



RESPONSIBALL RANKING 2018

The Eighth Annual Social
Responsibility Ranking of
International Football
Leagues



THE 2018 RESPONSIBALL RANKING

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THE RANKING

The eighth annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking report looks at the sustainability of over 20 men's top professional football leagues from around the world through the 2017/18 season.

As in past editions, the report again looks at three key topics: Governance, Community and Environment. These three pillars encapsulate the areas of sustainability most important to the success of a football club. Through good governance, community outreach and awareness, and environmental consideration, clubs may improve their financial performance while also contributing to sustainable development in society.

This year's ranking saw many familiar names at the top of the list, including Denmark and England, two countries which have consistently proven that sustainable actions are both feasible and profitable.

There was an overall improvement in the average scores of each of the three pillars, with Community remaining the highest, increasing from 31% in 2017 to 38% in 2018. Governance rose from 24% in 2017 to 31% in 2018, and Environment improved from 6% to 8%. Though there were three fewer countries in this year's report, the overall scores of each country improved.

A new leader topped the chart this year. The United States continued its upward trajectory from fifth in last year's ranking, finding its place at the top of each of the three categories

and ultimately as the highest ranked football league this year. In the environmental category alone, the United States' Major League Soccer franchises improved from 22% to 38%. As more clubs with new football-specific stadiums are added to the league, this is an unsurprising development. Atlanta United is a prime example, joining MLS only in 2017 and housed in the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, a LEED Platinum certified arena.

RESPONSIBALL contacted MLS to learn more:

"Through our [Greener Goals platform](#), MLS has taken steps to address our environmental impacts by measuring and offsetting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with select League events and big moments throughout the season,"

said Joanne Neale, Chief Administrative & Social Responsibility Officer.

"We're proud to support projects, like the cookstoves in Kenya, that align with our long-standing commitment to fighting cancer, while working in partnership with MLS clubs to promote healthy, sustainable communities throughout North America, and other areas in need throughout the rest of the world."



We also contacted Allen Hershkowitz, PhD, Chairman, Sport and Sustainability International, an expert who is well versed on the topic of sport and social responsibility in North America for his insights:

"The world has never confronted more urgent ecological challenges, biologically, economically and politically. For many years Major League Soccer, one of greatest sports organizations in North America, has been consistently strengthening its commitment to responsible environmental stewardship in critically important ways, including the promotion of climate literacy. MLS is leading by example at a critical time, when the world most needs sustainability leadership from all business leaders. It is no surprise to me that they have achieved the top RESPONSIBALL Ranking for 2017/2018, and all of us at Sport and Sustainability are proud to have supported this important work."

The purpose of the annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking is to raise awareness and demonstrate the level of social responsibility in elite level professional football.

In November 2018, the first RESPONSIBALL Forum was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, focused on the topic of Sport and Refugees. As RESPONSIBALL continues to grow and expand its reach and activities, the value of ranking and the analysis of leagues and clubs gains value not only for general knowledge, but also for those ranked to recognize where they can and should improve.

1	(5)	USA		MLS		
2	(1)	Denmark		Superliga		
3	(2)	England		Premier League		
4	(16)	Sweden		Allsvenskan		
5	(6)	Spain		La Liga		
6	(7)	Netherlands		Eredivisie		
7	(8)	Japan		J-League		
8	(3)	Germany		Bundesliga		
9	(4)	Scotland		Premiership		
10	(18)	Australia		A-League		
11	(15)	Portugal		Primeira Liga		
12	(12)	Switzerland		Super League		
13	(10)	Austria		Bundesliga		
14	(13)	Italy		Serie A		
15	(17)	Rep. of Ireland		Premier Division		
16	(24)	Greece		Superleague		
17	(11)	France		Ligue 1		
18	(21)	Croatia		First Football League		
19	(9)	Brazil		Série A		
20	(-)	Egypt		Premier League		
21	(25)	India		Super League		

Environment

GOOD PRACTICES

One of the main goals of RESPONSIBALL, both as a platform and a ranking, is to seek out, share and showcase good social responsibility practices at football clubs. This year, with the continued awareness of and trends toward more sustainable actions, a large sample was available to choose from.



English Premier League – Tottenham Hotspurs

Upon the opening of their new stadium, Tottenham Hotspurs committed to a Single-Use Plastic Reduction policy. As a result, plastic straws, stirrers and disposable packaging are banned from the stadium. To raise awareness and get fans involved, all Tottenham members were given a Bag for Life in their membership package for the new season.

