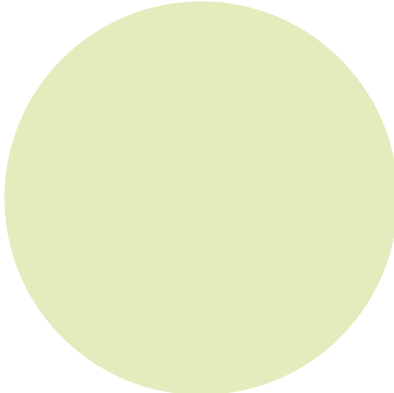




BELIEF IN THE GAME



**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SPIRITUALITY, FAITH AND
FOOTBALL – FOR COUNTY FAS, FAITH COMMUNITIES,
GRASSROOTS AND PROFESSIONAL CLUBS**





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INTRODUCTION

This practical guide aims to explore the way that faith and football work together, illustrating that when delivered inclusively, they can work together for the betterment of the game. Faith and football have been intrinsically linked to each other since the organised game began in the 19th century. Far from being poles apart as many assume, football has been in many cases the instrument by which faith communities have come together regardless of their backgrounds.

With the help of case studies and signposting, this guide aims to inform both football and faith communities on the best utilisation of the beautiful game to achieve common goals.

FOREWORD



“The FA’s Faith and Football Group has proven that there is a passion for football across all religious groups and their various strands and denominations. Football has the power to bring anyone together, no matter what their background. This guide we hope can illustrate that football can be and is being enjoyed by increasing numbers and different sections of faith communities. We hope that it assists in bringing more people from diverse backgrounds to join us in our shared passion for the beautiful game of football.”

Alex Goldberg

Rabbi, Chaplain & Chair of The FA’s
Faith and Football Group

FOREWORD

“The FA has an ethos of football for everyone; this covers both every background from our society and every belief. Football can open new avenues to faith communities and by the same token faith can enrich football. Whether we are looking to develop football within particular faith communities or bring communities together through football, this work can be nothing but beneficial. Through the FA Inclusion Advisory Board we hope to weave this positive more widely into the fabric of the grassroots game.”

Heather Rabbatts

Inclusion Advisory Board Chair, The Football Association

THE HISTORY OF FAITH IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL

Within the culture and dynamics of football today, you would be forgiven for thinking that faith and faith communities were far removed from the beautiful game. History would point to the opposite, as many English football clubs were founded by local faith communities. Football has often been an integral part the development of local communities and their integration with mainstream society. See below some of the key dates to note:

1800s

1874

Bolton Wanderers FC

The Reverend Thomas Ogden founded the Christ Church Football Club run from the church of the same name. The Catholic club changed name to Bolton Wanderers in 1877 and was one of 12 founder members of the Football League in 1888



1878

Everton FC

In 1878 The St Domingo Methodist Church Sunday School football team played its first match in Stanley Park. After this the successful club implemented a name change to Everton in November 1879



1919

St George's Settlement

In 1919 The St George's Settlement Synagogue was founded in the East End of London for the local Jewish community. The only synagogue at the time linked to Liberal and Reform Judaism excelled in sports including football

1900s

1966

Punjabi FC

Punjabi United FC formed in 1966, one of the first Sikh based football clubs. This club formed the basis of the Punjabi Wolves, generally recognised as the largest organised group of ethnic football club supporters in the world.



2012

FIFA hijab ban

In 2012, The FA led an appeal against the FIFA ban on Muslim women wearing the hijab (headscarf) whilst playing football. The appeal was successful and all religious head coverings deemed safe are now allowed on the field of play.

2000s



1937

Maccabi GB

Maccabi GB, the Jewish sports and social Charity was founded in 1937 as a response to many Jews being excluded from mainstream sport. Its first football fixtures were played in the Southern League in 1957



2012

Association of Muslim Footballers

Nathan Ellington, an ex-professional player and Muslim revert, helped found the Association of Muslim Footballers (AMF) in 2012, a support network for professional Muslim players

FAITH AND THE RULES OF FOOTBALL

So that football is open to all communities and faiths, it must be flexible and accessible to their needs. Below are the rules of the game most relevant to faith communities:

To see 'The Laws of the Game' as set out by FIFA, please [click here](#).

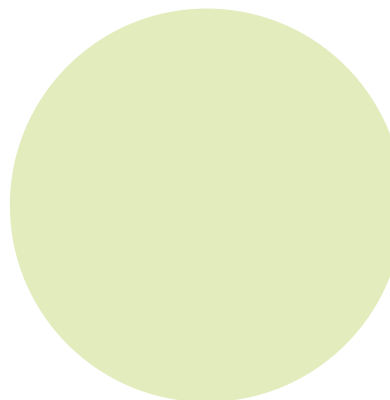
As part of The Football Association's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all to participate in football, Rule B5 was amended in 2005 in order to include all religions:

RULE B5 FOOTBALL AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

(a) A Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant:

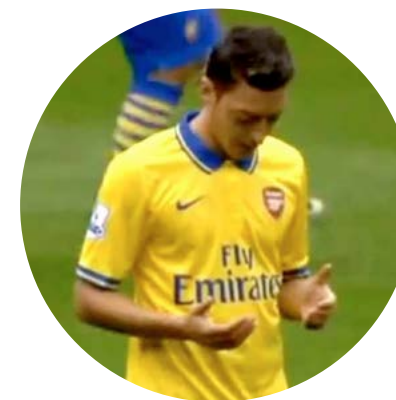
- (i) has consented to do so on such occasions; or
 - ii) is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract.
- (b) Annually, when planning programmes, Competitions shall define and notify agreed dates of such occasions.

