalate” on the prepared flipchart.

When all ideas are shared, facilitators ask:

“What words can calm a situation?”

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Facilitators write examples under “Words that calm”.

After commenting on the brainstorm results, facilitators should introduce a simple communication structure:

- **I saw...**
- **I feel / I think...**
- **I need...**
- **Next, we should...**

Facilitators can give an example:

“I saw the push after the whistle. I think we are close to a fight. I need everyone to step back. Next, the captain should speak to the referee.”

Participants should be divided into pairs, and each pair gets one communication card. Their task is to rewrite the aggressive phrase into a better football phrase in 15-20 min. Each pair presents their phrase.

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use the following questions:

- Which words usually make football conflict worse?
- What is the difference between disagreement and insult?
- How can a player speak to a referee without disrespect?
- How can a coach correct a player without humiliating them?
- Which phrase from today would you actually use?

Evaluation task:

Each participant writes:

- one phrase they will avoid;
- one phrase they will use.

Tips for facilitator

Facilitators should not allow the session to become a competition for the worst insults. The point is not to collect offensive language. The point is to replace it. If participants say respectful language is too soft, facilitators should ask: “Which phrase is more useful if the goal is to stay in the game and avoid conflict?”. Active listening means showing the other person that you hear them before reacting. It does not mean you agree with everything.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

It means you reduce the emotional pressure so the situation can be handled. In football, active listening can be very short:

- “I hear you.”
- “I see you are angry.”
- “Let’s calm this down.”
- “We will speak after the match.”
- “I understand you disagree, but insults will not help.”

Non-violent communication in this unit should stay simple and practical. Participants do not need theory. They need words they can use during a match.

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 1: Communication cards

Card 1 Situation: coach pressure Escalating phrase: "You are useless." Better phrase:	Card 2 Situation: referee decision Escalating phrase: "The referee is blind." Better phrase:
Card 3 Situation: Aggressive foul Escalating phrase: "I will get back at you!" Better phrase:	Card 4 Situation: Discrimination of the player Escalating phrase: "You do not belong here!" Better phrase:
Card 5 Situation: Local rivalry Escalating phrase: "They are our enemies." Better phrase:	Card 6 Situation: Sideline shouting Escalating phrase: "Shut up!" Better phrase:
Card 7 Situation: Teammate mistake Escalating phrase: "You ruined the match." Better phrase:	Card 8 Situation: Player insult Escalating phrase: "Say that again!" Better phrase:

SESSIONS – CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN FOOTBALL SETTINGS

Handout 2: Hot words / Better words

Situation	Hot words	Better words
Referee decision	"You are blind!"	"Can the captain speak to you?"
Aggressive foul	"I will get back at you!"	"That was dangerous. Step back / I am stepping back."
Player insult	"Say that again!"	"Stop. We play football."
Teammate mistake	"You ruined the match."	"Mistakes happen. Stay focused for the next action."
Coach pressure	"You are useless."	"Focus on the next action. We still need you."
Local rivalry	"They are enemies."	"They are opponents, not enemies."
Sideline shouting	"Shut up!"	"Please support without insults."
Online conflict	"They are trash."	"Respect remains after the match."
Discrimination of the player	"You do not belong here!"	"Everyone has the right to play. Let's continue the game."

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Session name: Words from the sidelines

Theme: Recognizing hate speech, verbal abuse, stereotypes, and exclusion in grassroots sport

Time: 90 minutes

Overview: This workshop helps participants recognize different forms of hate speech, discrimination, and exclusion that appear in sports environments – both openly and subtly. Through interactive activities and realistic sport-based scenarios, participants explore how harmful language and behavior affect individuals, teams, and the overall atmosphere within sport communities. The session encourages empathy, critical thinking, and active responsibility.

Objectives of the session:

- To help participants recognize visible and subtle discriminatory behavior
- To increase understanding of emotional and social consequences of harmful behavior
- To encourage empathy and respectful communication among peers
- To strengthen participants' ability to react appropriately when witnessing discrimination

Group size: 12–30 participants

Material: Flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, printed scenario cards, tape, A4 paper, pens, projector (optional)

Preparation: Facilitators should prepare: 1) Printed examples of real-life sport situations involving discrimination or exclusion; 2) Scenario cards for group work; 3) A safe and respectful learning environment; and 4) ground rules for discussion (respect, listening, confidentiality). Facilitators should also familiarize themselves with local examples of discrimination in sport and be prepared to manage emotional reactions or sensitive discussions.

Instructions

Warm-up: “Where do we hear it?” (15 minutes)

Participants stand in a circle. Facilitator reads different phrases commonly heard in sports settings (examples may include stereotypes, insults, exclusionary comments, sexist or racist jokes – check out Handout 1, but facilitators can also prepare some examples from the local events).

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Participants move to one side of the room if they think the phrase is “harmless” and to the other side if they think it is “harmful.” Facilitator can prepare the phrases in advance, on a piece of paper. After each statement, briefly discuss:

- Why do people say this?
- How could someone feel hearing it?
- Does intention matter more than impact?

For this exercise, the examples should feel realistic and recognizable, but still appropriate for educational settings. The goal is not to shock participants, but to help them reflect on how normalized language and “locker room culture” can become harmful. It’s useful to mix obviously harmful statements WITH phrases participants may initially see as “normal jokes”. That tension creates the discussion. For example:

- “You play like a girl.”
- “Don’t be soft.”
- “That’s so gay.”

These are commonly normalized in sports culture and work well for reflection. You can also categorize phrases into:

- Clearly harmful
- “Just joking”
- Hidden discrimination
- Online behavior
- Exclusion through silence

This helps participants understand that discrimination is not always aggressive or obvious. Start with milder examples first, then gradually move into more serious ones. This creates psychological safety, reduces defensiveness and encourages honest discussion. If participants become uncomfortable too early, they may shut down instead of reflecting.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Mini input: Understanding discrimination in sport (10 minutes)

Facilitator presents short definitions of:

- Stereotypes
- Prejudices
- Discrimination
- Hate speech

Examples should be connected to grassroots sport, locker rooms, online team chats, fan culture, and social media. (Handout 2). Facilitator can also distribute these definitions to each participant.

Scenario group work: “What would you do?” (35 minutes)

Participants should be divided into small groups. Each group receives a scenario card describing a realistic sport-related situation.

Examples (Handout 3):

- A teammate repeatedly mocks another player’s accent
- Girls are ignored during mixed training sessions
- Offensive memes are shared in a team WhatsApp group
- A player is excluded because of disability or ethnicity
- A coach laughs at homophobic comments

Groups should discuss:

- What is happening?
- Who is affected?
- Why is this harmful?
- What could teammates/coaches/bystanders do?
- What would be the best response?

Each group should present their conclusions in plenum.

Reflection activity (15 minutes)

Participants individually write on sticky notes:

- How discrimination affects a person
- How it affects the team
- How it affects participation in sport

Sticky notes should be placed on a wall in three categories: 1) Individual impact, 2) Team impact and 3) Community impact.

After that, facilitator summarizes common themes such as fear, isolation, low confidence, reduced participation, conflict, and loss of trust.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

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SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Closing round (5 minutes)

Participants complete the sentence: *“One thing I will pay more attention to in my team/community is...”*

Debriefing and evaluation:

Facilitator should lead a discussion using questions such as:

- Which examples felt most realistic?
- Why are some forms of discrimination difficult to recognize?
- How does silence support harmful behavior?
- What can make intervention difficult?
- What role do teams and coaches play in creating safe environments?

Verbal evaluation can include one new thing participants learned, one thing that surprised them and one action they could take in their own sport environment.

Tips for facilitator: Some participants may normalize discriminatory language because it is common in sport culture. Avoid shaming participants and focus on reflection and learning. Ensure examples are age-appropriate and culturally sensitive. Encourage discussion without forcing personal disclosures. Be prepared to manage disagreement respectfully. Reinforce that “jokes” can still have harmful consequences. If participants become emotional, allow space for reflection and support.

