



ENGLAND FOOTBALL  
LEARNING



# Dealing with inappropriate behaviour from players

Prevention is better than cure. Try to use these tips at training and matchdays to prevent poor behaviour from players.

## 2 Spend more time on task

No need for lengthy instructions or debriefs. Get the players in, on task and playing. Try to get players moving and on the ball for at least 70% of the session

## 3 Build in time to chat

Expecting players to be ready to listen as soon as they turn up is unrealistic. This is especially true if you work with a young team. Rather than fighting for quiet, build in time for players to catch up. Remember, they probably haven't seen each other all week.

## 4 Get started quickly

Get the players on task as soon as possible. This helps you see who wants to focus and who might need extra support as the session goes on. Try giving players an arrival activity when they get there.

## 1 Notice good player behaviour

If an individual demonstrates safety, learning or respect, take the time to notice their effort. Being specific makes the praise more meaningful. This helps to reinforce these desirable behaviours. However, be mindful not to over-praise. This can make positive feedback less meaningful over time. Instead, simply acknowledge your players' actions. For example, say, "you're ready to listen", rather than, "well done, brilliant, you're ready to listen."

If you do come across poor behaviour from the players, here are some tips for dealing with it:

## **1** Don't give attention to poor player behaviour

Don't focus on those doing the wrong thing. This sends the message that negative behaviour is the way to gain your time.

Instead, give your attention where it's deserved. Seek out players who are performing well, trying hard and investing in their learning. Make a strong example of them.

## **2** Don't stop the whole group to highlight a mistake

Avoid drawing attention to individual player mistakes. If you need to give guidance, it should be one-to-one while the other players are busy with the task.

## **3** Be clear about unacceptable behaviour

Recognise that it's not your players who are unacceptable – it's their behaviour. Making a distinction between the person and their actions is crucial. For example, Clara isn't bad, but her behaviour is. Try to make this clear in your communication. For example, "rude language is disrespectful and using it is unacceptable."