

RESPONSIBALL RANKING 2020

The Tenth Annual Ranking of International Football Leagues' environmental, social and governance commitments

THE 2020 RESPONSIBALL RANKING

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



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FOREWORD

In publishing our tenth RESPONSIBALL ranking, we first and foremost must share our immense gratitude to all of those – researchers, colleagues, the greater RESPONSIBALL community, and so many more – for their continued support of the RESPONSIBALL endeavour. We admire their tireless commitment to pushing for greater responsibility and accountability within this much beloved sport of ours, and in a business that thrives on competition, we are pleased to be on the same team.

Reflecting on the past decade, the RESPONSIBALL ranking has been the lens through which we have had a magnified view of football's actions, watching as leagues and clubs slowly wade through the vast sea of social responsibility and sustainable development as we know it. Their efforts, sometimes frustratingly slow and other times well ahead of the mark, have mirrored the shifting attitudes and norms within society over a broad range of topics and issues, and we're encouraged to see those within football, and sport in general, take greater accountability for their responsibility to society.

Before we dive into the heart of the report, we must acknowledge what a unique and challenging year this has been. None of us, or at least not many, could have foreseen an international pandemic and its global implications.

People around the world are experiencing a widespread decline in physical and mental health; to everyone who has and is suffering, we offer our sincere condolences and concern. We, like everyone else, are battling to get past this moment in time and come out not only stronger, but better for having lived through it.

As you begin reading the 2020 RESPONSIBALL ranking report, we invite you first to consider these enduring words:

"Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." 1

The RESPONSIBALL Team December 2020

¹ Excerpt from "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson



^{*}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.

THE RANKING

German Bundesliga on top

Completing one decade of ranking football leagues' commitment to the environment, society and good governance structures has proven an exercise in understanding trends, examining shifts and developing a broader picture of where football has been versus where it can and should go.

The purpose of the annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking is to raise awareness and demonstrate the level of social responsibility in elite level professional football, looking specifically at governance, community and environmental aspects of a club's activities and commitments. This season saw an increase in all aspects of the research scoring, with the German Bundesliga ultimately being crowned the top of the 2020 RESPONSIBALL ranking. Their efforts in community and environmental work, in particular, pushed them ahead of the 19 other leagues that were studied this season.

Not only did the majority of clubs, and resultingly, leagues, improve overall this season, but some saw great individual increases from previous years. In particular, France's work over the past season in its reporting on commitments to the community and environment has seen the French Ligue 1 rise dramatically in the rankings. For the overall ranking, this shows how important it is for clubs not only to commit to the different issues, but also to show that they have done so.

By transparently reporting on their activities, the general public has a greater understanding of what they do, and other clubs, from professional to grassroots, can use them as a good practice example.

This season, an extraordinary one marked by a latter half filled with disruptions, delays and a constant redevelopment of the idea of what could or could not be done, was not solely defined by the Covid-19 pandemic. The first half of the 2019/2020 season, which for most leagues began in August or September of 2019, was business as usual; it was not until March of 2020 that the global pandemic changed the face of football for the remainder of the year.

Scope and methodology

In researching and writing this year's ranking, researchers for the 20 leagues were provided with the same spreadsheet of 46 indicators covering governance, community and environment – updated on an ongoing basis – that had been used for past reports. Researchers were given from June through August 2020 to gather information from club websites, ultimately comprising the overall ranking. Due to the Covid-19 situation, some information, such as ticketing or general stadium access, were not as readily available on club websites; in addition, fewer leagues were researched this year (20) than last (24) because of a lack of resources.

TOPICS

Governance

"Corporate social responsibility is a hardedged business decision. Not because it is a nice thing to do or because people are forcing us to do it... because it is good for our business."

Niall Fitzgerald, Former CEO, Unilever

Sweden once again is the leader in the governance column, a result of its continued commitment to good governance, transparency and the overall social responsibility of the club as an entity. Spain and Germany both rose within the ranking in this area, with the Bundesliga and La Liga clubs increasing their reporting of sustainability and internal club commitments. As in previous seasons, financial transparency is still not at the level it could or should be, with player remuneration information unavailable.

This season, 35% percent of the 320 clubs researched have at least one female representative on the superior decision-making body (board) at the club. Sweden led the charge with female representatives at 14 of their 16 clubs.