Some common examples of Rule B5 in practice are below:



A grassroots league fixture which falls during Ramadan

Under the above rules any fixtures that fall within Ramadan (or on any other faith's time of observance) can be played either after sunset or after Eid (the celebration at the end of Ramadan). Different Muslims will have different interpretations and observance of Islam and therefore it is always advisable to consult with anyone affected by these changes in advance. The Islamic calendar is slightly different to the Western calendar and typically Ramadan falls 11 days earlier each year.



A youth club's fixtures falling on a Friday night or Saturday morning

Jews observe the Sabbath from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Under Rule B5, if so requested by that community, any club or league would be obliged to move those fixtures to a more convenient time for anyone observing the Sabbath.

CLOTHING

What players wear on the pitch is governed by FIFA. But what happens when a player wants to express their religious observance whilst still enjoying the beautiful game? Below are the laws that are relevant and some frequently-asked questions on this subject:

FIFA LAW 4

The Players' Equipment

Players are required to wear the following separate items:

- A jersey or shirt – if undergarments are worn, the colour of the sleeve should be the same main colour as the sleeve of the jersey or shirt
- Shorts – if undershorts are worn, they are of the same main colour as the shorts
- Stockings
- Shinguards
- Footwear

Religious jewellery (taken from '[The Laws of The Game](#)')

(1) Safety

Referees should ensure that players do not wear articles which may constitute a danger to other players or to themselves. Referees should set a good example by removing their own rings and jewellery.

Referees, however, should make allowances for religious

symbols (e.g. a player of the Sikh religion wearing a Kara in a match), provided that they are not dangerous and that adequate covering be applied as protection.

The Equality Act 2010, the legal context

Under The Equality Act, 2010, many organisations, clubs and leagues will now have an obligation to operate in an inclusive and non-discriminatory way. The Equality Act covers all areas of diversity or 'protected characteristics' as they are known, these are:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Faith or belief
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy
- Marital status

For more information and guidance on the Equality Act, [click here](#)





FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO RULES, FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

1. Can I wear a hijab (Muslim headscarf) when I play football?

Yes you can, as long as it is deemed safe by the Referee. In a recent case brought to FIFA by The Football Association, it was shown that it was safe and appropriate for women to be able to observe their faith whilst playing football wearing a Hijab or headscarf, and that specific sport Hijabs were not a health and safety issue during a game. This had been the policy of The Football Association in England for several years.

2. Can I wear a kippah/yarmulke (Jewish skull cap) whilst playing football?

Like the wearing of the Hijab for women, in February 2014 all religious head coverings have been officially approved on the field of play by FIFA. This is of course subject to the referee deeming them safe.

3. How do professional players deal with Ramadan?

Professional players deal with Ramadan in a number of different ways as they, like everyone else, have different interpretations and observances of their faith. Some Muslims will choose not to fast at all because of their profession and because they believe they have a responsibility under their faith to honour any contract they have signed. Some players though will fast throughout Ramadan regardless. One popular strategy undertaken by many players is to fast on training days

(often training near or after sunset) and not to fast on match days, choosing to make these days up after Ramadan has ended.

4. A local Church league advertised for players but I'm not Christian, can I still play?

Yes you can, it is illegal for teams or clubs to advertise in a discriminatory way that excludes people because of their faith (apart from under certain exemptions within The Equality Act 2010). Many leagues have historically grown from religious communities but this does not mean they aren't welcoming to others. It may just be the historical name of the league. A religious establishment such as a Church or Mosque will often see football as a way or re-connecting with younger people on their own terms but this doesn't necessarily mean they won't welcome others. The best way forward is always to speak to the organisers.

5. I'm a Muslim woman/man and want to play football, but don't want to wear shorts like the professionals, what can I do?

The Rules of The Game allow players to be modest in their dress, in line with their religious beliefs. This means you can wear tights or a tracksuit bottom underneath your shorts, a long sleeve t-shirt underneath your top or a Hijab over your head, as long as the shirt, shorts and socks you wear over them are in the correct colours. The leggings, shirt and Hijab will need to be deemed safe and be the same main colour as the shorts and shirt.

6. A player of the Sikh faith enters the field of play wearing a kara or steel bangle, one of the required 5 K's of Sikhism, likewise a Hindu player wearing the rakhi (a cotton bracelet signifying the love between a brother and sister). Are they allowed to play?

Yes, but only if the referee deems it safe. Jewellery, religious or not, is strictly speaking not allowed on the football pitch. Referees though are encouraged to be flexible and pragmatic where possible and allow religious jewellery such as the Sikh kara (steel bangle) or Hindu rakhi (small cotton bracelet) if, and only if the referee deems it safe. Safety will always take priority in these situations. One pragmatic solution could be to wear a small kara or rakhi underneath a wrist sweatband.

7. A Jewish player has requested the day off as he feels extremely uncomfortable playing football on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. What do I do?

Most religions have festivals. Jewish Festivals and Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday until dusk) are considered day of rest, and for observant Jews specific work is forbidden. The 'Laws of the Game' state: "a Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant has consented to do so on such occasions; or is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent

to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract."

There is different level of observance across all communities but the vast majority mark the Yom Kippur/ Day of Atonement. In recent years, Avram Grant at Chelsea / West Ham and Itay Schechter at Swansea asked for leave on that day and were supported by the club in doing this.

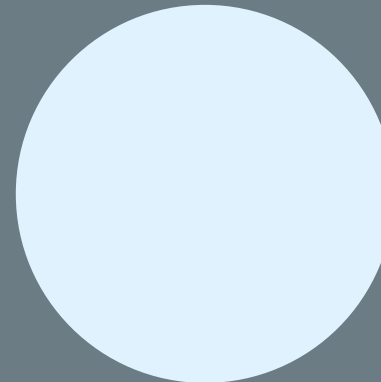
8. Three Hindu members of my team have mentioned that they have a special diet but they all appear to be different. I am not sure what I have to do and want to accommodate them. What should I do?

