



RESPONSIBALL RANKING 2019

The Ninth Annual Social
Responsibility Ranking of
International Football
Leagues



THE 2019 RESPONSIBALL RANKING

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THE RANKING

In its ninth year, RESPONSIBALL's annual ranking and report brought together research and analyses of 24 of the most well-known international football leagues in the men's elite game. The research conducted focuses on the work and activities completed during the 2018/19 season.

Consistent with the eight previous editions, the report again focuses on three key topics: Governance, Community and Environment. By examining these three topics, the ranking researchers and author, as well as readers of the report, may acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the social responsibility and sustainability activities and structures within each league.

Though often among the top five, this season, Sweden's Allsvenskan had the highest overall score, earning the first position in the RESPONSIBALL Ranking. In addition, the Allsvenskan ranked highest in Governance. The Japanese J-League moved up the ranks, scoring in the top five clubs overall and joining familiar ranking fixtures England, the United States and Canada, and Denmark. Denmark's efforts in the community earned it the highest place in that category, and Major League Soccer again led the way with its commitment to environmental action.

New leagues were added to this year's research from Korea, Russia, Mexico, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The addition of these new leagues adds to a broader international view.

Sustainable Development Goals

Unlike in previous seasons, this year, a focus has been made to understand the data in comparison and alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are "the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all,"¹ and in using them as a guideline, the report aims to provide a broader understanding of how individual football clubs may steer their activities and initiatives into closer alignment with the SDGs. Some clubs have already begun their commitments to the SDGs, such as **Denmark's FC Nordjaelland**, which discussed the SDGs with players and staff and encouraged them to think about and promote the SDGs in their lives. **FC Barcelona** has begun promoting a 'Young Ambassador' programme as part of its Goals Beyond the Game initiative; the overall goal of this initiative is to empower the generations of tomorrow by raising awareness of the SDGs.

In order for readers to gain a greater understanding, this report will highlight good practices from different clubs that were part of the research. The good practices will reflect one or more of the three key topics, and they may also show an alignment to one or more of the 17 SDGs.

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>



Community

The recognition that sport is more than a business is what keeps the business alive. Community has proven to be the most consistent commitment that leagues and clubs make, with a slight improvement on last year's standing. Across the globe, clubs have found ways to take steps to make their communities better, from putting smiles on the faces of sick children to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their physical capability, has access to the sport. It is important that clubs and leagues continue this commitment to the community and recognize that football is for everyone; with that, it is their responsibility to ensure that the environment they create and promote adheres to values of equality and inclusion while respecting and protecting the diversity that makes the game so great.

Environment

As in past years, the available information regarding environmental initiatives and impact is the weakest of the three pillars. Yet, football clubs, leagues, federations and governing bodies are beginning to understand that sport is not separate from the environment; rather, it is dependent on it. While there are financial benefits for clubs that choose to 'go green', from reduced energy bills to increased tax exemptions, a commitment to protecting the environment gives greater assurance that clubs will still be in existence in ten, twenty or fifty years' time.

Whether offering alternate transportation options or ideas such as cycling or carpooling, or if creating and carrying out a waste management plan, simple solutions are available for clubs, as well as individuals, looking to decrease their environmental footprint.

Governance

Finally, Governance has proven a fairly stable portion of club and league activities, with increases in female representation in decision-making positions and greater commitment to the protection of children within clubs. Many clubs still lack sustainability reports and quite often do not share full information of their CSR activities on their website. Player remuneration has become an important topic, with exorbitant transfer fees and UEFA Financial Fair Play regulations bringing greater public awareness to the disparities between clubs and leagues.

The purpose of the annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking is to raise awareness and demonstrate the level of social responsibility in elite level professional football. The ranking has been released on 24 October 2019 in conjunction with the anniversary of the United Nations Charter in 1945, which effectively led to the founding of the United Nations. What began 74 years ago continues in new ways today, including the SDGs.

1 (4)	Sweden		Allsvenskan		
2 (2)	Denmark		Superliga		
3 (3)	England		Premier League		
4 (7)	Japan		J-League		
5 (1)	USA/Canada		MLS		
6 (-)	Korea		K-League		
7 (8)	Germany		Bundesliga		
8 (6)	Netherlands		Eredivisie		
9 (5)	Spain		La Liga		
10 (9)	Scotland		Premiership		
11 (11)	Portugal		Primeira Liga		
12 (-)	Russia		Premier League		
13 (19)	Brazil		Série A		
14 (12)	Switzerland		Super League		
15 (13)	Austria		Bundesliga		
16 (-)	Mexico		Liga MX		
17 (14)	Italy		Serie A		
18 (18)	Croatia		First Football League		
19 (15)	Republic of Ireland		Premier Division		
20 (16)	Greece		Superleague		
21 (10)	Australia		A-League		
22 (17)	France		Ligue 1		
23 (-)	Bosnia & Herzegovina		Premier League		
24 (-)	Serbia		SuperLiga		

*The indication of the arrows in the ranking is in comparison with the leagues' positions in last year's ranking. Scores for some leagues did improve, though they may have decreased in their ranking position.

