

THEIR GAME

Let Them Play



We ^{do} only
positive.

THEIR GAME

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INTRODUCTION

Their Game weekend is designed to raise awareness of the need to create a positive and pressure-free environment that children can enjoy.

This seasons Their Game weekend took place Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd October 2021.

In order to gain feedback and recommendations for future Their Game weekends an anonymous online survey was used with a number of different questions. They were split into responses from Coaches, Parents/Spectators and Players.

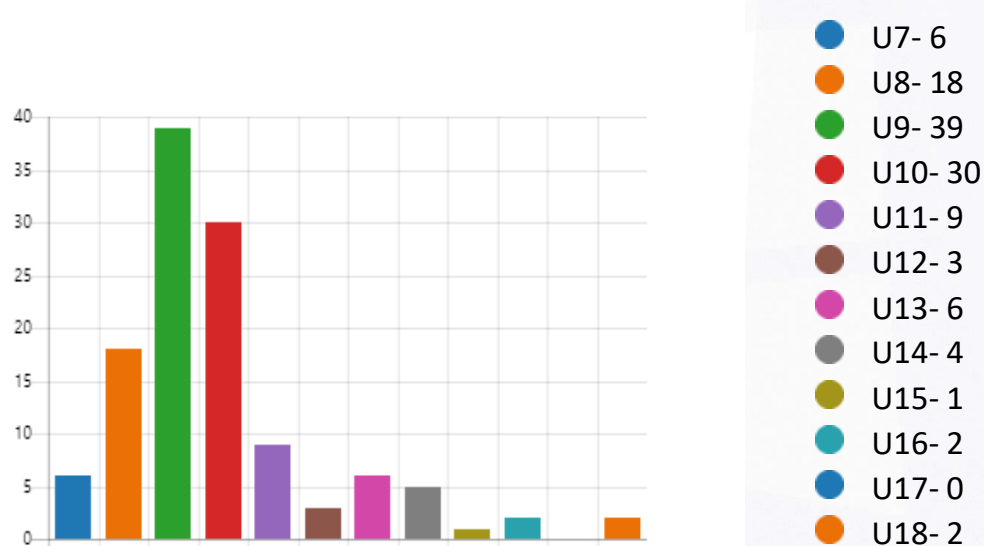
From data collected Football Development Apprentice, Max Humphreys, produced the following review from players who participated in Their Game.

Please note: the following separate reports have also been produced

- Overall feedback received from Coaches and Parents/Spectators
- Future Recommendations from Coaches and Parents/Spectators

PLAYERS FEEDBACK

Their Game weekend presented us with 120 responses to the player survey that was released. The chart below shows what age groups responded to the survey, and as shown the most common age group was U9's.



The trend that is shown with this data is that there were minimal responses from age category U14 and above. This evidence could further back the responses given by coaches and parents/spectators relating to Their Game being more tailored towards younger age groups.

CONTINUED

Q: Team gender

This pie chart below shows what gender the player responding to the survey participates in. As shown, the majority of players (75%) who answered this question were playing for a male team on Their Game weekend, compared to the 22% of players playing in mixed teams and 3% playing for female teams.



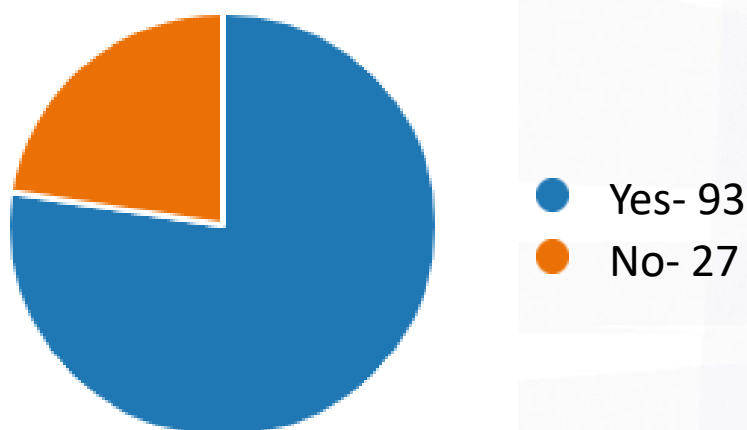
Although a lot of the players that answered this question did play in male teams, it is still good to have a sense of variety in the feedback we are receiving. This is because it gives different points of view on how Their Game weekend was managed in either male, mixed or female teams.

CONTINUED

Q: Do you agree with the idea of running Their Game for youth football?

The next question that was asked on this survey was important to get feedback on as it provides an insight as to whether the players agree with the delivery of Their Game weekend.