Many religions have dietary laws. Hinduism is no exception (Judaism, Jainism and Islam all have strict dietary laws). There are different paths of Hinduism so different adherents may follow different paths. Also across all religions there are different levels of observance. Some Hindus are vegetarians whilst others will eat meat (but not beef). It is not uncommon for Orthodox Vaishnav Hindus to follow a vegetarian diet, which excludes Onion and Garlic. The best practise is to ask players and staff their dietary needs and not assume just because one person will accept the menu on offer that all from his or her faith accept the same sort of food. In accommodating genuine needs you will ensure a fit, healthy and happier team.



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FOOTBALL'S FAITH WORKFORCE





ISLAM

Name: Rimla Akhtar

Area: Football Development

Role: Chair of The Muslim Women's Sports Foundation and member of The FA Council and FA Inclusion Advisory Board

Faith: Islam

"The way we in the football world work with religious commitments has a great impact on the experience that Muslims have of the game we love. The flexibility that I've been shown in this regard has been vital in my journey in football. I have played football for as long as I can remember and have been in and around the game for over 10 years and I knew from day one this was my true vocation. Far from being at odds with my spirituality, football is a way I feel I can express myself and be myself." – Rimla Akhtar

ISLAM FACTS

Beliefs: Islam, literally, means to submit. Muslims believe that Islam was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, directly from God. Muslims laws and lifestyle are based on their holy book the Qur'an, and the 'Sunnah', which is the practical example of Prophet Muhammad. Muslims believe that there are five basic 'pillars' of Islam, which are a declaration of faith (Shahadah), praying five times a day (Salah), giving money to charity (Zakat), fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawn) and travelling on the 'Hajj' pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime. There are two main branches of Islam, Sunni and Shia, Sunni making up around 90% of the world's Muslims, and Shi'a most of the remaining 10%.*

Population: It is estimated that over 1.6 billion people or about 25% of the world's population are Muslim. In the UK there are almost 3 million Muslims or close to 5% of the population, the second largest faith group.*

Religious practices: Many Muslims pray five times per day and will visit a congregational Friday prayer called 'Jummah'. Muslims will not drink alcohol and will not eat pork or meat that is not 'Halal' or 'permitted' (slaughtered in the name of God). Observance and practice is down to personal interpretation.

Holy days: There are 30 days of consecutive fasting during the month of Ramadan. There are also the celebrations of Eid-al-Fitr (at the end of Ramadan) and Eid-al-Adha (during the Hajj); Eid is the third of the five days of Hajj.

For more details of Ramadan please refer to The FAs [Ramadan and football factsheet](#).

Other Muslims in football:
Former Arsenal player **Abou Diaby**

"I play professional football and am a practising Muslim and have been throughout my life. I have not found any barriers to practising the two at once; in fact they complement each other in my view"



Adil Nabi
England U21 player and 1st team squad at West Bromwich Albion

* Source: www.pewresearch.org



JUDAISM

Name: Dean Furman,
player, Oldham Athletic FC

Faith: Judaism

“I’m South African and the Jewish community here is even smaller than there. Although I’m usually the only Jewish person either in my team my faith has never been any barrier to me. I find that sport and especially football is a great leveller where whatever your differences, they are all thrown to one side in the name of sport. Being the only Jew has made me somewhat of a curiosity and I have seen this as an opportunity to educate people about Judaism and people really are eager to learn.” – Dean Furman

JUDAISM FACTS

Origins: Judaism originated in the Middle East more than 3,500 years ago and was founded by Moses, a Jewish prophet who is thought to have written the Jewish Holy book, the Torah. Jews trace their history back to the prophet Abraham who is prominent in Christianity and Islam too.*

Beliefs: Jews believe that there is only one God with whom they have a covenant and the nature of the relationship between God and humanity and God and the Jewish people is recorded in scripture. Judaism has a rich history of religious text, but the central and most important religious document is the Torah. Jewish people believe that the Torah containing God’s laws was revealed and gifted to them about 3500 years ago at Mount Sinai. Jewish people are called to keep these laws (written and oral) and try to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives.*

Population: There are about 13 million Jewish people in the world, most residing in the USA and Israel. There are about 300,000 Jews in the UK.

Religious practices/Holy days: The most important month in the Jewish calendar occurs in Tishri, in

September/October). Festivals in this month include Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (the day of Atonement) and Succot. Passover (Pesach), marking the story of the Exodus is a major spring festival and is a time where Jewish families usually come together. Shavuot is the major summer festival. For more details of Tishri please see The FAs Tishri and Football Factsheet which can be found [here](#)

Other Jews in football:

Former Chelsea manager **Avram Grant**
Yael Averbuch, USA International player

Writer, broadcaster and creator of ‘The Y word’ David Baddiel:

“I consider myself Jewish although I wouldn’t say I’m particularly practising. I support more than I play and the atmosphere inside Stadiums and the anti-Semitic comments you used to hear are becoming rarer. Football is going in the right direction.”

To see the Y word short film, [click here](#)

* For more information on Judaism see the BBC website here www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/



CHRISTIAN

Name: Matt Baker

Role: Pastoral Support
Director in English Football
for Sports Chaplaincy UK

Faith: Christian

“Initially I trained and qualified as a solicitor but gradually realised that my calling lay in full time Christian ministry and so I went to Bible college and then led a church for a number of years. During this time I was invited to become chaplain to Charlton Athletic and have remained their chaplain for 15 years. I now work for Sports Chaplaincy UK in overseeing chaplaincy in English football where currently 75% of the clubs in the top four divisions have chaplains.” – Matt Baker

CHRISTIANITY FACTS

Origins: Christianity shares its origins and early history with Judaism. It began in 1st century Galilee with Jesus whom Christians believe to be the Son of God, fully divine and fully human.

Beliefs: Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Its followers believing that there is only one God, comprising three distinct persons which make up the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. The most important religious book for Christians is the Bible. The Bible is made up of the Old Testament which prophesies the coming of the Messiah and the New Testament detailing Jesus, whom Christians believe to be the Messiah, coming into the world and how the early Church then follows Him.

