

Guide for Coaches & Managers

somesetfa.com | support@somesetfa.com

What is the Traffic Light System?



Our Goal

To ensure youth football in Somerset is a positive experience for all.

The Traffic Light System is a county wide behaviour system that has been developed to empower and assist clubs to improve behaviour across grassroots football.



GREEN

All teams start on green.
Good respect scores, no reported problems.
Good role models. Positive environment.



AMBER

Reported incident.
Poor practice or misconduct.
Details passed onto SFA.
Team will be monitored closely by league and CFA.



RED

Escalation from amber OR referee incident. Zero tolerance for referee abuse.
Serious incident. Team must take action to improve behaviour.



BLUE

Another serious incident. Meeting with league / CFA with possible withdrawal of fixtures/ from the league.



Why do we need the Traffic Light System?



The importance of adults in youth football.

Whilst the majority of youth football in Somerset is a positive experience, sadly, over the past few seasons we have seen a decline in behaviour.

We asked young people aged 12-16 this question: **“How do you think coaches & parents could create a positive environment in football?”**

“Parents and coaches shouting can be distracting and rude”

“Coaches should support all players and not badly criticise them”

“Coaches should be more calm”

“Let referees do their job and don't complain”

“Be respectful to the other team and their parents”

“Compliment the players when they do something well”

“Coaches need to give everyone equal time to develop”

Remember: It's all about the children! We want to ensure football is a positive experience for all and create lifelong memories.



How does it work?



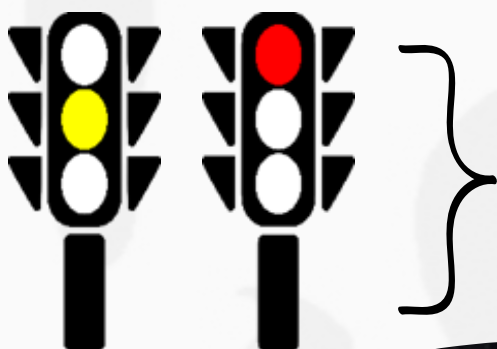
Coaches & Managers, there will be consequences for your behaviour.

The leagues and Somerset FA will receive reports of poor behaviour.

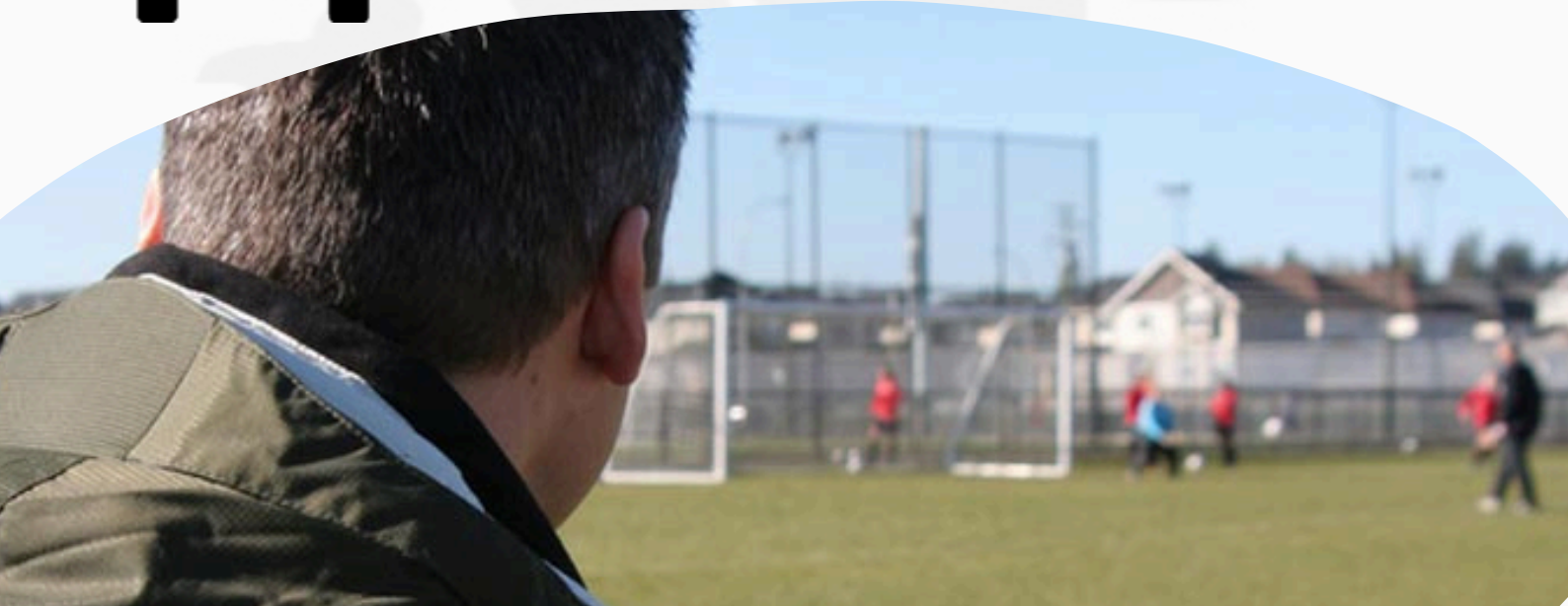
Minor respect issues are dealt with by the league and teams will be moved to amber for a period of 3 months. Any serious incidents (e.g. discrimination) will result in a red status.

If a second incident happens whilst on amber this triggers a red status, OR, any form of referee abuse will move a team straight to red.

Any reports involving discrimination or referee abuse etc sent straight to Somerset FA. Team placed on red pending CFA outcome.