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Handout 1

Gender stereotypes / sexism	· "You play like a girl." · "Let the boys take the important shot." · "Girls are too emotional for football." · "Boys are naturally stronger." · "She's actually good... for a girl." · "Football isn't really a women's sport." · "Don't cry like a little girl."
Racist / ethnic discrimination	· "Go back to your country." · "Players from your country are always aggressive." · "Your accent sounds funny." · "Foreign players don't understand teamwork." · "You don't belong here." · "They only picked you because of diversity."
Homophobic language	· "That's so gay." · "Real men don't act like that." · "Don't be soft." · "Stop acting weak." · "You run like a girl." · "Only girls dance after scoring." · "You're not masculine enough for football."
Exclusion and social isolation	· "Nobody wants you on their team." · "Just ignore them." · "You're always the weak link." · "Don't pass to him/her." · "They'll never fit in." · "You can sit this one out." · "We already have our group."
Disability-related discrimination	· "You're too slow to play." · "This game is too difficult for you." · "Don't include them, they'll ruin the game." · "We'll never win if they play." · "They need special treatment for everything."
Body shaming / appearance-based comments	· "You're too fat to be an athlete." · "You're too skinny to compete." · "You don't look athletic." · "Maybe sports just aren't for you." · "You'd be better on the bench."
Online hate / team group chats / social media	· Sharing offensive memes targeting teammates · Mocking players after mistakes in WhatsApp groups · Posting humiliating videos from training · Excluding someone from team chats · Leaving insulting comments under match photos/videos · Using emojis or GIFs to mock nationality, gender, or appearance

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Handout 2

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are simplified and generalized beliefs or assumptions about a person or group of people based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or age. Stereotypes often ignore individual differences and can lead to unfair expectations or treatment. In sports, stereotypes may appear through beliefs such as:

• “Girls are not good at football.”

• “Boys should not show emotions.”

• “Players from certain countries are aggressive.”

• “People with disabilities cannot compete seriously.”

Stereotypes can influence behavior, opportunities, participation, and team relationships, even when people are not aware of it.

Prejudices

Prejudices are negative attitudes, opinions, or feelings toward individuals or groups based on stereotypes rather than personal experience or facts. Prejudices are often formed before truly knowing someone and can result in exclusion, discrimination, or unfair treatment. In sports environments, prejudice may appear when:

• a player is excluded because of their background,

• a coach assumes certain athletes are less capable,

• teammates avoid someone because they are “different,”

• participants are judged based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or appearance.

Prejudices can damage self-confidence, trust, team cohesion, and equal participation in sport.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unfair or unequal treatment of a person or group based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, or social background. Discrimination happens when someone is excluded, insulted, ignored, treated differently, or denied opportunities because of who they are rather than their abilities or actions. In sports environments, discrimination can appear through excluding someone from activities or teams, giving unequal opportunities, offensive comments or jokes, unfair treatment by coaches, teammates, or supporters, online harassment or hate speech, and stereotypes influencing decisions and behavior. Examples:

A girl is not allowed to join a football team because “football is for boys.”

A player is ignored because of their ethnicity or accent.

A participant with a disability is excluded from training activities.

A coach gives fewer opportunities to players from certain backgrounds.

Discrimination negatively affects self-confidence and mental wellbeing, sense of belonging, participation and motivation, team cohesion and fair play. Creating inclusive and respectful sport environments means actively preventing discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone. Prejudice + Action = Discrimination.

Hate speech

Hate speech refers to any form of communication — spoken, written, online, or symbolic — that attacks, insults, humiliates, threatens, or promotes hatred against a person or group based on characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other aspects of identity. In sports environments, hate speech can appear during matches or training sessions, in locker rooms, among supporters, on social media, and/or in team group chats or online comments. Hate speech may include offensive chants or insults, racist, sexist, or homophobic comments, humiliating jokes or slurs, online harassment, and threatening or degrading language.

Examples:

Mocking a player because of their ethnicity or accent

Using sexist insults toward female athletes

Homophobic comments directed at teammates or opponents

Sharing hateful memes or offensive messages online

Hate speech creates unsafe and hostile environments and can seriously affect mental wellbeing, self-confidence, participation in sport, team relationships, and feelings of safety and belonging. Promoting respect, inclusion, and responsible communication is essential for preventing hate speech and creating positive sport environments for everyone.

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Handout 3 – Scenario cards

Teammates constantly make jokes about another player's clothes, hairstyle, or way of speaking. Nobody directly insults the player, but they slowly stop participating in team conversations.	During training, several teammates repeatedly joke that one player is "too weak" and should "stick to watching instead of playing." The coach hears the comments but says nothing because "they are just joking."	A younger or less experienced player is repeatedly left out of friendly matches because teammates only want to play with the "best players."
A player shares a meme in the team WhatsApp group mocking another player's nationality. Several teammates react with laughing emojis, while others stay silent.	Before an important match, a coach decides not to include girls in certain drills because "the boys need stronger competition."	A new player joins the club after moving from another country. Teammates avoid passing the ball to them and rarely include them in conversations during breaks.
Parents watching a youth match shout comment such as: • "Football is not for girls!" • "Stop crying and play like a man!" Young players begin repeating similar comments during training.	A coach laughs at homophobic comments	After missing an important penalty, a player receives insulting comments and mocking messages on social media from classmates and other players.
A player is constantly called by a nickname related to their body size or appearance. Some teammates think it is funny, while the player becomes quieter and less engaged during training.	During team activities, teammates stop inviting a player with a disability into group exercises because they believe "it slows the team down."	A player repeatedly uses homophobic phrases during matches. When another teammate objects, others respond: • "Relax, it's just locker room talk."
A player is excluded because of disability or ethnicity	During mixed training sessions, boys are consistently given leadership roles, while girls are asked to organize equipment or stand aside during tactical exercises.	Offensive memes are shared in a team WhatsApp group
A player struggles to fully understand the local language. Teammates become impatient and stop including them in tactical discussions or social activities.	A coach publicly humiliates a player for making mistakes during training. Teammates feel uncomfortable but nobody says anything afterward.	A player asks for a short break during training for religious reasons. Some teammates complain that the player is receiving "special treatment."

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Session name: More than a game

Theme: Understanding the impact of hate speech, discrimination, and exclusion on individuals, team cohesion, and sport performance

Time: 60 minutes

Overview: This workshop helps participants explore how hate speech, exclusion, bullying, and discriminatory behavior affect not only individuals, but also the overall functioning and atmosphere of teams. Through interactive reflection, teamwork exercises, and sport-based simulations, participants examine the emotional, psychological, and social consequences of negative behavior in sport environments. The session emphasizes that respectful and inclusive environments are not only ethical and safer, but also contribute to stronger teamwork, trust, motivation, and performance.

Objectives of the session:

- To understand the emotional and psychological impact of discrimination and exclusion
- To explore how negative behavior affects participation, motivation, and self-confidence
- To examine the impact of toxic behavior on team cohesion and performance
- To strengthen empathy and emotional awareness among participants

Group size: 12–30 participants

Material: Flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, printed role cards/scenarios, A4 paper, pens, tape, optional sports equipment (balls, cones)

Preparation: Facilitators should prepare realistic sport-related scenarios involving exclusion, discrimination, or toxic team behavior and create enough space for movement activities and group work. They should be prepared to facilitate emotional discussions in a respectful and supportive manner. Facilitators should also familiarize themselves with basic concepts related to mental wellbeing, inclusion, and group dynamics in sport.

Instructions

Warm-up activity: “The isolated player” (10 minutes)

Participants stand in a circle and pass a ball to one another freely. After a short time, facilitator secretly instructs the group (without telling one participant) to gradually stop passing the ball to that person. After 2–3 minutes, the activity stops.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Facilitator asks:

- How did the excluded person feel?
- How did the group feel?
- What changed in the atmosphere?
- Did the team perform better or worse?

The facilitator explains that exclusion in sport is not always loud or obvious – sometimes it happens subtly through ignoring, mockery, or isolation.

Mini input: The hidden consequences of discrimination (10 minutes)

Facilitator briefly presents how discrimination and hate speech can affect:

- Individuals: self-confidence, motivation, sense of belonging, mental wellbeing, and willingness to continue participating in sport.
- Teams: communication, trust, cooperation, performance and team atmosphere.

The facilitator should highlight that toxic environments often reduce participation and increase conflict.

Small group exercise: “Inside the Locker Room” (30 minutes)

Participants divide into smaller groups. Each group receives a scenario describing a problematic team situation. Examples:

- A player is constantly mocked for mistakes
- Girls are excluded from decision-making during training
- A player receives offensive comments online after a match
- A newcomer from another cultural background is ignored by teammates
- A player hides emotions because “showing weakness is not acceptable”

Groups should discuss:

- How could this affect the individual emotionally?
- How could this affect the team?
- What long-term consequences could appear?
- What could teammates/coaches do differently?