<https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/the-club/spurs-cares/plastic-reduction-measures/>

French Ligue 1 – Dijon Football Côte d’Or

The Dijon Football club sees sport as a wonderful tool to promote tolerance and open exchange with other people. The DFCO president, staff and players are committed to working in the local community, creating activities in neighborhoods, and visiting hospitals.

<https://www.dfco.fr/foot-citoyen>

Japanese J-League – Vissel Kobe

Vissel Kobe wants to keep the city green. Besides activities inside the stadium, like PET recycling or energy efficiency, players and employees go into the city to clean the streets. Even the fans can contribute: A floor power generation system produces energy for the stadium by using the vibrations of jumping and cheering on match days.

<https://www.vissel-kobe.co.jp/club/ecoprj/>

Spanish La Liga – Valencia CF

Valencia CF’s commitment to improving its environmental impact has been proven through its project “Toward a Sustainable Valencia CF”. The club has signed a commitment with its current electric marketer enabling it to use clean, renewable energy in its sports facilities.

<http://www.valenciacf.com/ver/74602/el-valencia-cf-utilizara-en-sus-instalaciones-deportivas-energia-limpia-de-origen-100-renovable.html>

USA Major League Soccer – San Jose Earthquakes

The San Jose Earthquakes partnered with a bus company to provide free charter buses to get to the stadium. These buses are replacing a discontinued public transportation line. Every game ticket gives free access on match day, taking this bus directly from Downtown to the pitch.

<https://www.sjearthquakes.com/post/2018/03/16/news-earthquakes-lux-bus-america-offer-free-charter-buses-downtown-san-jose-match>

Community

GOOD PRACTICES



Australian A-League – Melbourne City FC

Students from local Primary Schools can join Melbourne City's Homework Club, where volunteer tutors help them with their homework. In a second part the kids learn new football skills and take part in a fun game session. Therefore, the program connects club and local community and gives the kids the opportunity of combining homework with fun.

<https://www.melbournecityfc.com.au/news/city-community-wrap-homework-club-and-citc-week>

Brazilian Série A – Grêmio

Grêmio's Instituto Geração Tricolor serves children living around the Stadium in social and economic vulnerability. Four hours per day children can join the activities and take two meals together. Their activities include also helping with homework, sports activities, and different workshops.

<https://gremio.net/index.php/conteudo/index/32>

Danish Superliga – Brøndby IF

Brøndby IF initiated a ticket pool for people with financial limitations. Individuals who cannot afford a match ticket may apply for a free ticket, and once per half season they are awarded free access to a home match.

<https://brondby.com/csr/billettulje/>

Egyptian League – El Nasr

The El Nasr club makes a point of promoting and participating in sport activities at local schools and academies.

<http://elnasrclub.com/news.php?topic=3380>

Indian Super League – Chennaiyin F.C

Chennaiyin F.C. organizes regular Grassroots Festivals in local schools with always several hundred children participating. One tournament was held in a school for underprivileged children. A total of 790 girls attended.

<http://www.chennaiyinfcc.com/grassroots/festivals-2017-18>



The Indian Super League publishes a salary guide on the website with the salary information and the tenure of their contract for each ISL player. It is also listed whether it is an Indian or an international player to have full transparency for the remuneration.

<https://www.indiansuperleague.com/player-salary-information>

Italian Seria A – SPAL

In following the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play guidelines, SPAL introduced a Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) to improve the club's relationship with its supporters. In general, the club licensing regulations are set to make the clubs improve their performance both on and off the pitch.

https://www.spalferrara.it/storia/slo/?doing_wp_cron=1544497378.2436869144439697265625

Portuguese Primeira Liga – SC Braga (Governance, Community)

SC Braga has taken its responsibility for the city serious and founded the SC Braga Solidário. Therefore, they support the local community with different projects regarding the topics healthy living in schools, or waste reduction. Besides that, SC Braga promotes different activities caring for the environment.

<https://scbraga.pt/responsabilidade-social-sc-braga/#1502871052403-0cbf0e4b-e46b>

Scottish Premiership – Motherwell FC (Governance, Community)

Motherwell FC worked with their club sponsor, the Bank of Scotland Foundation, to provide therapy sessions for dementia sufferers. Together, they engage in a project, supporting the local community and raising awareness for the case.

<https://www.motherwellfc.co.uk/Pages/Category/Memory-Well>

Swedish Allsvenskan – Östersund FK

Östersund FK founded the culture academy seeing culture as an important part of community building. It is an act of taking responsibility for players and young people, creating self-confidence. Various projects have already been carried out. The proceeds were always donated to charitable organisations.