When a team is on amber or red they will be supported by the league and Somerset FA to return to green. Clubs have the right to remove you as a coach if you breach the code of conduct.



How can you help?

The important role of coaches & managers.



Follow the code of conduct:

ROLE MODEL

Remember, your players look up to you for guidance. Use your position to set a positive example for the young people you are responsible for. Be gracious in victory and defeat.

RESPECT

Always respect the match officials, even when you don't agree. Respect the players, spectators and the opposition managers/coaches. **Remember: many match officials are children themselves who are learning the game just like the players.**

BOUNDARIES

Remain behind the touchline and in the designated technical area. Do not stand behind the goal and never enter the field of play unless instructed by the referee.

SUPPORT

Support positively and offer players encouragement, not criticism. Appreciate good play from whatever team it comes from. Remember to promote Fair Play and high standards of behaviour in your players.

SAFETY

Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything else, **including winning**. Ensure all activities you organise are appropriate for the players' ability level, age and maturity.

NEVER...

Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language/behaviour.



Examples of behaviour that will result in your team being put on amber or red:

Shouting negatively at the match officials or the players

Entering the field of play or not staying in the technical area

Engaging in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour

Top Tips for Matchday



Matchday, for many, can be the highlight of the footballing week. Here are some things to keep in mind to ensure your teams remain on green.

Remember, you're a role model. Behave in line with your club values and ethos. Everything you do matters.

Things like your body language and tone of voice can have a big impact on your players. Sometimes, you need to simply take a step back. If you're guilty of constantly giving instructions to your players, try giving them space and the freedom to make independent decisions during the match.

Children will experience matchdays differently. There will be nerves and excitement. Try and let players take the lead whenever you can and give them positive encouragement rather than criticism.

Model the behaviours you want to see in your team.

Involve parents. Discourage them from playing 'coach' by clearly explaining what you're trying to do. Get parents involved in the pre-match conversation so they can cheer on players if they do what you're focusing on that week.

Always respect the match officials and opposition, even if tensions run high. Remember, your players are likely to replicate your emotions so remain calm and think before you speak.

How are we supporting coaches?



In your position, you're likely to be one of the most important role models in a young person's life. Your role in helping children to develop as footballers and young people should never be underestimated. The way you act, the way you behave and the time you commit plays a massive part in their lives. For the countless hours spent travelling between matches, stood on the side lines in the pouring rain, offering advice and guidance, pumping up footballs, putting the nets up, filing reports and so on.

Take a look at some of the strategies we are using to support coaches below:



CODES OF CONDUCT

We are supporting clubs to ensure they have up to date codes of conduct. **Please ensure you sign these as a coach and abide by them at all times.**

COACH CPD

We offer a comprehensive Coach CPD programme for coaches to gain new ideas and network with fellow coaches. This also includes certified hours that contribute towards your UEFA Licenses.

TEAM MEETINGS

Somerset FA will offer support to any teams or clubs wishing to hold a meeting to discuss behaviour or if they have any concerns. We can hold these for all club coaches or parents if required.

MATCHDAY MONITORS

We have a number of anonymous Matchday Monitors who will observe youth games and report back. Referee mentors will also be on hand to report any concerns or poor behaviour.

EDUCATION

There are a number of online courses and articles provided by the FA that can support with creating a positive environment. These can all be found at learn.Englandfootball.com

SPOT CHECKS

League officials regularly spot check games to ensure there is a positive environment for all.

FAQs



Frequently Asked Questions...

Will my behaviour impact on my team?

Yes. Your behaviour will have consequences. Reports of poor behaviour/language from coaches will have a direct impact on the team. If your team is on amber or red, then it is the players that will suffer, but you that is responsible.

What should I do if I witness abusive behaviour/language at a game?

Speak to those involved and if you feel comfortable to do so, call out the behaviour. Report it immediately to your Club Welfare Officer giving precise details of the incident including the date, time, location, details of what was said/done and anyone else who was present and witnessed the incident. You can also contact discipline@somersetfa.com.

What should I do if I witness a referee being abused?

Sadly, referee abuse happens and often leads to referees leaving the game. Remember, more often than not in youth football the referee is a child who is learning. Some seem to think because they are the referee, it is OK to abuse them. It is never acceptable. You can either speak to the person concerned and suggest that the referee is still learning just like the players or make detailed notes and report it to your Club Welfare Officer.

What if someone writes a fake report to deliberately put a team on amber or red?

As with all reports received, we thoroughly investigate with all involved. If a serious report is received we will place a team on red pending an investigation. If it is found to have no substance the team will return to green.

Will the status of any other teams be displayed?

We will not be displaying the status of teams publicly. This information will only be shared with the club involved, the league and Somerset FA.

If another team in my club misbehaves, will this have consequences?

No, the Traffic Light System is team based. Therefore, the actions of one team will not affect any others in the club.

If I make a report about negative behaviour, will I find out what actions are being taken?

If you report an incident to your welfare officer they will investigate and try to resolve the issue. It is not always possible to inform you of any resulting actions however they are there to speak to regarding any concerns you have. Similarly, if the County FA investigate you may be asked to provide a witness statement. Again, it is not always possible to inform parties of the result of any FA Discipline investigations.

What can I do if it is the parents/spectators that are misbehaving?

Parents and spectators are often just as invested as you are in the team. Don't hesitate to involve parents in your discussions with the team so they understand what you are working on and can support your messages with the players on and off the pitch. You can also set out clear expectations of what behaviour is acceptable. If you are struggling with a parents' behaviour, contact your Club Welfare officer who can support you.



If you have a safeguarding concern about a child or young person, contact your Club Welfare Officer in the first instance. Additionally, get in touch at safeguarding@somersetfa.com