Groups should present conclusions to the larger group.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Debriefing and evaluation

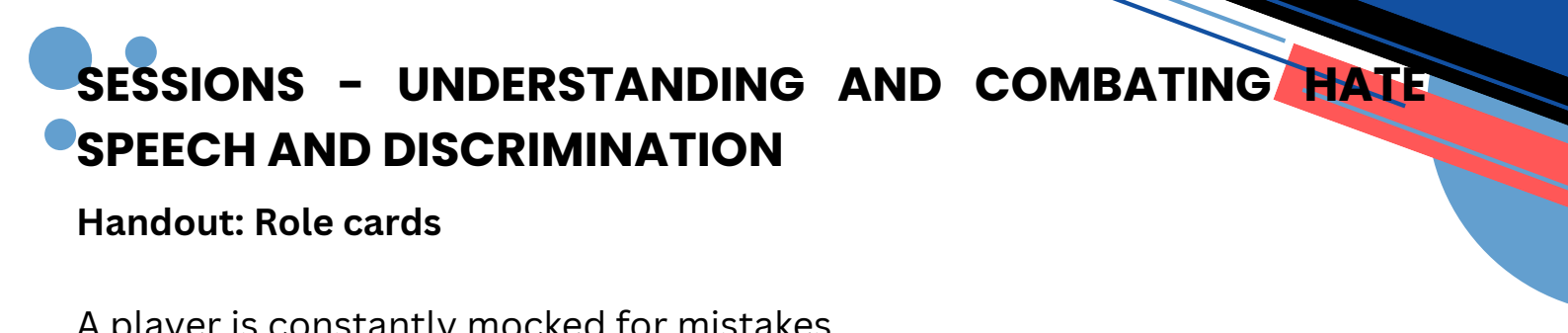
Facilitator leads reflection using questions such as:

- Which exercise felt most realistic?
- How can exclusion affect someone beyond sport?
- Why do respectful teams often perform better?
- What role do coaches and leaders play in team wellbeing?
- What warning signs should teams pay attention to?

Facilitator should ensure participants leave with a sense of responsibility, empathy, and possibility for positive change.

Tips for facilitator

Some exercises may trigger strong emotional reactions, especially among participants with personal experiences of exclusion or bullying. Ensure a supportive atmosphere throughout the session. Avoid singling out participants during simulations in ways that could cause real discomfort or humiliation. Clearly explain that simulation activities are learning tools and not personal attacks. Encourage participants to connect emotional wellbeing with sport performance and participation. If appropriate, remind participants that seeking support and discussing emotions are signs of strength, not weakness.



SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Handout: Role cards

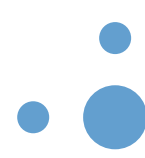
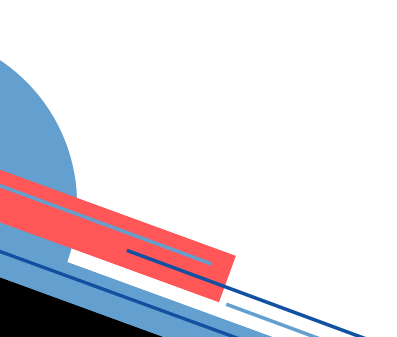
A player is constantly mocked for mistakes

Girls are excluded from decision-making during training

A player receives offensive comments online after a match

A newcomer from another cultural background is ignored by teammates

A player hides emotions because “showing weakness is not acceptable”



SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Session name: Becoming an active bystander

Theme: Bystander intervention and responding to hate speech and discrimination in sport

Time: 70 minutes

Overview: This workshop focuses on empowering participants to safely and confidently respond when they witness discrimination, bullying, or hate speech in sports settings. Participants practice intervention techniques through roleplay, teamwork, and problem-solving activities while learning that everyone has a role in creating inclusive and respectful sport environments.

Objectives of the session:

- To understand the role of bystanders in preventing discrimination
- To introduce practical intervention techniques
- To build confidence in responding safely to harmful behavior
- To strengthen solidarity and peer support in teams

Group size: 10–25 participants

Material: printed roleplay cards (Handout 1), flipchart paper, markers, tape, pens, optional whistle or sport props

Preparation: Facilitators should prepare roleplay situations connected to grassroots sport, print intervention technique cards and arrange enough space for roleplay activities. Facilitators should review de-escalation techniques and prepare examples suitable for participants' age and experience.

Instructions

Energizer: "Freeze Frame" (5 minutes)

Participants should move around the room while music plays. When music stops, facilitator calls out situations such as:

- "A player is being mocked online"
- "Someone is excluded from training"
- "A sexist joke is made during practice"

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Participants create frozen body statues showing reactions. Facilitators should briefly discuss:

- What reactions did you see?
- Who acted?
- Who stayed silent?

The power of bystanders (45 minutes)

The facilitators should introduce the concept of the bystander – a person who witnesses harmful behavior, discrimination, hate speech, bullying, or exclusion but is not directly involved as either the perpetrator or the target. Participants should understand that bystanders play a crucial role in shaping team culture and that their reactions can either worsen, maintain, or improve a situation. Bystanders can:

·Escalate the situation - A bystander may contribute to the harm by laughing at offensive jokes; sharing harmful content online; encouraging negative behavior; joining in teasing or exclusion; and / or supporting discriminatory comments. Example: During training, one player mocks another player's accent. Several teammates laugh, making the targeted player feel even more isolated. Key message: Even passive encouragement can make harmful behavior seem acceptable and increase its impact.

·Ignore the situation - A bystander may choose not to react at all because they feel uncomfortable, fear becoming a target themselves, believe it is "none of their business and / or assume someone else will intervene.

Example: A player is repeatedly excluded from team activities, but teammates remain silent and continue as if nothing is happening. Key message: Silence may unintentionally communicate acceptance of harmful behavior and leave the affected person feeling unsupported.

·Help stop the situation - A bystander can take positive action to support others and promote a respectful environment. Intervening does not always mean confronting someone directly. Small actions can make a significant difference. Key message: Everyone has the power to contribute to a safer and more inclusive sport environment.

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The facilitators should introduce practical techniques that participants can use depending on the situation, their confidence level, and safety considerations:

·*Distract* - shift attention away from the harmful behavior without directly confronting the person responsible. Examples: change the subject; invite the targeted person into another activity; redirect the group's focus; or create an interruption. Sport example: During a training session, a group starts mocking a teammate. Another player quickly asks the teammate to help with a drill, moving attention away from the teasing.

·*Support the victim* - show the targeted person they are not alone. Examples: sit with them; talk to them after the incident; offer encouragement; include them in activities; and/ or ask how they are feeling. Sport example: After seeing offensive comments in a team group chat, a teammate privately messages the affected player and offers support.

·*Speak up calmly* - address the behavior respectfully and confidently. Examples: "That comment isn't okay."; "Let's keep things respectful."; "I don't think that's funny."; "Can we stop with those jokes?". Sport example: During training, a player calmly challenges a sexist comment and reminds teammates that everyone deserves respect.

·*Ask for help* - seek support from someone who has responsibility or authority such as coach, team captain, referee, youth worker, club safeguarding officer or similar. Sport example: A player reports repeated discriminatory comments to the coach when they feel unable to intervene directly.

·*Report behavior* - When harmful behavior is serious or repeated, reporting may be necessary. This can include informing club management, using reporting procedures, reporting online abuse through social media platforms and / or documenting incidents when appropriate. Sport example: Repeated racist comments during matches are reported to club officials and competition organizers.

·*Check in afterward* - Sometimes support after an incident can be just as important as intervention during it. Examples: ask how the person is feeling; listen without judgment; encourage them to seek support if needed; continue including them in team activities. Sport example: Following an incident of exclusion, teammates check in with the affected player and ensure they feel welcomed during future activities.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

After these explanations, participants should be divided in groups of 4–5. Each group should receive a sport-related scenario involving discrimination or exclusion (Handout 1). Groups should prepare short roleplays showing:

- The harmful situation
- An ineffective response
- A positive bystander intervention

After each roleplay, all participants should discuss what worked, what could be improved, and if the intervention safe and respectful.

Building the “Bystander toolbox” (10 minutes)

Participants should brainstorm practical phrases and actions they can use in real situations. Examples:

- “That’s not okay.”
- “Let’s keep this respectful.”
- “Are you okay?”
- “Coach, can we talk?”
- “That joke could hurt someone.”

Ideas are collected on flipchart paper to create a shared “toolbox.”

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators can use questions such as:

- Why do people sometimes stay silent?
- What makes intervention difficult?
- Which intervention techniques felt realistic?
- How can teams support positive behavior?
- How can online hate be addressed differently from face-to-face situations?