As shown in the chart, 78% of the players that participated in the Their Game weekend agree with the idea of running the initiative. Out of the 120 responses from players only 27 of them disagreed with the idea of running Their Game weekend, which overall can be considered as positive feedback in terms of the delivery of the initiative in the future.

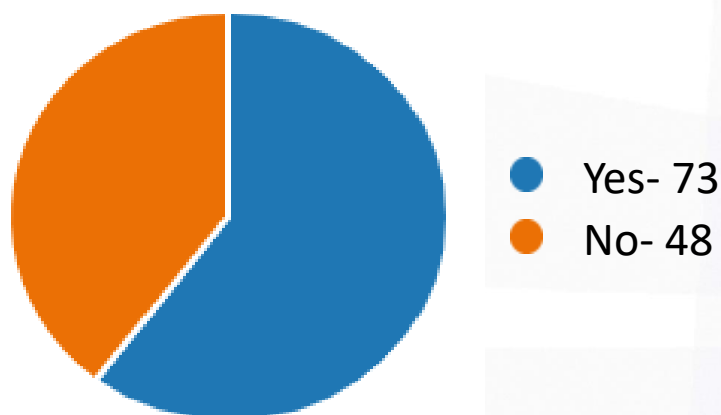


CONTINUED

Q: Did you notice anything different about the game at the weekend?

Despite the fact that 78% of the players agreed with the idea of running Their Game for youth football, 40% of the players involved in the weekend stated that they did not notice anything different about the game.

Although the players may not have noticed a difference in the game they played in, would appear the match day experience for these individuals is positive every week.



CONTINUED

Q: What did you think about the game at the weekend compared to a normal game?

Out of all the responses, 44% of players decided that the Their Game match they participated in was the same as every weekend. There are multiple factors that could contribute towards this including:

- Match day experience for these players is positive every week
- Coaches/Parents not adhering to Their Game Codes of Conduct
- Players not realising/knowing about Their Game
- Opposition team not adhering to Their Game Codes of Conduct

43 players stated Their Game matches were much better/better/much than a normal game they participate in. Only 24 players combined stated that they thought Their Game weekend was worse/much worse than a normal game, which can overall be seen as positive feedback due to the amount of players that agreed it was better/neutral.

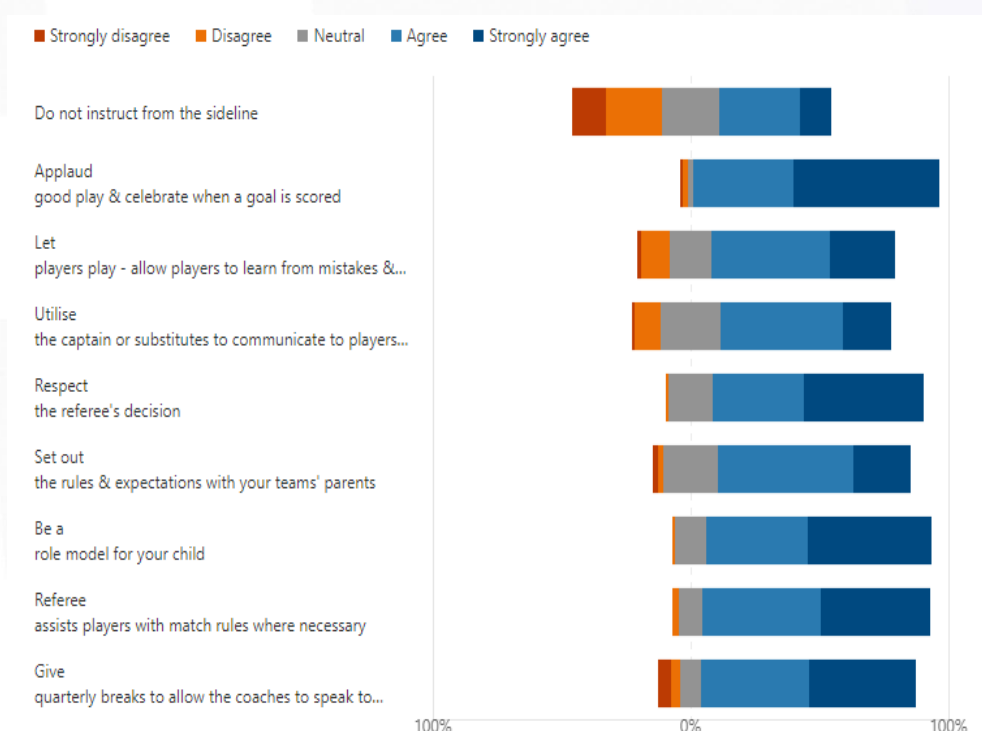


- Much better- 17
- Better- 26
- Neutral- 53
- Worse- 15
- Much worse- 9

CONTINUED

Q: Do you agree with the criteria laid out within the Coaches, Parents and Match Officials Code of Conduct?