Governance	Results
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	68.96%
La Liga (Spain)	67.33%
Bundesliga (German)	63.70%
English Premier League	57.50%
Danish Superliga	54.05%
J League (Japan)	51.67%
K League 1 (South Korea)	44.72%
Ligue 1 (France)	43.50%
Eredivisie (Netherlands)	36.00%
Scottish Premier League	35.00%
Major League Soccer (USA/Canada)	33.67%
Croatian First Football League	32.67%
Swiss Super League	29.00%
Primeira Liga (Portugal)	23.33%
Serie A (Italy)	22.33%
Russian Premier League	20.83%
Tipico Bundesliga (Austria)	19.17%
Liga MX (Mexico)	17.22%
Premier Division (Republic of Ireland)	15.90%
Football League (Greece)	15.24%
Total avg.	37.59%

Increase from 2019	
Decrease from 2019	
Same as 2019	•

Community

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee." **John Donne**

The idea that sport and community are intertwined is more relevant than ever, and over the course of 2020, clubs have found that they rely on their communities, and communities have found that they also rely on their clubs. For business to continue for

football clubs, more than ever they must support their communities. And they have, with the overall average of the 20 leagues increasing from last season; this year, clubs in Germany, France, England, Japan and Sweden all increased their own scores and their leagues rose in position in the community column of the ranking.

30% percent of the 320 clubs researched provide the contact information of a Disability Access Officer. Of the 20 English Premier League clubs researched this season, all 20 clubs provided contact information for a Disability Access Officer (DAO); no other leagues had 100%, though 16 of 18 German clubs and 14 of 18 Japanese clubs also provided contact information.

Community	Results
Bundesliga (German)	86.75%
Ligue 1 (France)	80.77%
English Premier League	72.69%
J League (Japan)	69.02%
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	68.99%
Danish Superliga	67.58%
Russian Premier League	65.14%
Scottish Premier League	64.42%
K League 1 (South Korea)	61.22%
Eredivisie (Netherlands)	61.00%
Major League Soccer (USA/Canada)	48.85%
La Liga (Spain)	40.00%
Swiss Super League	37.31%
Liga MX (Mexico)	32.48%
Primeira Liga (Portugal)	28.63%
Serie A (Italy)	24.42%
Tipico Bundesliga (Austria)	22.76%
Premier Division (Republic of Ireland)	18.05%
Football League (Greece)	17.58%
Croatian First Football League	14.23%
Total avg.	49.09%



Environment

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, overcivilised people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity."

John Muir

Environment, though still the weakest of the three topics covered, saw an overall increase in club activities and commitments to the environment. The German Bundesliga clubs led the way, jumping to the top of the environment column, a result of newly implemented or newly reported environmental commitments that its clubs have made.

As governments and sport governing bodies set environmental goals, it is imperative that sport recognise the value and urgent need to decrease its footprint and champion environmental causes; if they do not act now, we may not need to even do this ranking in the future.

Of the 320 clubs researched this season, 8% of clubs play in stadiums which achieved an environmental certification. The majority of those stadiums, 42%, are from the German Bundesliga.

Environment	Results
Bundesliga (German)	58.33%
Ligue 1 (France)	29.72%
La Liga (Spain)	25.69%
J League (Japan)	24.85%
Major League Soccer (USA/Canada)	21.94%
K League 1 (South Korea)	18.75%
Danish Superliga	12.70%
Tipico Bundesliga (Austria)	12.04%
Eredivisie (Netherlands)	12.00%
Allsvenskan (Sweden)	9.38%
Scottish Premier League	8.80%
English Premier League	8.47%
Liga MX (Mexico)	5.09%
Swiss Super League	4.72%
Primeira Liga (Portugal)	4.01%
Russian Premier League	1.74%
Serie A (Italy)	1.67%
Croatian First Football League	0.83%
Premier Division (Republic of Ireland)	0.43%
Football League (Greece)	0.00%
Total avg.	13.06%

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Increase from 2019	
•••••	
Decrease from 2019	
•	······
Same as 2019	

ADDITIONAL KEY ISSUES

Each year, we discuss the three key topics governance, community and environment within the RESPONSIBALL ranking, these focused on 46 particular indicators that were chosen to represent universal commitments and activities that make the basis of a socially responsible club.

In this edition, we would like to offer a broader perspective, looking at some of the key issues that are not within the indicators, but that have stood out to us, both as football fans and sustainability professionals. The issues we have chosen to highlight do not represent all of the issues within football that are possible to discuss; we chose these because of their particular global relevance.

Racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and other discrimination in football

We have entered the era of the athlete activist. Players around the world, from professional leagues to grassroots sports, have dealt and are continuing to deal with varying forms of discrimination and abuse.

Now, particularly in the wake of the George Floyd and Black Lives Matter protests, we are seeing an increasing number of players and teams confront racist and discriminatory behaviour head on. We see players walking off the pitch if racist behaviour is not addressed. Others kneel.