Tips for facilitator: Remind participants that intervention should always prioritize safety. Encourage multiple solutions instead of one “perfect” response. Some participants may fear social consequences of speaking up; validate these concerns while exploring realistic strategies. Avoid pressuring participants into roleplays if they feel uncomfortable. If appropriate, connect discussions to reporting mechanisms within clubs, schools, or organizations.

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Handout 1 – Role play cards

Role play card 1 – "It's Just a Joke" During training, a player repeatedly makes sexist jokes about girls' football. Several teammates laugh. One player looks uncomfortable but says nothing.	Role play card 2 – The Ignored Teammate A new player recently joined the team. During drills, teammates rarely pass the ball to them and exclude them from conversations during breaks.	Role play card 3 – Parents on the Sidelines During a youth match, a parent shouts: "Stop playing like girls!" Several children hear the comment and begin repeating it.
Role play card 4 – The Team WhatsApp Group A player shares an offensive meme targeting another player's nationality. Some teammates react with laughing emojis while others remain silent.	Role play card 5 – The Coach's Favorite A coach consistently gives more opportunities to certain players while ignoring others. Some players begin mocking those who receive less attention.	Role play card 6 – "Don't Pass to Her" During a mixed football session, some boys intentionally avoid passing the ball to a girl, claiming: "She isn't good enough."
Role play card 7 – The Locker Room Rumor A rumor spreads about a teammate. Players begin excluding that person from conversations and social activities.	Role play card 8 – Online Abuse After a Match After making a mistake during a match, a player receives insulting messages on social media from other players and supporters.	Role play card 9 – Mocking an Accent A player who recently moved to the country struggles with the local language. Teammates imitate their accent and laugh whenever they speak.
Role play card 10 – Disability and Participation A player with a disability wants to participate in a training exercise. Some teammates complain that adapting the activity will slow everyone down.	Role play card 11 – The Silent Captain A team captain witnesses discriminatory comments but chooses not to intervene because they do not want to upset teammates.	Role play card 12 – Exclusion Through Team Selection When choosing teams for a training game, the same player is always picked last, and teammates openly complain when they end up on their team.
Role play card 13 – Religious Difference A player asks for a short break to observe a religious practice. Teammates begin making jokes and questioning their commitment to the team.	Role play card 14 – Body Shaming A player is frequently called nicknames related to their weight or physical appearance. The comments are presented as "friendly banter."	Role play card 15 – The Referee Incident During a match, players repeatedly insult the referee using offensive language. Several teammates are uncomfortable but do not react.

SESSIONS – UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Session name: Code of Conduct – how to develop one?

Theme: Developing a team code of conduct for inclusion, respect, and safe participation in sport

Time: 120 minutes

Overview: This workshop supports participants in creating a shared Code of Conduct that promotes respect, inclusion, fair play, and zero tolerance for hate speech and discrimination within sports environments. Through collaborative exercises, discussions, and practical drafting activities, participants reflect on the values they want their team, club, or organization to represent and translate those values into clear behavioral standards and commitments. The session emphasizes ownership, accountability, and collective responsibility for creating safe and inclusive sport spaces.

Objectives of the session:

- To understand the purpose and importance of a Code of Conduct in sport
- To identify behaviors that contribute to safe, respectful, and inclusive environments
- To encourage shared responsibility for team culture
- To develop practical rules and commitments against discrimination and hate speech

Group size: 12–30 participants

Material: flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, printed examples of Codes of Conduct (optional), A4 paper, pens, tape, laptop/projector (optional)

Preparation: Facilitators should prepare examples of Codes of Conduct from sports clubs, youth organizations, or schools. They should prepare guiding questions for group discussions and arrange working spaces for small groups. They should create a supportive atmosphere where all participants feel comfortable contributing ideas. Facilitators should also review key safeguarding and inclusion principles that should be reflected in the final Code of Conduct.

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

After discussions, participants share key words with the group. Facilitator writes them on a flipchart. Common themes may include:

- Respect
- Support
- Equality
- Fairness
- Communication
- Safety
- Inclusion
- Teamwork

What is the Code of Conduct? (10 minutes)

Facilitators should explain that a Code of Conduct is a shared agreement about acceptable behavior. It protects participants and creates clear expectations. It helps prevent discrimination, bullying, exclusion, and abuse. It should apply to everyone equally (players, coaches, volunteers, staff, parents). Facilitator briefly presents examples of common sections:

- Respectful communication
- Anti-discrimination commitments
- Online behavior
- Reporting procedures
- Consequences for harmful behavior
- Inclusion and participation principles

Group exercise: "What belongs in our Code?" (30 minutes)

Facilitators should divide participants into smaller groups. Each group should be given the task of working on one thematic area, such as:

- Respectful communication
- Social media and online behavior
- Inclusion and equal participation
- Team responsibilities
- Responding to hate speech and discrimination
- Conflict resolution

Groups should discuss: *What positive behaviors should be encouraged? What behaviors should not be accepted? What actions should be taken if rules are broken?* Each group should write 5–7 proposed rules or commitments.

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Drafting the Code of Conduct (30 minutes)

Groups present their ideas. Facilitators should help combine them into a Code of Conduct. Participants can discuss: Which rules are most important? Are the rules clear and realistic? Does everyone understand them? Are consequences and reporting procedures fair?

The final Code of Conduct should include:

- Shared values
- Expected behaviors
- Unacceptable behaviors
- Reporting and support mechanisms
- Commitment to inclusion and respect

After this is done, participants should stand in a circle around the completed Code of Conduct. Each participant says one value they want to protect in their team/community and after that all participants symbolically sign the Code of Conduct on a poster or large paper.

Debriefing and evaluation

Facilitators lead a discussion using questions such as:

- What part of the Code is most important to you?
- What challenges could appear when applying these rules?
- How can we encourage others to respect the Code?
- Why is it important that everyone contributes to the Code?
- Which rules were easiest or hardest to agree on?
- How can a Code of Conduct improve team atmosphere?
- What happens if rules exist only “on paper”?
- How can coaches and team leaders model positive behavior?

SESSIONS - UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION

Tips for facilitator

Encourage participants to create realistic and understandable rules rather than overly formal language. Make sure all voices are included, especially quieter participants. Avoid allowing one participant or subgroup to dominate decision-making. Remind participants that a Code of Conduct should focus not only on punishment, but also on prevention and positive culture. Encourage concrete language (e.g., “We listen respectfully” instead of “Be nice”). If possible, adapt the final Code into a visual poster or digital version participants can later use within their clubs or organizations. Reinforce that Codes of Conduct are living documents that can be reviewed and improved over time.

Examples of Code of Conduct:

[Livingston FC](#)

[Ashton FC](#)

[Irish Football Association](#)

[Sport Ireland](#)

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Session name: The invisible mosaic of inclusion

Theme: This session focuses on cultivating trust, empathy, and intercultural dialogue by celebrating diversity in cultural backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic differences to strengthen team cohesion through shared values.

Time: 60-90 minutes

Overview

This workshop utilizes the "Invisible Mosaic" concept to help young participants visualize how different abilities and backgrounds come together to form a stronger, more vibrant team. By participating in a football-based challenge that incorporates varied roles and restrictions, participants explore the value of inclusive participation and the importance of shared values in a group setting. The session is rooted in non-formal education principles, emphasizing that every individual contributes something unique to the collective mosaic. Success is defined not by individual prowess but by how well the team supports every member, regardless of their specific challenges or strengths.

Objectives of the session

- To foster trust and mutual respect among participants.
- To develop empathy by experiencing different roles and challenges.
- To promote understanding of diversity, including different abilities and cultural backgrounds.
- To strengthen team cohesion through cooperative football-based challenges.

Group size: The session is designed for 10 to 30 participants.

Materials

- Colored bibs in at least four different colors.
- Secret role cards with visual symbols for the handout section.
- Standard footballs and training cones.
- A large poster or board for the "Teamwork Scoreboard."
- Markers or stickers for scoring.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Preparation

The facilitator begins by setting up a small-sided football pitch, measuring approximately 20x15 meters, using training cones to clearly define the boundaries. They must organize the colored bibs into two/four distinct sets to ensure teams of four to six players can be easily identified. Before the session starts, the facilitator needs to print/create and cut out the secret role cards found in the handout section, ensuring each card includes a the role's name. It is also essential for the facilitator to read through and familiarize themselves with the fair play stories provided in the final section to ensure they can narrate them effectively during the wrap-up to reinforce the "learning by doing" experience.

Instructions

The activity begins with the facilitator gathering all participants together to briefly explain that each player will receive a secret role card containing a specific rule they must follow during the match, without revealing it to anyone. The facilitator outlines the four possible roles. The facilitator makes clear that every role carries a unique challenge that will affect how the team functions as a whole.