Population: Around 30% of the world is Christian at 2.2 billion people. In the UK it's around 60% at around 33 million.**

Religious practices/Holy Days: The main Holy Days for Christians in England are Christmas and Easter which, as England is a predominantly Christian country, are also public holidays. Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Easter Sunday is the day when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ

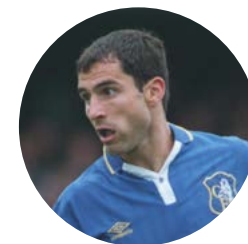
from the dead after His crucifixion on Good Friday two days before. Most Christians attend worship services at church on Sundays, which generally include singing, prayer and a sermon. Most churches have a special ritual for ordination, or designating a person fit for a leadership position in the church. At home, most practicing Christians pray regularly and many read the Bible.*

Well-known footballing Christians:

Pastor/former player, **Cyrille Regis**

West Bromwich Albion Manager, **Tony Pulis**

“Football was my life until I found God. Now I have found my vocation as a minister, football presents me with new opportunities all the time. My previous life as a footballer helps me shine a light on what I feel Christianity offers people and makes them more likely to listen.”



Gavin Peacock

Former Chelsea player and pastor

* Source: BBC website ** Source: www.pewresearch.org



HINDUISM

Name: Sheena Hirani
Role: Grassroots coach,
 London
Faith: Hindu

“I played football within my community’s female teams for a few years but ideally wanted to go further. “I qualified as a coach to encourage and inspire more Asian females to get involved in football. My community was very supportive, far from the stereotype you see portrayed of Asian communities in the media. Because of the appetite within my community for football, there has never been any problem for me”
 – Sheena Hirani

HINDUISM FACTS

Origins: Hinduism originated in India over 4,000 years ago. Many of the original Hindu communities settled near the Indus River in the Punjab, which is where the word Hindu comes from. *

Beliefs: It is a mixture of several beliefs but central to the faith is the supreme God, Brahman, the Universal soul which is found in everything. Hindus believe that life is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth and that every action has an effect and a cause, Karma. *

Population: There are around 900 million Hindus worldwide with around 800,000 in the UK. *

Religious practices and Holy days: Many Hindus are vegetarian as they are governed by the concept of Ahimsa which avoids harm suffering and violence. A Hindu vegetarian diet includes milk and milk products but does not include meat, fish or eggs. Cheese is acceptable so long as the rennet used is vegetarian. Each individual practices this to different degrees. Even the most secular Hindus will avoid eating Beef. The main Hindu festivals are Holi, Shivaratri, Ramnavani,

Janamashtai, Dusserah, Diwali and Navratri. Many fast during the Holy month of Shravan which is often in August. Fasting within Hinduism lasts a 24 hour period and is flexible as to how often they happen or how strict they are. The dates of these events are determined by the lunar calendar so change annually. To find out when they are next see The FAs [Religious calendar](#)

Footballing Hindu:



Vikash Dhorasoo
 Former French
 international

* Source: BBC website



SIKHISM

Bhupinder Aulak
Role: Sports Therapist,
Birmingham County FA
Faith: Sikh

"I have worked across all areas of society, the NHS and different sports. Football has always been my favourite area and I'm glad of the chance to work here. Although I'm a practising Sikh this has never been an issue for me in football and when dealing with the Sikh community, within which football is very popular, it has often been an advantage."

– Bhupinder Aulak

SIKHISM FACTS

Origins: Sikhism was founded in the 16th century in the Punjab district of what is now India and Pakistan. It was founded by Guru Nanak and is based on his teachings, and those of the nine living Sikh gurus who followed him. The tenth Sikh Guru decreed that after his death the spiritual guide of the Sikhs would be the teachings contained in the Sikh scriptures, so the Guru Granth Sahib now has the status of a Guru, and Sikhs show it the respect they would give to a human Guru. About 10% of Sikhs belong to the Khalsa, or the community of men and women who have undergone a specific initiation within the faith and whose observances are stricter than most other Sikhs.*

Some Sikhs keep long uncut hair, including men and women, as part of the five articles of faith known as the five Ks. Almost all Sikhs keep at least one of the five Ks, such as the kara (steel bangle), but Khalsa Sikhs keep all five of them at all times on their person.

Beliefs: The most important thing in Sikhism is the internal religious state of the individual; Sikhism is a monotheistic religion and stresses the importance of doing good actions rather than merely carrying out rituals. Sikhs also respect all other religions as equally valid.*

* Source: BBC website

Population: There are around 20 million Sikhs in the world, most of whom live in the Punjab in Northern India. The 2011 census recorded 420,000 Sikhs in England and 3,000 in Wales.

Religious practices and Holy days: The Sikh place of worship is called a Gurdwara. The Sikh scripture is the Guru Granth Sahib and they are respected by Sikhs as the guru or living teacher. There is no priesthood system. Vaisakhi (or Baisaikh) on the 13th April is the Sikh New Year and the most important date of the year. Diwali (also known as Bandi Chor Divas to Sikhs) falls on the 23rd October in 2014 and is celebrated by Sikhs, Hindus and Jains. The Guru Nanak's Birthday is another important date which will be on November 25 in 2015.*

Well known Sikhs:

Permi Jhooti was one of the first professional Asian female players and the subject of the film Bend it Like Beckham

Aman Dosanjh was the first South-East Asian to represent England

Pav Singh has been a successful player and coach and now works with Academy players at Leeds United



BUDDHISM

Name: Ji So-Yun

Role: Chelsea and South Korea, player

Faith: Buddhist

“Buddhism is the majority religion in Korea but I have found that through football I can find common ground with anyone, so there has been no problem with me moving to play in England” (to be approved) – Ji So-Yun

BUDDHISM FACTS

Origins: The two largest sects of Buddhism are Theravada Buddhism, which is most popular in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Burma (Myanmar), and Mahayana Buddhism, which is strongest in Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia.*

Beliefs: Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists seek to reach a state of nirvana, following the path of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, who went on a quest for Enlightenment around the sixth century BC. There is no belief in a personal God. Buddhists believe that nothing is fixed or permanent and that change is always possible. The path to Enlightenment is through the practice and development of morality, meditation and wisdom.*

Population: Buddhism has 376 million followers worldwide with 250,000 in the UK, around 0.5% of the population.**

Religious practices and Holy days: This most important Buddhist festival is known as either Wesak or Buddha Day, and is celebrated on the full moon of the lunar month of Vesakha, usually in May or early June.