Now is the time for governing bodies, leagues and clubs to make clear policies on abusive and discriminatory behaviour and stand by their words.

Scottish club Motherwell FC has already taken a step against racism and discrimination by publishing and promoting a <u>policy</u> stating the club's attitude toward issues of racial harassment, abuse or discrimination. The policy clearly highlights steps that will be taken if any signs of abuse take place.

Domestic violence

A much less discussed topic is the abuse that happens when no one is watching. Domestic violence against women is a reality that a sport predominated by men is, for the most part, unwilling to acknowledge.

While sport does not cause domestic violence, research has found that sporting results and major sporting events can directly correlate with a rise in domestic violence incidents. Campaigns began in 2006 at the time of that year's World Cup to bring awareness to the issue, which has continued through the most recent international men's tournament in 2018. In 2018, the Italian Serie A and its players took a step forward against domestic violence, participating in and promoting the now-annual campaign "#unrossoallaviolenza".

Now, with a <u>steep increase</u> in the number of domestic violence incidents against women since the Covid-19 began, it is time for football's governing bodies, its leagues, its clubs, its players and its fans to acknowledge that this is a problem that is directly related to them and to take steps to end this violence.

In addition, athletes themselves have been called out for violence against women, but their actions are often forgiven by the public because of their aptitude on the playing field. As there is no tolerance for racism, there unquestionably should be zero tolerance for violence against women, or anyone.

Refugees and migrants

As of the end of 2019, the <u>UNHCR measured</u> that there are over 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. As host cities welcome refugees and migrants, assimilation into new communities can be challenging because of language and cultural barriers, as well as fear, PTSD and other traumatic aftermaths, lack of opportunity and more. Football, and sport in general, has proven a method to help both refugees and host communities in joining together, having fun and building common understanding.

The Fare network offers a <u>database</u> of refugee football programmes in Europe.

Women's football

Women's football is on a continual rise, with new clubs and leagues, more players and an increasing number of fans. Yet, women's football is still not treated on equal footing with men's. Largely, women are paid less than their male counterparts, and often have lesser facilities or equipment because they are not considered a priority.

In the future, we hope to offer a RESPONSIBALL ranking on women's football.

Of the 20 leagues examined in this year's RESPONSIBALL ranking, 19 have an equivalent women's professional league. South Korea does not have a professional women's league but does have a semi-professional one. Below is a list of the countries with leagues researched in this year's RESPONSIBALL ranking, indicating those with women's professional leagues.

Country	Women's professional league	Website (if available)
Austria	ÖFB-Frauenliga	
Croatia	Croatian Women's First Football League	
Denmark	Elitedivisionen	https://kvindeliga.dk/
England	Women's Super League	https://womenscompetitions.thefa.com/
France	Division 1 Féminine	
Germany	Frauen-Bundesliga	https://www.dfb.de/flyeralarm-frauen-bundesliga/start/
Greece	Greek A Division	https://www.epo.gr/Home.aspx?a_id=256
Italy	Serie A	https://www.figc.it/it/femminile
Japan	Nadeshiko League	<u>http://www.nadeshikoleague.jp/</u>
Mexico	Liga MX Femenil	http://www.ligafemenil.mx/
Netherlands	Eredivisie	https://vrouweneredivisie.nl/
Portugal	Campeonato Nacional Feminino	https://www.fpf.pt/Competi%C3%A7%C3%B5es/ Futebol-Feminino/Liga-BPI
Republic of Ireland	Women's National League	https://wnl.fai.ie/
Russia	Russian Women's Football Championship	https://wfl.rfs.ru/
Scotland	Scottish Women's Premier League	https://www.womenspremierleague.co.uk/
Spain	Primera División Femenina	https://futbolfemenino.rfef.es/es/primera-iberdrola/
South Korea	WK League (semi-professional)	https://www.kwff.or.kr/wkleague/
Sweden	Damallsvenskan	https://www.svenskfotboll.se/serier-cuper/tabell- och-resultat/obos-damallsvenskan-2020/82420/
Switzerland	Axa Women's Super League ²	https://football.ch/sfv/juniorinnen-und- frauenfussball/ligen.aspx/
United States / Canada ³	National Women's Soccer League	https://www.nwslsoccer.com/

² Formerly known as Nationalliga A

³ Both the United States and Canada are responsible for Major League Soccer; therefore, in looking into the status of women's football in each country, it was noted that the United States has a women's professional league, but Canada does not.