The facilitator then divides the participants into teams by bib color to create the initial "mosaic" across the pitch, with each team consisting of approximately five or six players per side to ensure high engagement. Once the teams are established, the facilitator calls each player over individually or in small groups to privately distribute the secret role cards, instructing them to keep their assigned role hidden from teammates. For younger participants, the facilitator may quietly explain the role using the symbols printed on the cards to ensure full understanding.

When every child has received and understood their specific role, the match begins. Players must strictly follow their card's rules in silence, without revealing their restrictions or strengths to anyone. The facilitator remains on the sidelines to observe how the participants interact and how team dynamics shift as they encounter players with various invisible challenges. They should specifically watch for how teams attempt to integrate players who are struggling with their roles and how they maintain cohesion despite the different limitations present on the field.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

This observation period is crucial, as it allows the facilitator to identify key moments of cooperation or friction to highlight during the later discussion, without interrupting the natural flow of the game. The resulting confusion and frustration, as the lack of communication makes individual challenges invisible to teammates, is itself part of the learning experience.

After approximately 10 minutes, the facilitator stops the match and calls a "Private Huddle" for each team. During this structured pause, the participants are guided to reveal their secret rules to their teammates and each group is instructed to co-create a specific "Inclusion Plan" to support every member's unique challenge.

Play then resumes with the introduction of the "Passing Rule", which states that a goal is only valid if every single teammate has touched the ball during the play. This rule drives a visible shift in communication and collaboration, as players actively seek out their "restricted" teammates to ensure total group participation, and the facilitator monitors this transition carefully, focusing on how the team moves from individual struggle to collective success.

Debriefing and evaluation

Gather the participants in a closing circle. Ask the following questions:

How did it feel to play when your challenge was secret?

What changed in the second match once you had a plan to help each other?

How did your team adapt to help everyone participate?

What was the hardest part of the game for you?

How did you help a teammate who had a different challenge than yours?

Why is it important to support teammates who have different needs or backgrounds?

What did you learn about your teammates that you didn't know before?

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Teamwork Scoreboard

The Teamwork Scoreboard is a visual tool where teams award themselves points based on cooperation and inclusion rather than goals scored. At the end of the session, the participants gather around a large poster or board to reflect on their collective performance.

Tips for facilitator

Facilitators should pay close attention to the emotional state of the participants, as some roles might cause frustration or a sense of exclusion if the team does not adapt quickly. If a child seems to be struggling significantly, the facilitator can offer quiet encouragement or pause the game briefly to remind everyone about the importance of checking in on their teammates. It is essential to maintain a safe and respectful environment where participants feel comfortable exploring these new challenges without fear of judgment.

When "invisible" roles cause friction between participants the facilitator should use the moment to bridge dialogue. Ask the participants how different perspectives or ways of communicating can actually help the team solve the "puzzle" of the game. This grounds the activity in intercultural dialogue by showing that diversity is an asset to the team's success.

The facilitator acts as a primary role model and should demonstrate the same empathy and respect they expect from the participants. By focusing on the "learning by doing" aspect, the facilitator allows the participants to discover the benefits of inclusion naturally through play. The goal is to let the lived experience of the game drive the conversation during the debriefing phase rather than lecturing.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Material for facilitators

The story of the silent playmaker

Once there was a player named Mateo who joined a new team where everyone spoke a different language. In our game today, Mateo is like the Silent Runner. Because he couldn't speak to his teammates yet, he had to use his eyes and his hands to show them where he was moving. At first, his teammates were confused, but soon they learned to watch Mateo's gestures. By paying closer attention to each other and building trust without using words, the team became better at spotting open spaces. They learned that even when we communicate differently, we can still be perfectly in sync.

The story of the golden pass

In a very famous match, there was a striker named Elena who was the fastest on the field. However, the other team was very strong, and she realized she couldn't win alone. Elena decided to act like a Restricted Shooter; she made a rule for herself that she wouldn't kick for the goal until she had involved at least two of her teammates who were standing in different spots. By making those extra passes, she drew the defenders away and created a perfect opening for the whole team. This taught everyone that true success comes from including everyone in the play, especially those who might be overlooked. Through dialogue and cooperation, they turned a difficult game into a shared victory.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Handout

Silent runner: This player cannot speak and must use gestures to communicate with teammates.

One hand helper: This player must keep one hand behind their back at all times, even during throw-ins.

Star guide: This player is the only one allowed to give verbal instructions to the team.

Restricted Shooter: This player can only score if they receive a pass from at least two different teammates first.

Teamwork Scoreboard Table

Team Color	Communication (1-5)	Inclusion Effort (1-5)	Goal Completion (Yes/No)
Red			
Blue			
Yellow			
Green			

Legend

★: Beginning to talk

★★: Helping sometimes

★★★: Strong teamwork

★★★★: Full inclusion

★★★★★: Inclusion champions

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Session name: Coupled dribblers

Theme: This session focuses on developing teamwork and mutual respect.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Overview: This workshop uses paired movements and cooperative dribbling to help young participants experience cohesion through physical interdependence. By tethering players together and asking them to complete a shared mission, the activity makes the value of coordination, patience, and mutual adjustment immediately tangible.

Objectives of the session

- Develop physical coordination and trust between partners.
- Practice learning by doing through immediate physical feedback.
- Strengthen group cohesion by overcoming a shared physical restriction.
- Encourage the recognition of positive qualities in teammates.

Group size: The session is designed for 10 to 30 participants, divided into pairs.

Materials

- Standard footballs.
- Bibs to be used as tethers or to identify pairs.
- Training cones for marking the start and finish lines.

Preparation

Facilitator must ensure that enough bibs are available to be used as tethers between paired participants and that enough footballs are ready for each pair to have one. Before the session starts, the facilitator should divide participants into pairs, ideally mixing genders and abilities to break down traditional performance stereotypes and encourage inclusive collaboration. It is also essential for the facilitator to familiarize themselves with the sequence of the activity in order to guide the transitions between phases smoothly and to be ready to introduce the final circle exercise once all pairs have completed their dribbling task.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Instructions

The activity begins with the facilitator gathering all participants together to briefly explain that they will work in pairs and must remain physically connected throughout the challenge, either by holding a bib between them (with each player holding one end) or by linking arms for an additional level of difficulty. The facilitator makes clear that the goal is not to be the fastest pair but to complete the task while staying connected at all times.

Once the rules are understood, each pair receives a football and positions itself at the starting line. The mission consists of dribbling the ball from the start to the finish line without letting go of the bib or breaking the arm link. During this phase, the facilitator observes how each pair negotiates pace, direction, and ball control, paying attention to which pairs struggle to find a shared rhythm and which adapt quickly to each other's movements.

If at any point the ball goes too far away or the bib is dropped, the pair must stop and perform three cooperative passes between them before resuming the run. Each cooperative pass must involve both players touching the ball, reinforcing the principle that progress cannot happen unless both partners are actively engaged.

Debriefing and evaluation

Gather the participants in a closing circle. Ask the following questions:

- Was it frustrating to be tethered to someone else?
- What happened when one person moved faster than the other?
- How did you find a shared rhythm with your partner?
- How does this relate to a real match where you must adjust your speed and movement to your teammate's position?
- What did you learn about your partner during the activity?
- How did it feel to hear a positive trait said about you in the final circle?

Tips for facilitator

The facilitator should observe carefully how each pair distributes effort and attention during the dribbling phase, because the activity reveals very quickly which participants tend to dominate and which tend to follow. When one partner is visibly pulling the bib or running ahead while the other lags behind, the facilitator can step in with a quiet reminder that the bib is not a leash but a shared connection, and that the pace of the pair is always the pace of the partner who needs more time. Intervening in this way shifts the focus from individual performance to relational responsibility.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

It is important for the facilitator to manage frustration without removing the challenge. When a pair drops the bib repeatedly or argues about whose fault it was, the facilitator should not solve the problem for them but instead invite them to stop, look at each other, and agree on one small change before trying again. The pause itself is part of the learning, because it teaches participants that cooperation is built through repeated micro-adjustments rather than through a single perfect attempt.

The transition from the dribbling phase to the closing circle is delicate and deserves particular attention. Some participants may feel exposed when asked to publicly name a positive trait of a teammate, especially in groups where teasing or hierarchies already exist. The facilitator should model the exercise first by passing the ball to a participant and naming a genuine positive trait, choosing someone who may otherwise be overlooked. This sets the tone and signals that the exercise is sincere rather than performative.

