



THE CAPTAINS ROLE

The Captain has a vital role to play in helping achieve the number one priority for footballers in The FA's biggest-ever survey of grassroots football - a referee for every game.

Seven thousand referees are dropping out each season because of the abuse and intimidation they receive. It ruins games and can cause matches to be abandoned.

Taking responsibility

The Captain has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game, but does have a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of the team. To promote "Respect", the referee will work with the Team Captain, to manage the players and the game effectively.

Even if the Captain is some way away from an incident when the referee feels he needs the Captain involved in a discussion with a player, the referee will call the Captain over. This will ensure that the team Captain remains the point of contact for the referee.

How Captains can help to instil Respect:

- Ensure a Captain's armband is worn
- Introduce yourself to the referee before the game. He may ask if you are clear about your responsibilities
- Ensure all your players understand what they can/cannot do in relation to the referee and what is meant by 'unwanted behaviour'. No-one's trying to curb enthusiasm - just instil more discipline. This can only benefit the match - and football as a whole
- Ensure the vice-captain (appoint one if there is not one) is aware of the rules, in case you are unavailable for a game, or have to leave the field
- Ensure every player in your team is aware of the Respect a referee campaign

An important part of "Respect" is the need for Captains to work alongside referees to ensure a better playing atmosphere between players and officials.

Given the Captain is the main point of contact for the referee under "Respect", it is important that Captains understand what referees have been asked to do:

Firstly, the referee has been requested to work with you to manage the players and the game effectively.

However in his own right, the referee must control the game by applying the Laws of the Game. This includes dealing firmly with any open show of dissent by players (e.g. not to move away from the incident, but stay and deal with it).

The type of behaviour which often gives rise to problems in matches, and where Captains and referees need to work together, can be described as 'harassment' and 'challenging behaviour' towards the referee. Examples are:

Harassment:

- Running towards the referee in an aggressive manner
- Players surrounding the referee to protest a decision
- Repeatedly asking questions about decisions in an attempt to influence the referee or undermine his responsibilities

Challenging:

- Continually asking the referee questions about decisions made obviously in an attempt to undermine his position
- Passing comment to other players about a referee's decision-making
- Aggressively running at a referee to object about decisions
- Repeatedly moaning at the referee about decisions
- Gestures that obviously are made in a derogatory manner, such as a shaking of the head or waving of the hand