Well-known footballing Buddhists:



Roberto Baggio
Former Italian international



Park Ji-Sung
Former South Korean and Manchester United player

* Source: BBC website ** Source: The UK census



RASTAFARIANISM

Name: Anthony L. Ferguson

Role: UEFA A License coach and coach mentor, London

Faith: Multiple - Rastafarian / Christian

“My family roots are in Jamaica and I’ve been around Rastafarianism throughout my life. What most people don’t realise is that Rastafarianism isn’t a religion; it’s a mind-set and way of life. It’s more about acquiring knowledge through research and reasoning, being comfortable with self, others, nature and living off the land. I have been coaching now for over 20 years at various levels. Far from being at odds with my spirituality, football is a way I can express myself and be myself. I don’t eat particular foods such as pork or seafood, which is part of the Rastafarian way of life. This part of the lifestyle I think really supports my football and promotes healthy well-being.” – Anthony L. Ferguson

RASTAFARIANISM FACTS

Terms: Rastafarians may refer to themselves as Rasta’s, Sufferers, Locksmen or Dreads.

Beliefs and population: Rastafarians believe in the Judeo-Christian God, whom they call Jah. Rastafarians do not believe in an afterlife but instead look to Africa or ‘Zion’ as a heaven on earth. True Rastas are believed to be immortal, both physically and spiritually, a concept called ‘everliving’. An important Rastafarian concept is ‘I and I’, which is said instead of ‘you and I’. It emphasizes the oneness between humanity and God as well as the equality of all humans.

Population: There are about one million Rastafarians worldwide

Religious practices and Holy days: Rastas follow strict dietary laws such as abstaining from alcohol and meat,

especially pork and often inhale marijuana to increase spiritual awareness. They are forbidden from cutting their hair, but instead often twist it into dreadlocks.

Well-known Rastafarians:



Bob Marley

The late musician and artist



Kenwynne Jones

Player at Stoke City FC

5

CASE STUDIES IN FAITH AND FOOTBALL



CASE STUDY: THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (FA)

Due to the popularity of football across all faiths, The Football Association has an even more important role to play. A governing body has a myriad of communication channels at its disposal and as such a much wider network to send out positive faith messages. Here is what The FA have delivered

Contemplation room at Wembley Stadium

The FA recognised the needs of both staff and supporters visiting Wembley Stadium to be able to practice their faith or spirituality whilst also working in or enjoying football. When the new stadium was built a specific contemplation or prayer room was allocated and signposted to those who wish somewhere of sanctuary and peace at some point in their day.

The Faith School Linking Project

The FA has hosted a Faith School Linking Project at Wembley Stadium for several years. In partnership with Brent Council and using Wembley Stadium as the backdrop The FA brought together four faith schools (Jewish, Muslim, Catholic and Hindu) for one day per school term to get involved in inter-faith workshops and football. As the project progressed the workshops and football become more advanced and finished off with joint presentations to parents and teachers from all schools involved. The success of the project has led to several schools establishing permanent links with schools from other faiths.





FA Faith Calendar/Fact sheet

The FA annually produces a faith calendar highlighting all of the key faith dates across all religions as well as details of how this could affect football. The calendar is produced as an online resource and is distributed to all leagues and County Football Associations. Click [here](#) to see the calendar and feel free to forward it to others

Twitter

The FA has a Twitter following of over one million people and regularly tweet messages of support on specific religious dates, after consultation with specific faith groups.

FA Faith and Football Advisory Group

The FA administers a voluntary Faith and Football Advisory Group to advise and consult around matters of faith, especially pertaining to matters of football development and policy development. The group represents all of the major faith groups as well as inter-faith organisations and helps to bring the FA opinions that sit outside of the football family.

Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia taskforce

In 2010 John Mann MP headed up an FA taskforce on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. That taskforce was made up of people from all parties, faiths, football and the community produced a report that would inform this area of work. The report came to several conclusions which the FA and other football authorities are now working towards through English Football's Inclusion & Anti-Discrimination Plan. The plan includes:

- [Suggestions to reduce offensive chanting at professional grounds and deal more firmly with transgressors;](#)
- [An increase in funding for BAME and inter-faith football;](#)
- [Better representation in local football from minority ethnic volunteers;](#)
- [Better engagement from professional clubs with diverse local communities.](#)

CASE STUDY: A PLACE OF WORSHIP – GRAVESEND GURDWARA

Gravesend Gurdwara is one of the largest Sikh Temples in Europe, holding up to 1,200 worshippers at any time. The Gurdwara has a history of community sport with Guru Nanak FC and a Kabbadi team as associated clubs for over four decades. Two step five football pitches are housed on-site at the temple with free food and hospitality given to all teams visiting from local leagues. This working temple is a great example of how organised sport and religious worship can and does work hand in hand.