The facilitator should also pay particular attention to pairs in which there is a visible difference in physical confidence, body size, or athletic experience. In these pairs, the slower or less confident partner can easily feel they are holding the other back, which is the opposite of the message the activity wants to convey. When the facilitator notices this dynamic, they can quietly reframe the situation by pointing out to the faster partner that adjusting their pace is itself a skill, and that the pair is succeeding precisely because both are willing to meet in the middle.

SESSIONS – TEAMWORK, INCLUSION, AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Handout

Pair formation guide

- Mix genders whenever possible, because shared physical tasks between boys and girls challenge the unspoken assumptions that often shape mixed-gender football contexts.
- Avoid pairing strong players with strong players and weak with weak. A confident player paired with a less experienced one creates the most educational dynamic, as long as the difference is moderate and does not generate overwhelming frustration on either side.
- Combine contrasting personalities. Pair an introverted participant with an extroverted one, or a natural leader with a more reserved follower, so that both have to step slightly outside their habitual role.
- Avoid pairing close friends, who tend to fall back on established patterns, but also avoid pairing participants who are in active conflict, since the activity is not a mediation exercise.
- When in doubt, choose diversity. The central message of the activity is that cooperation across differences is the very condition through which the group succeeds together.

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Session name: Ready to enjoy

Theme: “Match safety check list”

Time: 45 minutes

Overview: Develop a tool that helps us as organizers to guarantee a safe, respectful and educational environment during children's football matches, promoting coexistence, fair play and the comprehensive protection of boys and girls.

Objectives of the session:

- To raise awareness among spectators and families about creating the right environment to enjoy the sporting activity
- To promote respect among players, coaches, referees, and families.
- To disseminate the protocol before each competition.

Group size: 15 - 20 people

Materials: In order to carry out this session, a room of adequate size to accommodate the group of between 15 and 20 people is needed, well-lit and ventilated. Regarding the materials needed for training, these would be the following:

- 1 Screen or big white wall (If a computer to support is used for a presentation to show the training content)
- A whiteboard or easel with large sheets of paper for making notes large enough to be seen by the training participants.
- Participants should have a notebook or device such as a computer/tablet for taking notes.

Preparation: In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.

The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.

The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Content 1: Participant introduction activity (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this session, we will present the “Event Safety Check list” document, a tool that aims to help sports clubs create a healthy and friendly environment for children's competitions.

Script example:

“..Hello everyone, in today's meeting, we will present the “Event Safety Check list” document, a tool that aims to help football clubs create a healthy and friendly environment for children's matches...”

Tips for facilitators:

It is important to focus on creating a relaxed environment that encourages participants to listen carefully and to want to participate.

Content 2: Review of the checklist document (25 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this section, we will review the entire document point by point, explaining its content in detail and using real-life situations that occur during children's football matches as examples.

Tips for facilitators:

Presenting the match checklist on the computer will help attendees follow each point in detail.

Content 3: Debriefing and evaluation (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: After the presentation of the document/tool, the facilitator will open a question and answer session for the participants. This will allow attendees to share their opinions on the material presented and contribute their thoughts.

Script example:

“..This concludes the document, which aims to help us create a suitable and friendly environment for a youth football match. Having this list will help us control and achieve our goal more easily....”

“..We would now like you to share any doubts or questions you may have about the content presented, and we would also be delighted if you could contribute valuable information based on your experience. We're all ears!...”

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Tips for facilitators:

It is important at this time to convey a genuine interest in understanding the concerns of the attendees and also to encourage them to share experiences or situations with the group that can add value and knowledge to the discussion.

Content 4: Closure (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We should end the activity by thanking all the participants for their efforts, sending a positive message about how they have provided a good environment for working on the content, and encouraging them to continue working to achieve the best environment so that boys and girls can continue enjoying football.

Script example:

“..Thank you so much, guys, for your effort. You did a great job. I hope you had a great time. I had a great time with you. I encourage you to continue being involved in this beautiful and rewarding activity and that you can help your players and their families to enjoy football....”

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Security and violence prevention protocol - check list

Before the match

Verification	YES	NO
Protocol disseminated to teams and families		
Designated person responsible for cohabitation		
Stands and designated spectator areas		
Restricted access signs to the playing field		
Emergency exits clear		
Referees and coaches informed of the protocol		
First aid kit available and accessible		
Emergency phone numbers visible		

Observations

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

During the match

Verification	YES	NO
Respectful atmosphere in the stands		
There are no insults or threats		
The public remains in authorized areas		
There is no invasion of the playing field		
Coaches maintain appropriate conduct		
The referee can perform his function without intimidation		
No discriminatory behavior was detected.		
There is no consumption of alcohol or substances		
No dangerous objects or pyrotechnics are used in the stands		

Observations

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

After the match

Verification	YES	NO
Sports salute performed		
Orderly exit of players and spectators		
Facilities inspected without damage		
Documented incidents		

Observations

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

In case of an incident

Verification	YES	NO
Incident detected and registered		
Immediate intervention performed		
Children protected and kept away from the conflict		
Informed person responsible for coexistence		
The corresponding warning or sanction was applied		
Families were contacted if necessary		
Emergency services or authorities were called if appropriate.		

Observations

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Session name: “We all play today”

Theme: “match day - behavior guidelines”

Time: 45 minutes

Overview: Develop a tool that helps us as organizers to guarantee a safe, respectful and educational environment during children's football matches, promoting coexistence, fair play and the comprehensive protection of boys and girls.

Objectives of the session:

- To raise awareness among spectators and families about creating the right environment to enjoy the sporting activity
- To promote respect among players, coaches, referees, and families.
- To disseminate the protocol before each competition.

Group size: 15 - 20 people

Materials: In order to carry out this session, a room of adequate size to accommodate the group of between 15 and 20 people is needed, well-lit and ventilated. Regarding the materials needed for training, these would be the following:

1 Screen or big white wall (If a computer to support is used for a presentation to show the training content)

A whiteboard or easel with large sheets of paper for making notes large enough to be seen by the training participants.

Participants should have a notebook or device such as a computer/tablet for taking notes.

Preparation: In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.

The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.

The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Instructions

Content 1: Participant introduction activity (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this session, we will present the “Communication model for the security and coexistence protocol” document, a tool that aims to help sports clubs create a healthy and friendly environment for children's competitions.

Script example:

“..Hello everyone, In today's meeting, we will present the “Communication model for the security and coexistence protocol” document, a tool that aims to help football clubs create a healthy and friendly environment for children's matches...”

Tips for facilitators:

It is important to focus on creating a relaxed environment that encourages participants to listen carefully and to want to participate.

Content 2: Review of the behavior guidelines (25 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this section, we will review the entire document point by point, explaining its content in detail and using real-life situations that occur during children's football matches as examples.

This document can be distributed in paper format, digitally via a QR code, and/or displayed for spectators within the sports facility. It is also recommended that the document be presented to and shared with the families of players from football clubs participating in youth competitions.

Tips for facilitators:

Presenting the Match Day - Behavior Guidelines on the computer will help attendees follow each point in detail.

Content 3: Debriefing and evaluation (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: After the presentation of the document/tool, the facilitator will open a question and answer session for the participants. This will allow attendees to share their opinions on the material presented and contribute their thoughts.

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Script example:

“..This concludes the document, which aims to help us create a suitable and friendly environment for a youth football match. If spectators and family members of youth matches are aware of this communication, it can help them maintain an appropriate attitude and behavior during the competition.....”

“..We would now like you to share any doubts or questions you may have about the content presented, and we would also be delighted if you could contribute valuable information based on your experience. We're all ears!...”

Tips for facilitators:

It is important at this time to convey a genuine interest in understanding the concerns of the attendees and also to encourage them to share experiences or situations with the group that can add value and knowledge to the discussion.

Content 4: Closure (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We should end the activity by thanking all the participants for their efforts, sending a positive message about how they have provided a good environment for working on the content, and encouraging them to continue working to achieve the best environment so that boys and girls can continue enjoying football.

Script example:

“..Thank you so much, guys, for your effort. You did a great job. I hope you had a great time. I had a great time with you. I encourage you to continue being involved in this beautiful and rewarding activity and that you can help your players and their families to enjoy football....”

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Communication model for the security and coexistence protocol

Dear families, players, coaches, and spectators: In anticipation of today's children's football match, we would like to remind you of the importance of maintaining a safe, respectful, and educational environment for all participating children.

The main objective of this sporting activity is to promote Learning.

Coexistence.

Respect.

Fair play.

Enjoyment of sport in a healthy environment.