Environment

GOOD PRACTICES



Swedish Allsvenskan – Djurgårdens IF

SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing; SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



Djurgården's matchday information offers supporters and visitors multiple options to reach Tele2 Arena, including public transportation, walking and bicycling instructions. The club not only encourages these options, but provides the logistical information, including directions and preferred routes to the stadium. For cyclists, there are one thousand bicycle parking spaces available. These spaces are secure and accessible, and they encourage more visitors not only to be environmentally conscious, but also to increase their physical activity and wellbeing.

<https://dif.se/om-oss/vara-arenor/tele2-arena>



Japanese J-League - Shimizu S-Pulse

SDG 15: Life on Land

Since 2012, Shimizu S-Pulse has been promoting the 'S-Pulse Eco Challenge', through which it has raised awareness about the environment by involving players in high-visibility environmental projects. In one such activity over the past season, 21 players and staff, along with 80 volunteers from companies and organisations, came together to put turf in the S-Pulse Dream Garden. The seedlings for the turf were planted on a sheet of special grass and soil that had been removed from the main training ground during maintenance work, thus elongating its life cycle.

<https://www.s-pulse.co.jp/csr/eco/>



Portuguese Primeira Liga – SL Benfica

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

SL Benfica teamed up with EDP Comercial to install an extensive photovoltaic power generator, with solar panels applied to the roofs of four Benfica administrative buildings and the Caixa Futebol Campus Pavilion enclosure. It is anticipated that this will produce 447 megawatts of clear energy per year, with an estimated annual saving of 52,000€ and an 18.6% reduction in energy consumption.

<https://www.slbenfica.pt/pt-pt/agora/noticias/2018-2019/04/05/clube-parceria-benfica-e-edp-projeto-solar-caixa-futebol-campus>



Mexican Liga MX – Rayados de Monterrey

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Mexico's Rayados de Monterrey's BBVA Bancomer Stadium received the LEED Silver certification by the US Green Building Council. This certification was awarded because of the innovative design of the stadium, the optimisation of energy production and usage, water efficient landscaping and water use reduction, the addition of bicycle parking and storage, and the overall development of sustainable sites within and around the stadium.

<https://www.rayados.com/noticias/11040/casa-rayada-leed-erando-en-sostenibilidad>



German Bundesliga -Werder Bremen

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Werder Bremen is committed to using creative and innovative methods in tackling its environmental footprint. Yet, to reduce waste, it drew from a well-known musical festival tactic and placed a small deposit fee on cups used at the stadium. The deposit on cups proves a successful waste deterrent.

<https://www.werder.de/werder-bewegt/umwelt/weitere-massnahmen/>



Danish Superliga - Hobro IK

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Hobro IK's environmental ethos is summed up by them in one memorable statement: 'Although Hobro IK plays in yellow and blue, we would like to be green.' With an awareness of the repercussions of climate change on future generations, Hobro IK has become an advocate for sustainable and green energy that has minimal environmental impact. When building its stadium, the club installed geothermal heating. The next addition included a rainwater collection system to be used for the irrigation of the stadium. Most recently, the club has installed solar panels, which should significantly reduce the annual energy consumption.

<http://hikfodbold.dk/csr>

Community

GOOD PRACTICES



Premier League of Bosnia and Herzegovina – FK Sarajevo

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

FK Sarajevo has made a point to recognise the needs of those who may not be able to afford full price tickets to its matches. Therefore, it has opted to offer a 50% discount on season tickets for senior citizens and disabled people, making the matches more inclusive, regardless of income.

<https://www.fksarajevo.ba/bs/sezonske-ulaznice>



Brazilian Série A – Cruzeiro

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Cruzeiro works in partnership with Belo Horizonte Adoption Support Group (GAABH) and the Santa Luzia Adoption Support Group (GADA) as part of its 'Adopt a Champion' campaign. With over 9,000 children waiting to be adopted in Brazil, the club has teamed up with regional adoption NGOs to bring greater visibility to the issue and encourage families to consider welcoming a new child into their homes.

<https://www.cruzeiro.com.br/pagina/show/21>

Swiss Football League – FC Thun

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Switzerland's FC Thun has ensured that a Disability Access Officer (DAO) is available to assist disabled people with their access needs. The DAO acts as a liaison between the club and those needing assistance, finding solutions to access needs and ensuring that people of all abilities can be part of the fanbase and enjoy the game.