GNG FC CHAIR TONY RANA

‘Raise Your Game’

In 2012 the Gurdwara joined forces with Kick It Out, footballs equality and inclusion campaign to deliver a Raise Your Game event. The event was looking to provide mentoring opportunities for diverse young people, especially from the local Asian community accessing the temple, who wishes to pursue a career in the football industry. Kick It Out, in partnership with the Gurdwara and Kent County FA arranged for a number of ‘mentors’ to be there on the day to

give advice on progressing in the game, including in coaching, refereeing, playing and the administration of the game. From an inter-faith perspective students from a sixth form football and education course in Luton were invited to take part. The students, who were predominantly Muslim, had never been to a Gurdwara before and the event also helped to breakdown significant cultural barriers.

Sprinkling some stardust onto the event was UEFA Pro License holder and current Burnley FC manager Sean Dyche. Dyche, who said: “Education is key for coaches,



especially at grassroots level. The game is an open environment, with people of all cultures accepted as one. As a coach I want to be able to adapt and cater for the wants and needs of players. I've benefitted from this experience."

How can we run our own version of 'Raise Your Game'?

The concept of 'Raise Your Game' is a very simple one, a little bit like speed dating. You bring together people who wish to become referees or progress in refereeing or other areas of football with those that have already made that journey.



The Gravesend Gurdwara

Here are a few tips to help you make your event a success:

- Speak to key community contacts about where and when to run the event and who the key people to invite are, use your IAG to help;
The Gravesend Gurdwara
- Use a hook to draw people to the event like inviting an ex professional referee/player or hold it at a professional club;
- Ask Kick It Out for their advice in planning and marketing the event or ask them to be a partner;
- Audit your refereeing workforce data to identify where the gaps in provision are and target those groups;
- Contact local schools, colleges, community centres or diverse clubs for eager participants;
- Once the event is set up, plan your communications carefully, many groups are called 'hard to reach' because they often are.

CASE STUDY – A PROFESSIONAL CLUB

THE ‘HEADSCARVES TO FOOTBALL SCARVES’ PROJECT

Participants of the project at Wembley

The ‘Headscarves to Football Scarves’ Project is the brainchild of National Asians in Football forum Chair Butch Fazal, a grassroots coach and teacher from Luton. The project started off in Luton where over 100 Muslim women from the Parkah community, most of whom wear the hijab (headscarf worn for modesty), were supported by Luton Town FC to attend a professional game at Kenilworth Road. This was a new experience as many of the girls had never been to a professional football club before.

Fazal said: “The initiative is about raising awareness of the lack of South Asian and Muslim females in football and not

just watching Premier League games but involvement across the whole game. Ultimately these are the mothers of the next generation of Asian Muslims and if they can lift the stigma attached to football held by many faith communities, not just Muslims, then the future will look more unified.”

Men and women from the same community were then supported to attend England games at Wembley through The FA and finally at The Emirates Stadium through Arsenal FC.

Arsenal Chief Executive Ivan Gazidis, said: “The ‘Arsenal for Everyone’ campaign underlines our ongoing commitment to diversity. I am delighted that we welcomed ‘From Headscarves to Football Scarves’ to join up with a cross section of our Arsenal family.”



CASE STUDIES: CREATING COMMUNITY COHESION

Football has been embedded within most faith communities for decades and there are many good examples of where faiths have used football to bring their communities together, here are a few of them

Maccabi GB

Maccabi GB is the sports arm of the Maccabi Jewish Community Charity. Set up as a direct response to the Anti-Semitic rules of decades gone by the charity has gone from strength to strength, delicately balancing young people's enthusiasm for competitive sport with the Jewish notion of Rachmanus or compassion. Maccabi oversee close to 30,000 people participating in sport with football being the most popular.

Khalsa football Federation

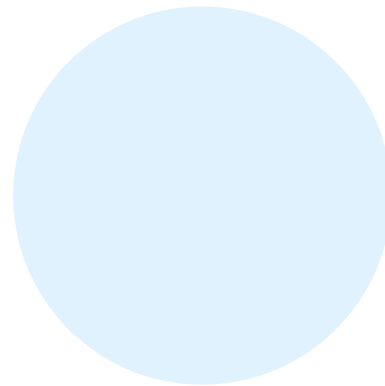
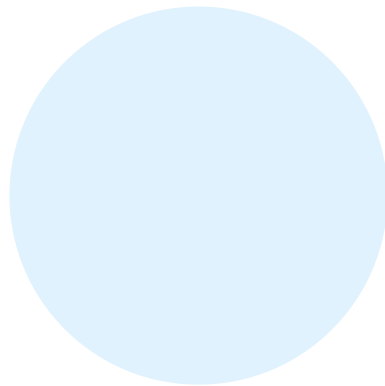
The Khalsa Football Federation was set-up in the mid-70s to provide Asian and predominantly Sikh football teams in England a platform to compete competitively at grass roots level. It is a not-for-profit organisation that has been sponsored over the years by local Sikh Gurdwaras and businesses. The Federation is affiliated with the Birmingham County Football Association and its membership is in the form of affiliated clubs from all parts of the UK. This established and non-exclusive network of Sikh teams is now more reflective of the towns and cities they are active in.

Khuddam

Khuddam is the name of the UK Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA), providing sporting opportunities for Ahmadiyya Muslims in the UK since the 1930s. Every summer Khuddam co-ordinates a national football tournament to bring young Ahmadiyyas from around the country together

BAPS Mandir – Neasden Temple

The Hindu Temple that uses the world famous Neasden Temple (the largest Hindu Temple outside India) has a thriving youth organisation with runs several football coaching programmes and tournaments. The main summer tournament engaging between 500-1,000 people from around the country.



REPORTING FAITH DISCRIMINATION AND ABUSE

As with all areas of diversity, discrimination against people on the basis of their faith is not only a barrier to participation and inter-faith dialogue, but often a criminal offence. Kick It Out (KIO) stated that more than 20% of the complaints of discrimination it handles are faith-based. Football's authorities have made this a priority area of their inclusion work through English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Plan 2013-17. Two of the plan's four priority areas are 'Clarifying Anti-Discrimination Regulations' and 'Sanctions and Instilling Confidence in Reporting Discrimination'.