*Therefore, we would like to inform you that the **Safety and Violence Prevention Protocol** will be in effect throughout the day, applicable to players, coaches, families, spectators, and organizing staff.*

Basic Rules of Conduct

We especially ask:

Players and coaches

To maintain respect for teammates, opponents, and referees.

To avoid aggressive or unsportsmanlike conduct.

To foster a positive and educational environment.

Families and spectators

To cheer respectfully.

To avoid insults, threats, or arguments.

To refrain from giving technical instructions from the stands.

To respect the referee's decisions.

To remain in the designated spectator areas.

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Rules of the sports facility

It is forbidden to enter the playing field.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal substances is prohibited.

It is forbidden to bring dangerous objects or pyrotechnics onto the premises.

Entrances and emergency exits must be kept clear.

Please take care of and keep the facilities clean.

Child Protection

*We remind you that any conduct involving physical, verbal, psychological, or discriminatory violence will be met with zero tolerance and may result in:
Expulsion from the facility.*

Suspension of participation.

Reporting to the appropriate authorities if necessary.

We appreciate the cooperation of all families and participants in ensuring a safe, positive, and enriching day of sports for our children.

Sincerely,

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Club / Organization: _____

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Session name: Stop the conflict

Theme: “Risk identification exercises”

Time: 60 minutes

Overview: Learn to detect behaviors or situations that may generate violence or insecurity.

Objectives of the session:

To raise awareness among spectators and families about creating the right environment to enjoy the sporting activity

To promote respect among players, coaches, referees, and families.

To provide answers to organizers and members of football clubs on how to deal with conflict situations during matches.

Group size: 15 - 20 people

Materials: In order to carry out this session, a room of adequate size to accommodate the group of between 15 and 20 people is needed, well-lit and ventilated. Regarding the materials needed for training, these would be the following:

A whiteboard or easel with large sheets of paper for making notes large enough to be seen by the training participants.

Participants should have a notebook or device such as a computer/tablet for taking notes.

Preparation: In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.

The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.

The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Instructions

Content 1: Participant introduction activity (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: With this session, our goal is to provide organizers and members of football clubs with knowledge and answers to deal with conflict situations during matches.

Tips for facilitators:

It is important to focus on creating a relaxed environment that encourages participants to listen carefully and to want to participate.

Content 2: Exercise 1: Observing risk situations (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: The first exercise will help us identify the different situations that can occur in a youth match, we will talk about the possible consequences of these events and see what actions we can take to prevent them.

With this exercise we will learn to detect behaviors or situations that can generate violence or insecurity.

We will present situations that can occur during a children's soccer game and ask the participants to identify:

- Risk detected.
- Possible consequence.
- Preventive action.

Examples:

·Situation 1: Father shouting insults at the referee.

- Risk: Escalation of violence.
- Preventive action: Immediate warning.

·Situation 2: Spectators very close to the playing line.

- Risk: Field invasion.
- Preventive action: Delimit areas.

·Situation 3: Argument between families.

- Risk: Verbal or physical aggression.
- Preventive action: Separation and mediation

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

·**Situation 4: Emergency door locked.**

- Risk: Evacuation risk
- Preventive action: Release access.

Tips for facilitators:

Let's encourage participants to take part in the dynamic by contributing their opinions based on their experiences.

Content 3: Exercise 2: Risk traffic light (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: With this exercise we seek to classify the different incidents that can occur in a youth sporting event to help us determine what actions to take and what consequences to apply to offenders.

Tips for facilitators:

We will give participants colored cards to "classify" the different examples of incidents we will discuss. At the end of the classification process, we will assess the potential consequences of the described events.

GREEN = LOW RISK: Situations that can be controlled quickly.

YELLOW = MODERATE RISK: It can escalate if left unchecked.

RED = SERIOUS RISK: It requires immediate action.

Examples:

Situation 1: Isolated protest by a spectator.

Level: Green.

Situation 2: Repeated insults from the stands.

Level: Yellow.

Situation 3: Threats among adults.

Level: Red.

Situation 4: Physical fight.

Level: Red.

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Content 4: Exercise 3: Role-playing (15 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this section of the training, we aim to work with situations that are as realistic as possible, so we will adopt different roles of the people who might be involved in an incident. The objective of this exercise is to practice appropriate responses to conflicts.

Examples of situations:

Situation 1: Family member insulting the referee.

Situation 2: Coach yelling at a minor.

Situation 2: Discussion among spectators.

Situation 4: Child being humiliated for a sports mistake.

Tips for facilitators:

After acting out the situations we have worked on from the different examples, all participants should answer the following questions:

What risk emerged?

How was it resolved?

What could be done better?

Content 5: Exercise 4: What would you do if...? (15 minutes)

Intro explanation: This exercise aims to reinforce the work of the previous exercise, that is, to give the most appropriate response possible to a conflict situation.

Examples of situations:

Situation 1: An adult invades the field.

Situation 2: A child reports being insulted.

Situation 2: Two families begin to argue.

Situation 4: Alcohol consumption detected in the stands.

Tips for facilitators:

After describing the situations we have worked on from the different examples, all participants should answer the following questions:

- Identified risk.
- Priority of action.
- Responsible party involved.
- Immediate measure.

SESSIONS – SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Content 6: Closure (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We should end the activity by thanking all the participants for their efforts, sending a positive message about how they have provided a good environment for working on the content, and encouraging them to continue working to achieve the best environment so that boys and girls can continue enjoying football.

Script example:

“..Thank you so much, guys, for your effort. You did a great job. I hope you had a great time. I had a great time with you. Hopefully, we won't experience many situations like this on a football field, but if they do occur, we will be prepared to give the most appropriate response and protect our players. I encourage you to continue being involved in this beautiful and rewarding activity and that you can help your players and their families to enjoy football....”

SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Session name: Leading by example

Theme: Positive leadership and creating an inclusive team culture

Time: 70 minutes

Overview: This workshop explores how coaches, youth workers, captains, and peer leaders influence team culture through their everyday actions, language, and decisions. Participants reflect on the impact of leadership behaviors and learn how positive role models can promote inclusion, respect, and fair play within sport environments.

Objectives of the session:

- To understand the influence leaders have on team culture
- To identify behaviors that promote inclusion and respect
- To recognize how leadership can prevent discrimination and exclusion
- To strengthen participants' capacity to act as positive role models

Group size: 10–25 participants

Materials: Leadership scenario cards, flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, A4 paper, pens

Preparation

Facilitators should prepare examples of positive and negative leadership behaviors from sport settings and create scenario cards based on realistic situations.

Instructions

Warm-up: “Who inspired me?” (10 minutes)

Participants think about a coach, teammate, youth worker, teacher, or leader who positively influenced them. They write down:

- What did this person do?
- How did they make others feel?
- What leadership qualities did they demonstrate?

Group activity: “Leadership in action” (25 minutes)

After the warm-up part, participants work in small groups and receive leadership scenarios:

- A player is excluded from team activities.
- A discriminatory joke is made during training.
- A conflict emerges between teammates.
- A new player struggles to integrate into the team.

SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Task for the groups is to discuss:

- What should a good leader do?
- What should a leader avoid?
- What message would their actions send to the team?

After the discussion, each group presents.

Activity: “The ripple effect” (25 minutes)

Participants identify common leadership behaviors and place them on a flipchart divided into:

- Positive Ripple Effects
- Negative Ripple Effects

The facilitator explores how even small actions can influence team norms and behavior.

Reflection (10 minutes)

Participants complete the sentence:

“An inclusive leader is someone who...”

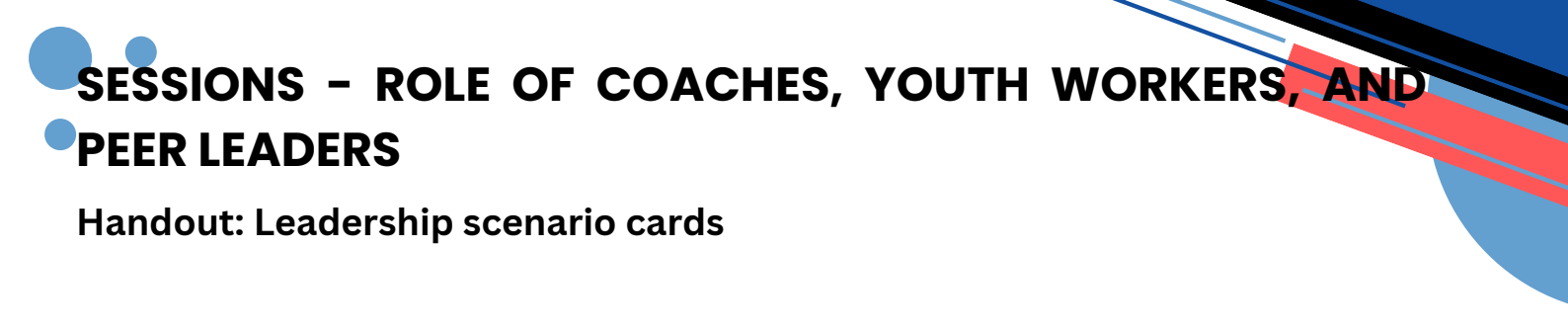
Debriefing and evaluation:

Facilitators can use following questions:

- How do leaders shape team culture?
- Which leadership behaviors create trust?
- Why do young people often copy leaders?
- What responsibility comes with leadership roles?