<http://ostersundsfk.se/csr/kulturakademi/>

Swiss Football League – FC Luzern

FC Luzern's fan workers are not only engaging in the dialogue between fans, club, and the locals. Prevention work for young supporters is leading them to an addictive drug-free fan culture. It is the goal of the fan work to create a positive image of fans and to be a low-threshold contact point for especially young supporters.

<https://www.fanarbeit-luzern.ch/uber-uns/tatigkeiten>

Governance

GOOD PRACTICES



Austrian Bundesliga – SK Rapid

One of SK Rapid's values is diversity - mentioned as a major driver of the club. To outline this, they translated the club's vision and values into 22 languages. The removal of the language barrier is therefore a statement of equal opportunities inside the club.

<https://www.skrapid.at/de/startseite/verein/der-sk-rapid/leitbild/>

Croatian First Football League – Hajduk Split

Hajduk Split provides on its website a code of conduct with ethical basics which needs to be signed of involved parties. The club vision calls on players, suppliers, and employees to provide ethical standards in the domains of finances, staff selection, work behavior, and to stand against corruption.

<https://hajduk.hr/klub/eticki-kodeks>

Republic of Ireland Premier Division – Limerick FC

Limerick FC makes a strong commitment against Racism and Discrimination and thus support the active involvement of those from a different background. Besides implementing the UEFA 10 Point Plan to combat racism, they are also supporting special teams for the SARI (Sport Against Racism in Ireland) Cup and are providing the same opportunities as well for their employees, volunteers, and players.

<http://www.limerickfc.ie/community/against-racism>

German Bundesliga – Borussia Dortmund

Borussia Dortmund's sustainability report fulfills international standards. Additionally, it is well designed and has different interactive tools. Using the storyline of a match day makes reading it even more easy and fun.

<https://verantwortung.bvb.de/en>



METHODOLOGY

Data sources

The research was conducted based upon the clubs' websites. The information found on the websites not only indicates what clubs find value in reporting, but also show the level of transparency in clubs. This reflects the philosophy that transparent communication is essential to social responsibility.

Analysis

Based on the three main pillars, 50 pre-defined social responsibility indicators were used to analyze the data collected from the club websites. The indicators were created by adapting guidelines from recognized social responsibility standards, including GRI G4 and ISO 20121.

Results

The ranking is attained by calculating the average score of each league based on the results of the individual clubs. The results are divided into the respective three core topics, which are also combined to get the overall average.

Limitations to the methodology

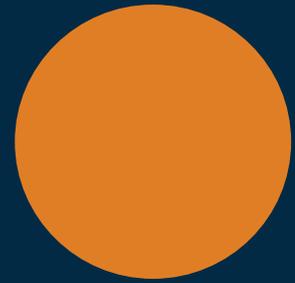
Due to the fact that the research data is collected from the websites, information may be missed because clubs do not report it. As there are numerous researchers involved, there may also be a variance in how research is conducted, how strictly the researchers adhere to the indicators and guidelines, and how much bias (conscious or unconscious) there may be in collecting the results.

The indicators used are non-specific and not approved standards. They were chosen because they should apply to all clubs. Clubs must implement their social responsibility strategy according to the needs of their stakeholders.

The ranking is completed to give a perspective of the sustainability of the overall league, not the performance of individual clubs. The average score of a country may differ greatly with the overall score of an individual club. For the implementation of measures, a club must be considered individually.

ABOUT RESPONSIBALL

RESPONSIBALL is the first point of reference for responsible football clubs. It supports the progress of social responsibility at all football clubs.



Funded by the work of SchweryCade, RESPONSIBALL provides an online platform for a community of practitioners within the football sector to act together and promote and maintain high standards of meaningful social responsibility.

RESPONSIBALL has two key goals at the heart of its mission:

- To showcase good practices in governance, community development, and environmental stewardship; and
- To support a community of practitioners who want to connect with others, share good practices, compare and progress.

Connect

RESPONSIBALL supports a community of people who want to connect with others that share similar passions, interests, and jobs - all of whom understand, or want to learn more, about how football clubs can work in harmony with their communities and the environment.

Share

RESPONSIBALL is built to house a community that can exchange knowledge and insights. It holds a Good Practice database that allows members to easily upload and share good practices that may be useful or interesting for others.

Compare

RESPONSIBALL allows practitioners to compare club practices with others' according to our three main pillars and a corresponding sub-set of topics, ultimately encouraging them to progress along their own path toward a more socially responsible future.