<https://fcthun.ch/de/club/organisation/mitarbeiter-innen/Detail?eid=663>



French Ligue 1 – Dijon FCO

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Dijon FCO encourages the club President, staff and players to be involved in community activities. The club sees the value in using sport to create social exchange and promote tolerance within its community.



By leading by example, from working with young people to creating neighbourhood activities, the club aims to be a club of and for the people in its community. In addition, when employers encourage their employees to volunteer and work for social good, there are benefits in the employees' personal development and overall sense of self-worth.

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



Dutch Eredivisie – ADO Den Haag

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

In accordance with the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play guidelines, Dutch club ADO Den Haag employs a Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) to improve the club's relationship with supporters and provide supporters with a direct link to the club.

<https://adodenhaag.nl/nl/tickets/voorwaarden?highlight=WyjzbG8iXQ==>



Russian Premier League - PFC CSKA Moscow

SGD 3: Good Health and Well-Being

Russian club PFC CSKA Moscow aims to build a culture of community activism within its teams. This season, a master class known as “CSKA Lesson” was conducted at a local school by players from the PFC CSKA youth team. These players talked played football with the students, encouraging them to be active.

<https://pfc-cska.com/novosti/vse-novosti/club/urok-cska-proshel-v-shkole-45/>

Governance

GOOD PRACTICES



USA and Canadian MLS – Seattle Sounders

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

All season ticket holders are automatically members of Seattle's Alliance, which elects an Alliance Council to represent supporters and liaise with the Sounders' Front Office and owners. In building the club, the ownership deemed the democratic representation of supporters one of its key commitments, acknowledging the importance of the supporter in building and maintaining the club.

<https://www.soundersfc.com/supporters-and-alliance/alliance>



English Premier League – Tottenham Hotspurs FC

SDG 5: Gender Equality

In an effort to ensure equal opportunities for its employees, Tottenham Hotspurs began publishing the Gender Pay Gap Report in 2018. The report is a step in Tottenham's commitment to ensuring that men and women receive equal compensation for equivalent work.

<https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/the-club/gender-pay-gap-report/>



Serbian SuperLiga - FK Macva Šabac

SDG 5: Gender Equality

The Serbian club FK Macva Šabac has two female members in decision making positions on the board of directors. The club is committed to ensuring that there is equal representation from the top down, and in doing so, it becomes more representative of the society around it.

<http://www.fkmacva.com/klub/uprava/>



Italian Serie A – Juventus FC

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Over the years, Juventus FC has aimed to match its prowess on the pitch with its activities within the community. Each season, it reports on its social responsibility activities in a sustainability report. The report uses the GRI Standards and is available in both English and Italian.

https://www.juventus.com/media/native/csr/Bilancio_di_sostenibilit%C3%A0_2018_ENG_web-compressed_16-01-19.pdf



Croatian First Football League - HNK Rijeka

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

HNK Rijeka is one of many clubs to have a youth team connected with its elite programme. It recognises the importance of safeguarding its youth players and creating an open and positive relationship among parents, coaches and players. As such, a policy to protect the welfare of children playing for youth team has been put into the framework of the club.

<http://www.nk-rijeka.hr/skola-nogometa-hnk-rijeka/skola-kodeks/>



Korean K-League – Suwon Bluewings

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

The Korean K-League club Suwon Bluewings aims to encourage and engage local small businesses as sponsors through its 'Blue Sponsor' programme. In working with small businesses, it can stimulate economic growth within the community and encourage more people to buy local.

<http://www.bluewings.kr/bluesponsor>



METHODOLOGY

Data sources

Research was completed through analysis of information provided on each club's website. This is done to gain an understanding not only of what the club does, but also what it considers of value to report and how transparent it is.

Analysis

The data analysis was based on 51 predefined social responsibility indicators that fall within the three key topics of Community, Governance and Environment. The indicators were created by adapting guidelines from recognised social responsibility standards, including GRI Standards and ISO 20121. In addition, the SDGs were considered during the analysis phase.

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

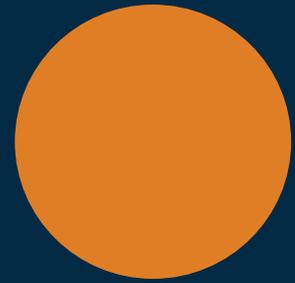
Each year, new researchers join the RESPONSIBALL Ranking team. As such, and because there are numerous researchers each year, there may be inconsistencies within the research due to (conscious or unconscious) biases, comprehension and language abilities, and adherence to the indicators and guidelines.

In addition, as the information is collected from the clubs' websites, there is potential for missing information. Some clubs are well-advanced in their social and environmental practices, but they may not report it on their website. 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 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, ultimately encouraging them to progress along their own path toward a more socially responsible future.