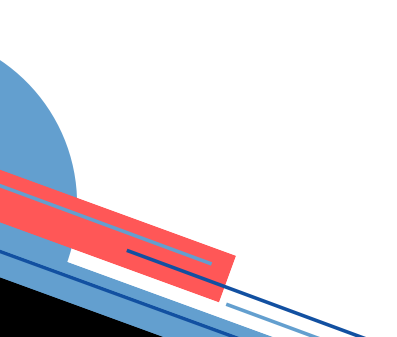
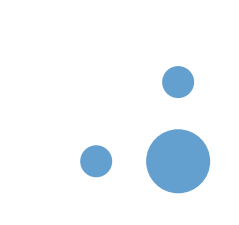
Tips for facilitators

Emphasize that leadership is not limited to coaches. Captains, peer leaders, older players, and youth workers also influence group culture through their behavior and attitudes.



SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Handout: Leadership scenario cards

- A player is excluded from team activities.
 - A discriminatory joke is made during training.
 - A conflict emerges between teammates.
 - A new player struggles to integrate into the team.
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SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Session name: Peer leaders for positive change

Theme: Empowering young people to become inclusion ambassadors

Time: 70 minutes

Overview: This workshop focuses on the role of peer leaders, captains, and influential teammates in promoting respect, challenging discrimination, and supporting others. Participants develop confidence to act as positive influencers within their teams and communities.

Objectives of the session:

- To understand the role of peer leadership in sport
- To strengthen confidence to challenge exclusion and discrimination
- To develop communication and mentoring skills
- To encourage youth-led action for inclusion

Group size: 10–25 participants

Materials:

- Role-play cards
- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Action Plan template

Preparation

Facilitators should prepare scenarios involving peer influence, exclusion, bullying, and conflict.

Instructions

Group activity 1: Peer Influence Spectrum (20 minutes)

Facilitators explain that in this part of the session the group will discuss the peer influence and explain that there is a line on the floor. All participants should position themselves behind the line. Facilitators explain that they will read certain statements, and if the participants agree with the statement, they should cross the line; if they don't agree, they stay where they are. After each statement, there should be a brief discussion with those who crossed the line and those who did not cross the line. After the discussion is finished, the whole group goes back behind the line.

SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Facilitators read statements such as:

- Team captains influence behavior more than coaches.
- Friends are more likely to challenge discrimination.
- Silence encourages harmful behavior.
- Coaches influence team culture more than players.
- The behavior of team captains affects the team atmosphere.
- Young players copy what older players do.
- Actions speak louder than words when it comes to leadership.
- Leaders should always intervene when they witness discrimination.
- Being a good player does not automatically make someone a good leader.
- Team culture depends more on daily behavior than on written rules.
- Every team member is responsible for making newcomers feel welcome.
- One negative person can affect the entire team atmosphere.
- Inclusion is everyone's responsibility, not only the coach's.
- Small acts of kindness can change team culture.
- Excluding someone from social activities is as harmful as excluding them from the game.
- A respectful team performs better than a talented team with conflicts.

Facilitators finish this part with conclusion that each team member has the influence on the others and that this influence should be used in a positive and respectful way.

Group activity 2: Inclusion Ambassador Role-Plays (35 minutes)

Facilitators divide the group into 4 smaller groups. Groups receive scenarios:

- A teammate is being mocked online.
- A player is excluded from team activities.
- Discriminatory language is used during training.
- A younger player lacks confidence.

The task of each group is to create a scenario where participants practice:

- Speaking up respectfully
- Supporting affected individuals
- Seeking help when needed
- Encouraging positive team behavior

Each group presents their scenario. Each role play is discussed with the rest of the group.

SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Individual activity 3: My Leadership Commitment (5 minutes)

Each participant creates a personal commitment statement: *“In my team I will...”*

Debriefing and evaluation:

Facilitators can use following questions:

- Why can peer leaders be powerful agents of change?
- What makes speaking up difficult?
- How can young people support each other?
- What leadership skills would you like to develop further?

Tips for facilitators

Facilitators should reinforce that leadership does not require a formal position. Every participant has the capacity to influence team culture through their actions, attitudes, and everyday interactions.

SESSIONS – ROLE OF COACHES, YOUTH WORKERS, AND PEER LEADERS

Handout: Inclusion ambassadors – role play

A teammate is being mocked online	A player is excluded from team activities
Discriminatory language is used during training	A younger player lacks confidence

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Pass a Ball, Make a Friend project is implemented by Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM 018) from Serbia in cooperation with Youth European Society (YES) from Bulgaria, Barcel'hona Sport Events from Spain, JuvenTagus - Associação Desportiva e Juvenil from Portugal, Associazione Sportiva Dilettantistica TIQUITACA FOOTBALL from Italy and Futbolen Klub Septemvri from Bulgaria. Pass a Ball, Make a Friend project aims to address the escalating conflicts and hate speech among local football teams, which have led to physical fights. Project will address these challenges by using football as a platform to combat hate speech, reduce physical conflicts and promote social inclusion. By promoting peaceful sportsmanship, "Pass a Ball, Make a Friend" not only improves relationships within football teams but also sets an example for broader community cohesion and understanding. Specific objectives: 1) To create a comprehensive training module designed to instill values of fair play, respect, and inclusivity in young football players and supporters; 2) To bring together young football players from partner countries to promote intercultural exchange, collaboration, and sportsmanship; 3) To reduce physical conflicts by teaching conflict resolution and fair play, ensuring the focus remains on the spirit of the game; 4) To equip young football players and supporters with leadership skills to become ambassadors for sportsmanship in their teams, communities, and beyond; 5) To raise awareness about the problem of conflicts and hate speech among the local football teams as well as among the supporters; 6) To promote social inclusion by encouraging social dialogue cooperation among diverse teams, teams' supporters and members of local communities and in this way breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. The activities of the "Pass a Ball" project will be carried out in Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Serbia and Spain over a period of 24 months, from 01.11.2025 to 31.10.2027. The project is co-financed by the European Union.

ABOUT ERASMUS + SPORT

The aim of Erasmus+, as a program, is to support the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, to contribute to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to drive innovation and to strengthen European identity and active citizenship.

Erasmus+ actions in the field of sport promote participation in sport, physical activity, and voluntary activities.

They are designed to tackle societal and sport-related challenges. Opportunities are available for organizations under 3 Calls which address these challenges.

A specific call on Capacity Building in the field of sport is also available as of 2022. It targets EU Member States and third countries associated to the Program (previously called Program countries) and the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership.

Cooperation Partnerships

Designed for organizations to develop and implement joint activities to promote (among others) sport and physical activity, as well as deal with threats to the integrity of sport (such as doping or match-fixing), promote dual careers for athletes, improve good governance, and foster tolerance and social inclusion.

Small-scale Partnerships

For grassroots organizations, less experienced organizations and newcomers to the Program. Small-Scale Partnerships have simpler administration, smaller grants and shorter durations than Cooperation Partnerships.

Not-for-profit European Sport Events

Designed to encourage sporting activity, implement EU strategies for social inclusion through sport, foster volunteering in sport, fight against discrimination and encourage participation in sport and physical activity.



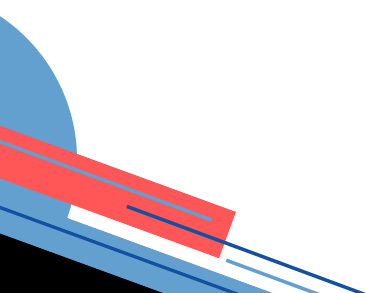
ABOUT ERASMUS + SPORT

Capacity Building in the field of sport

Capacity-building projects are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organizations active in the field of sport in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Program (previously called Program countries) and the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership. They aim to support sport activities and policies in as a vehicle to promote values as well as an educational tool to promote the personal and social development of individuals and build more cohesive communities.

More info on:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/organisations/sport-actions>





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