

AGW/cw/9776

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TO ALL CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND SECRETARIES

Dear Colleague

FA 'Respect' Programme

You may have seen some reference in the media to a 'Respect' programme which is to be launched by The Football Association for the forthcoming season. This initiative will seek to improve behaviour both on and around the pitch, and, in particular, demonstrate a commitment towards greater respect for match officials. It is being supported by all the agencies in the game including ourselves, the Premier League, the Football Conference, the PFA and the LMA. Further information about the overall programme will be circulated to club chairmen later this week in advance of the pre-season managers meetings when the FA intend outlining details to managers themselves. I will ensure that the circular letter to club chairmen is also copied to Chief Executives and Secretaries, for information.

The reason for writing to you in advance of these announcements, however, is to advise you that as part of the 'Respect' programme, the League has agreed to fall in line with the pre-match 'Fair Play' handshake procedure which has been in evidence at International, European club competition and Premier League matches in recent years. This procedure is intended to symbolically demonstrate the unity of purpose behind the 'Respect' initiative. With effect from the official start of the new League season, all clubs are, therefore, asked to incorporate this 'Fair Play' handshake into their pre-match ceremony in front of their own 'main' stand. This procedure should be implemented for all first team competitive matches – Football League, FA Cup, Carling Cup and (where applicable) Johnstone's Paint Trophy.

Attached are broad guidelines as to how the procedure should be conducted and these are based on the instructions originally issued to Premier League clubs.

However, it may be advisable for clubs to consider rehearsing these arrangements in any pre-season friendly matches you might be planning at home in order to iron-out any teething problems. This would help facilitate the smooth operation of the procedure once the competitive season gets underway and it would also assist in getting players and match officials used to this new pre-match ceremonial.

You will see from the guidelines that these contain diagrams of various tunnel configurations - these are merely intended to be illustrative but are not exhaustive. Arrangements at individual grounds may need to adapt the precise process to local circumstances. However, if you are unsure about how the procedure should operate at your ground then please do not hesitate to contact this office.

I hope this advance notice will assist you in making the appropriate arrangements and, on behalf of the League and all the other agencies involved in the 'Respect' programme, can I thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Andy Williamson" in a cursive style. There are two long, horizontal strokes extending from the bottom of the signature, one under "Andy" and one under "Williamson".

Andy Williamson
Chief Operating Officer

THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Pre-match 'Fair Play' handshake

Guidelines for clubs and match officials

1. Pre-match

Briefing

All clubs and match officials will receive a copy of these guidelines in advance of the season. Until the new pre-match procedures are established it is recommended that a representative from both clubs is designated for a pre-match briefing with the match officials in order that the local operation of these arrangements can be clearly understood following any briefing. The designated club representative will then be required to communicate the appropriate instructions to their respective players.

2. Music/announcements

Theme Music/Enjoy the Match announcement

Clubs may wish to incorporate their own theme music for the entry of the two teams onto the pitch.

Those clubs participating in the 'Enjoy the Match' initiative are asked to consider playing their own club announcement during the actual 'Fair Play' handshake as the two sets of players pass each other. If this announcement is incorporated or a second piece of music is played then there should be a short pause between the players lining-up and the 'walk-past' commencing for the handshake. This pause need only be very brief because it is intended to provide an opportunity to ensure the players are properly lined-up and to safeguard against the process becoming too cursory or rushed.

3. Timings

Approximate timings (3.00 p.m. kick-off)

2.52	Referee to call players
2.55	Players enter field of play side by side and take up position parallel to Main Stand touchline, roughly 10 yards in-field.
	Pause
	Handshake takes place
2.58	Players disperse immediately to kick-in.
	Referee calls captain's together for coin toss, etc.
3.00	Kick-off

4. Formation

Pitch/tunnel configuration

Attached at Appendix A are several examples of tunnel layouts. These are only illustrative and may not match exactly with clubs own configurations.

Arrangements at individual grounds may, therefore, need to be adapted to suit local circumstances.

Handshake formation

The **starting eleven** from both teams together with the three match officials (excluding fourth official) should take part in the handshake.

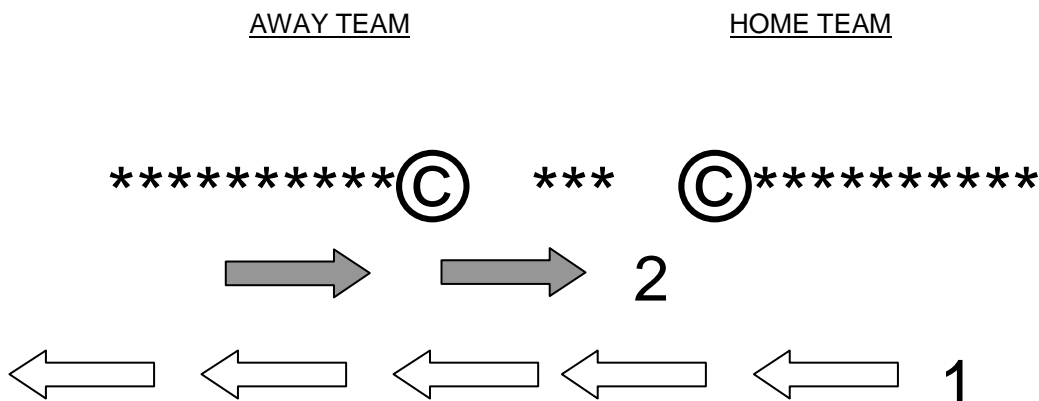
Each team should line up on the same side of the half-way line that they exit the tunnel, with the match officials in the middle.

The **Home** team, led by their captain, then walks to shake hands with the match officials, then the away team's players (see 1 below). Once each Home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player they disperse to their favoured end to kick-in.

Once the last home team player has completed the handshake, the **Away** team then follow their Captain passing in front of the match officials to shake hands (see 2 below) before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.

Once the handshakes have been completed the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

HANDSHAKE FORMATION



N.B. © Captains

Mascots

Any child mascots should remain with the respective captains throughout the procedure walking alongside him during the handshakes but not participating in shaking hands.

Should there be more than one mascot associated to a particular team these should be paired with the next player(s) in line behind the captain. In the event of a mascot with any disability which makes them unable to walk alongside the captain, then the Referee may need to supervise the mascot until he/she can be escorted from the field of play.

5. Referee/Assistant Referees

Only the Referee and the two Assistant Referees should participate in the pre-match ceremony. The Referee and his colleagues should ensure that the teams are ready to enter the field of play in good time allowing sufficient leeway to conclude these arrangements satisfactorily. This should take into account local circumstances. The Referee should also be aware of the formation of the procedure and direct players, if necessary.