The FA has set up disciplinary panels to make sure that all cases of discrimination are dealt with appropriately.

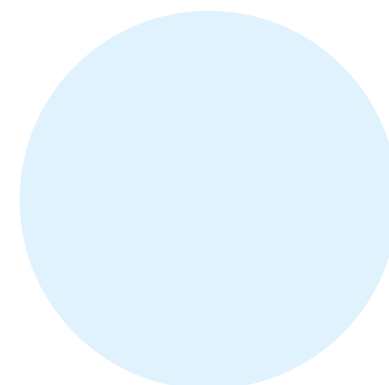
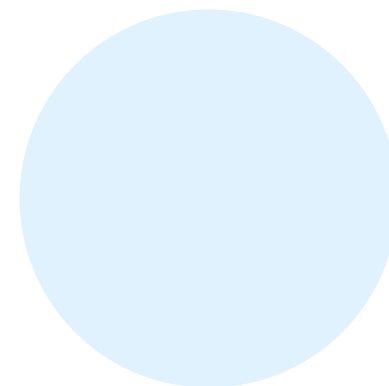
KIO has set up reporting as one of its key activities to combat discrimination in the game. To support this, it has launched a free smartphone App to enable people to report discrimination quickly, easily and subtly from any location. To download this App please go to the iTunes store. The App is also available for Android.

Faith, football and Inclusion

With more than seven million people regularly playing football in England, faith has an important place within the beautiful game. And within such a large football community, people of faith themselves are diverse, whether because of their race/ ethnicity, sexual

orientation/ gender identity, sex, age or because they have a disability. All faiths approach and interpret this diversity in different ways – attitudes towards traditional gender roles and sexual orientation, or historical non-integration of some ethnic groups, for example, can sometimes cause conflict within a game as diverse as football. However, The Football Association and all major faiths are fully committed to making sure that everyone, regardless of their background, can enjoy participating in football in different ways, using faith as a vehicle to bring people together.

For more information about Kick It Out's work
contact info@Kickitout.org



PRACTICAL OUTREACH ADVICE (FOR CFAS, GRASSROOTS AND PROFESSIONAL CLUBS)

ADVICE FOR PROFESSIONAL CLUBS

Faith and football are important parts of people's lives, but for all of their similarities rarely cross-over. Currently there is a momentum across the game to be more inclusive and to help faith and football come together. This section suggests ways in which you can make football a more attractive place to local faith groups, whether you are a club, County Football Association or professional club.

Do your research

Identifying who your local faith communities are, where they are and what activities they are already involved in should shape your offer to them. Some will have no experience of football and may only be interested in it as a way of engaging their young people. Some may already have established teams.

Here are some organisations you might want to contact to find out more:

- Inter Faith Network
www.interfaith.org.uk
- Sports Chaplaincy UK
www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk
- Kick It Out
www.kickitout.org
- Sporting Equals
www.sportingequals.org.uk/
- The 3-Faith Forum
www.3FF.org.uk

Reach out

Engaging with communities in the right way is key to building long-term relationships. Different people

communicate in different ways. The key to getting this right is dialogue. Making personal contact in the first instance and building relationships and understanding will always be the foundation of a successful project. Here are a few ways you can reach out:

- Offer communities free escorted tickets to a game, include a tour so they have an understanding and link to the club and its history;
- Arrange a player visit to a community centre or place of worship – not only will this enthuse the young people of that community but it will also be a learning curve for players;
- Invite some key community leaders to a game within your hospitality suites. An informal chat can help break down barriers.



Suggested activities

Each community will have its own needs, wants and dynamics but here are a few activities that have worked well for clubs in the past:

1. Offer free use of club facilities on a key religious festival like Eid, Yom Kippur or Diwali ([Click here](#) to see The FA's faith calendar). This first positive introduction at such important times will be appreciated. Over the longer term if communities hire facilities and catering during quiet times this can help the club financially.
2. Discuss the footballing needs of people within the community and offer to send a community coach to deliver some taster sessions. Having the club badge seen within this environment will help the clubs brand.
3. Tweet greetings on important faith dates like Diwali (11 November in 2015), Eid (17 July in 2015) and over Tishri (Sept/Oct in 2015). These simple messages can reach far and wide and reflect well on the club as well as raising awareness of other supporters.
4. Through The FA, host the 'Faith School Linking Project' which was successfully run at Wembley. The FA will provide support in the first year to help it work for your club ([See page 15 for more details](#)).

The Equality Standard for professional clubs

Almost all Premier League clubs have achieved the Equality Standard and many Football League clubs are following suit. If you would like more advice about how any faith focused work might count



towards this please contact Kick It Out [here](#)

ADVICE FOR GRASSROOTS CLUBS

Do your research

Grassroots clubs such as FA Charter Standard clubs are much more likely to work with faith groups in their immediate vicinity. Speaking to either players in your team, parents or other local people will be your best way of uncovering potential opportunities for both local players and support.

If you don't have any links to those local faith communities then there will be other local people who might be able to help, for example:

- [Local faith leaders such as Imams, Priests, Rabbis or Sikh or Hindu community leaders;](#)
- [Inter-Faith Network;](#)
- [The Federation of Stadium Communities;](#)
- [The PFA;](#)
- [Sports Chaplaincy UK.](#)

More players and volunteers

One of the threats to all grassroots clubs is a lack of volunteers. Engaging with a faith community correctly could generate many positives from that community. Even if the standard of play and ages are very different to your club's, sharing facilities and costs can help to sustain clubs as well as educate them.