As shown in the graph, almost all of the criteria laid out the players agreed with and believed is a positive part of the Their Game rules.



The only two possible parts of criteria that were disagreed with, were the managers not instructing from the side-line and giving quarterly breaks to allow the coaches to speak. This could be due to the fact that the younger players (U7 & U8) would prefer to be instructed from the side-lines, especially if they are new to football and are still getting to learn the basics. Overall, the feedback from this question was positive and can give an insight on the criteria to be included for next seasons Their Game weekend.

CONTINUED

Q: Is there anything else you really enjoyed about the game?

As shown in the image taken from the survey, 18% of the players answered this question and stated that playing in the game was what they really enjoyed. A lot of other comments highlighted that players could focus more without being shouted at, which therefore benefited their overall performance.

10 respondents (18%) answered **Playing** for this question.



The comments below show that Their Game weekend is beneficial to players in terms of the way they played and how much they enjoyed the match. Being able to focus without being shouted at and learning how to communicate effectively with each other can play a big part in development, especially at a young age.

"More player communication/ownership"

"Able to focus more without shouting going on"

"It was a fund game, parents were calm"

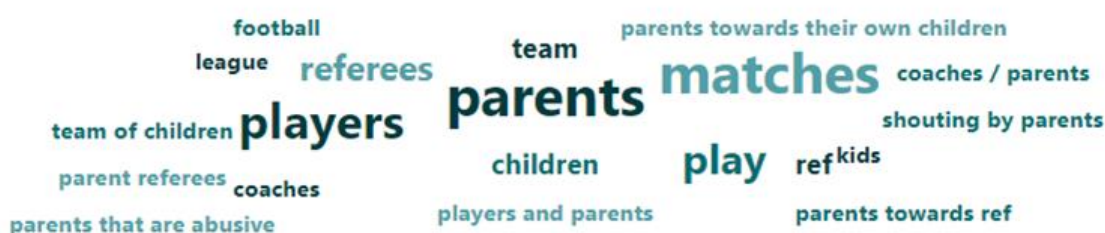
CONTINUED

Q: If there is one thing you could change in football what would it be?

As the Their Game weekend is all about the players involved, the feedback to this question is very important. From this question, we received 60 responses from players with an age range from U7-18 within the County.

As shown in the summary of the responses from players below, it is clear that the most common thing children would like to change about football is the way parents behave towards themselves as players and toward match officials.

8 respondents (13%) answered **parents** for this question.



Taking a deeper dive into the main responses regarding parents, all of the points that are made back up the aims of the Their Game weekend.

"Parents getting involved during matches/training. Let the children play, the coaches coach and the referees to referee"

"Critical shouting from parents/coaches"

"No pushing or shirt pulling by the other teams, the other team not being mean, no shouting by the parents because it confuses me"

"Enable the refs to report coaches/parents that are abusive"



FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS - PLAYERS

Common Themes:

- Coaches being allowed to Coach
- Too quiet
- Their Game would work better for older age groups

Researcher Observations:

From the qualitative data, it is noticeable that different teams had different experiences during Their Game weekend. For example, in the first comment a player mentions how their coach still shouted at them which they did not like, but the other comment from a player mentioned how it was too quiet and probably would've preferred a louder experience and guidance from the coach.

"My coach still shouted at me"

"It was too quiet"

"Doesn't work for younger age groups, they got really confused and the atmosphere wasn't very encouraging for them"

The other comment that is included backs up a lot of the points that were made within the coaches survey, in the sense that Their Game does not suit younger players as they still are looking for guidance and encouragement in order to better their performance and development. Future suggestions could include considering specific age groups that would benefit from participating in this initiative and introduce encouragement coaching.

Additional Future Recommendations:

- Both teams adhering to Their Game
- Can we do it every week



CONCLUSION

Researchers:

In conclusion, this season's Their Game weekend had a lot of intriguing and helpful feedback that can contribute towards a better delivery of this initiative, as well as youth grassroots football becoming a more positive environment and allowing youth players to develop their football knowledge and skills.

Consideration should be given to the impact the weekend can have on novice players balanced with the general interest in delivering the initiative more often. How compliance can be guaranteed across clubs and leagues who have opted in to take part and allowing encouragement coaching across all age groups.

Hampshire FA:

Charlotte Langley-Brown (Clubs and Leagues FDO) added: 'Their Game Weekend this season had the most responses since the start of the initiative, which was fantastic and validates data that aids us in our future planning and improvements for the initiative. Ultimately the initiative is aimed at players and them being able to enjoy Their Game without the distractions whilst also developing in making their own decisions.'

THANK YOU

Their Game | Hampshire FA



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