

MEMO TO ALL CLUBS

Re: FOOTBALL TOOWOOMBA “ZERO TOLERANCE” FOUL LANGUAGE DIRECTIVE

Introduction

FIFA Laws of the Game – Law 12 (Fouls & Misconduct), “Sending-off Offences”

“A player, substitute or substituted player is [shown the red card] and sent off if he/she [...] uses offensive, insulting and/or abusive language and/or gestures”

While this statement has been a part of the FIFA Laws of the Game for some time now, foul language is once again becoming more prevalent within our game. This sort of behaviour ruins the image of football and is detrimental to the ideals of Football Toowoomba’s RESPECT campaign. It is for these reasons that Football Toowoomba is restating our “Zero Tolerance” foul language directive.

Scope

This directive:

- Applies to all matches operated under the jurisdiction of the Football Toowoomba CA which includes, but is not limited to, both junior and senior regular season competitions.
- Has been distributed to all clubs and referees, and over-rides any previously issued or retracted directives regarding this subject.
- Is not limited to players, but also applies to coaches, managers, team officials, spectators and any other person involved with our game. In instances where the offender is not a player, the offence is to be handled as stated in the FIFA Laws of the Game.
- Is effective immediately.

Definitions

As per the FIFA Laws of the game, “foul language” is to be defined as language which is *offensive, insulting and/or abusive*.

As a part of this directive, when used as described in *Offence* below:

- The words “Cunt” and/or “Fuck” (or their derivatives) are always to be considered offensive, insulting and/or abusive and require mandatory expulsion.
- The word “Shit” (or its derivatives) is strongly advised to be considered offensive, insulting and/or abusive.
- The use of any other words or their derivatives is at the sole discretion of the referee as to whether it is to be considered offensive, insulting and/or abusive.

Offence

For the purpose of this directive, these offences have been categorised into two groups, as follows:

1. **Foul language not directed at any person** – Football Toowoomba understands that in the heat of the moment foul language may be used out of frustration. If, in the opinion of the referee (and after clarifying with his/her Assistants if required), this language is clearly audible on the sideline then the player is to be shown the red card and sent from the field. If, in the opinion of the referee, foul language used in this context is not audible on the sideline, referees have been advised to use common sense and their player management skills to remind the player of this directive. That said however, if, in the opinion of the referee, the player is guilty of Unsporting Behaviour, the referee is to caution the player and show them the yellow card.

2. **Foul language directed at a person** – A player who uses foul language that is directed at, or used in conversation with, any person – whether they are another player (including their own teammates), coach, manager, referee, assistant referee, fourth official, spectator or any other person – is to be shown the red card and sent from the field of play.

Consequences

There will be no change to disciplinary sanctions imposed by Football Toowoomba regarding this offence.

Additionally, Football Toowoomba will take action against individuals and /or clubs where *offensive, insulting and/or abusive* language is used in the context of a game but not necessarily on the field of play. This will cover such behaviours as inappropriate language from spectators and inappropriate club chants, songs and war-cries.