Reach out

1. [Engaging with communities in the right way will be key to building long-term relationships, make sure your first approach is in person;](#)
2. [Ask if the local community has any specific needs or wants so you can make them feel wanted rather than isolated;](#)
3. [Whether you meet people in person, via email or Skype, try to keep your communications relevant and regular.](#)

Suggested activities

- [Club community or Open Day - hold an open day for new club members and local people. Advertise it far and wide and use different channels like word-of-mouth, text, email or Twitter to make sure you reach as many people as possible.](#)

- [Arrange a meeting with a key community contact, maybe within some local surroundings to discuss how your club can make a difference.](#)
- [Offer a local community team a friendly match and invite families; perhaps each team can bring its own traditional food to share afterwards.](#)

ADVICE FOR FAITH GROUPS

Do your research

Football is the world's game, and can also be a powerful vehicle that brings people together. Football can be an effective way of serving your community, in a way, it is a form of worship. Talking to your community will therefore be key to finding out their needs and interests. Is physical activity and a friendly introduction to the game what people want or competitive teams and leagues? Is there a demand from men and women and what facilities will they require.

Proper consultation is vital and linking up with your local County Football Association development staff can help you do this in a structured and supported way. Click this link for the contact details of your local County FA www.thefa.com/CountyFA

Suggested activities

The activities you deliver will relate directly to the level of participation you achieve and how sustainable your project will be. Activities can vary significantly and here are common examples of successful projects:

1. A series of free football or Futsal taster sessions, run locally or at your place of worship
This would be suitable if you and your community are new to football and you are looking to gauge interest before moving forward. (Tip – work with your local County FA to recruit a coach with experience of working with different communities or is of the same faith as the community with whom he/she will work).
2. Football development – if you see football as a potential way your community keeps in touch with their faith, (Ed: not sure what you mean by the previous wording – I think you need to be more explicit) then development of that game becomes even more important. Enabling people to progress through the pathways of the game, whether it be as a player, coach, official or volunteer can be life-enhancing for individuals.

Inter-faith partnerships

Spreading the word of your faith and bringing people of different faith groups together are the aims of many groups. Inter-faith football activities can deliver on so many social levels that are often universally supported. If you would like to set up an inter-faith project we would recommend you use the following check list:

- Speak to your local race equality council for advice and insight;
- Speak to the Inter-Faith Network for details of their local contacts: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/>;
- Speak to your local County FA and professional club for their active support;
- Personally visit local places of worship to speak to key contacts – don't just email them.

ADVICE FOR COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS (CFAS)

Do your research

Identifying who and where the local faith groups are – and what activities they already undertake – should shape your approach to them. Some will have no experience of football and may only be interested as a way of engaging their young people, but some may already have established teams. Here are some organisations you might want to contact to find out more:

- [Local Council Equality Officer;](#)
- [Local Race Equality Council;](#)
- [Local places of worship;](#)
- [Inter Faith Network](#)
www.interfaith.org.uk;
- [Sports Chaplaincy UK](#)
www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk;
- [Local police.](#)

Use your Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG)

Inclusion Advisory Groups are your local resource on the ground to help support these types of projects. Using local community volunteers gives your project more kudos within communities and helps it become more sustainable. If you don't already have an IAG and would like extra support in engaging with local faith communities, contact The FA's Equality department

County FA (CFA) Plans

Engaging meaningfully with faith communities through football can often take time and doesn't fit with the traditional football development model. By putting this work in your County FA plan you can set aside resources and build in realistic medium-term targets that will help you achieve your goals.

Suggested activities

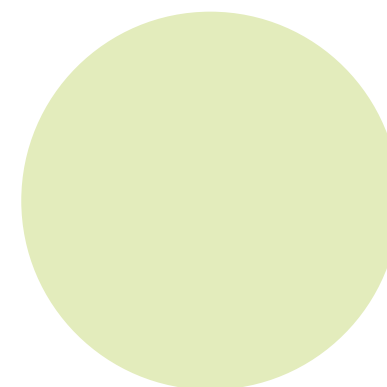
- CFA facilities – many County FA headquarters will include conference facilities and pitches. Offering free or discounted use of these facilities to local community groups will help engage but will also act as a learning tool for CFA staff.

- Audit – many faith groups will already be involved in organised football leagues and competition, either locally or nationally. Offering to support or affiliate these competitions will make the community more aware of your CFA's work.
- Community venues – having the CFA use community facilities is a great way to reach out to communities and show the County is interested. Kent County FA regularly uses the Gravesend Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) for meetings and events, to very positive effect.

The Equality Standard for Sport for County FAs

All CFAs will be working towards an accreditation level by the end of 2015 (Preliminary, Foundation, Intermediate or Advanced). Engaging with faith communities in any of the above ways will count as positive evidence for this piece of work.

For more information on this please contact The FA's Equality department via email: equality@TheFA.com



The FA has produced a toolkit specifically for CFAs to help them to engage with faith-based communities, and ensure that the services they provide meet any gaps in provision. **Click here** to be re-directed to this guide

USEFUL CONTACTS

Here you will find some useful contacts from within The FA's Faith and Football Group



- The City Sikhs Network
www.citysikhs.org.uk
- The European Hindu Forum
www.hinduforum.eu
- The 3 Faith Forum
www.3ff.org.uk
- The Al Khoei Foundation
www.khoei.net
- Maccabi GB
www.maccabigb.org
- Community Security Trust
www.thecst.org.uk
- Muslim Women's Sports Foundation
www.MWSF.org.uk
- The Christian Muslim Forum
www.christianmuslimforum.org
- Below are a number of football organisations who may be able to assist or get involved:
- The Premier League
www.premierleague.com
- The Football League
www.football-league.co.uk
- The PFA
www.thepfa.com
- Association of Muslim Footballers (AMF)
www.the-amf.com
- Sporting Equals
www.sportingequals.org.uk
- Kick It Out
www.kickitout.org
- Faith and Football
www.faithandfootball.org.uk
- Inter-Faith Week
www.interfaithweek.org
- Show Racism the Red Card
www.srtrc.org



The Football Association

W: TheFA.com

E: equality@TheFa.com

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