Governance

GOOD PRACTICES



FC Schalke O4 (Bundesliga - Germany)

FC Schalke is part of the "Clubs and supporters for better governance in football" project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union and UEFA. The project, coordinated by fan organisation SD Europe, involves member-run football clubs and national supporters' organisations in training, education and exchange programmes, with the overall aim to promote good governance in sport, with particular focus on financial sustainability and member and volunteer engagement and democratic participation.

https://schalkeO4.de/mitglieder-fans/mitgliedschaft/good-governance/

Getafe CF (La Liga - Spain)

In the Getafe CF Foundation's report, the club asserts its commitment to aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It states that by committing to sustainable development, it does so with the intent to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Getafe FC aims to both integrate the SDGs in the management of the organisation while also promoting its dissemination in society. In addition, it is stated the Getafe FC Foundation is a signatory partner of the Spanish Global Compact Network, which confirms its commitment to greater involvement and participation in the advancement of the SDGs in Spain.

https://www.getafecf.com/Portals/O/MRSC_19_20.pdf?ver=2020-05-21-161424-567

St. Mirren (Scottish Premier League)

St. Mirren published the updated "Children's Wellbeing at St. Mirren Football Club" policy in January 2020, which focuses on three key areas of child wellbeing:

- Children's rights
- Child protection
- Anti-bullying

The policy also includes a code of conduct for safeguarding children's wellbeing.

https://www.stmirren.com/images/downloads/2020/policies/childrens-wellbeing-at-stmirren.pdf

NAC Breda (Eredivisie - Netherlands)

NAC Breda published its annual report, which offers a transparent look at the club's finances. This year's report was postponed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, yet the club ensured that all required figures were included, sharing a brief overview before delving into the full report.

https://www.nac.nl/jaarrekening

Community

GOOD PRACTICES



FC Lugano (Swiss Football League)

The FC Lugano Schools Project, a project sponsored by the Supporters Club and coordinated by footballer Fulvio Sulmoni, supports players in visiting elementary school classrooms in the Italian region of Switzerland. With the aim to combat bullying and discrimination among young people, the players participate in and run targeted activities within the classrooms. Ultimately, not only do the children benefit from the lessons learned, but the players do, as well, bringing their experiences back to the team.

https://www.fclugano.com/progetto-scuole/

Ulsan Hyundai (K League 1 – South Korea)

As part of Covid-19 relief efforts beginning in March 2020, Ulsan Hyundai supported the collection and dissemination of food, working with the regional Red Cross branch to reach those most vulnerable and in need. Ulsan Hyundai players were some of those who donated and prepared food sets.

https://www.uhfc.tv/board/board_view.php?page=1&no_seq=52702&buid=with3&s_field=bd_title&s_value=_

AC Milan (Serie A - Italy)

AC Milan believes that the practice of sport can offer significant benefits for both mental and physical wellbeing. The club actively participates in the "Fourth Category" project, which has also been backed by the Italian Football Federation and Lega Calcio. The project, which is a 7-a-side football tournament, is exclusively for athletes with cognitive-relational disabilities.

https://www.acmilan.com/en/club/sustainability

Aalborg BK (Danish Superliga)

Aalborg BK is committed to nurturing and optimising its relationship with its supporters. Working with a Supporter Liaison Officer, the club focuses on creating dialogue with fan groups and general spectators. The dialogue includes fan panels focused on the different areas of being a fan, from merchandise to security; the club uses digital surveys, which are sent out to spectators after each home game, to receive ongoing feedback that will help improve the experience of and relationships with fans.

hhttps://aabsport.dk/nyheder/2017/oktober/aab-ansaetter-ny-fankoordinator/

Environment

GOOD PRACTICES



New York Red Bulls (Major League Soccer - USA/Canada)

The New York Red Bulls' 11 Days of Service initiative was organised to coincide with the national day of service and remembrance on 11 September. To honour the 9/11 victims, survivors and those who rose up in service in response to the attacks on 11 September 2001, the club and community take part in 11 activities, including park clean-ups throughout the city. Participants clean and refurbish park structures, benches and infrastructure, clear overgrown brush, remove trash and add new plants.

https://www.newyorkredbulls.com/content/11-days-service-2019

Club Necaxa (LigaMX - Mexico)

The Rayos del Necaxa participated in a reforestation event in the Municipality of Aguascalientes, with staff from the club's social responsibility department and a handful of players as part of the event. Players were responsible for planting trees, and children and families in attendance joined in support. The event had a fun and family atmosphere, which helped simultaneously bring a joyful aspect to the activities while also learning about and promoting respect for the environment.

https://www.clubnecaxa.mx/noticias/2048/RAYOS-DE-LUZ-PARTICIPAN-EN-REFORESTACIN-DE-PARQUE-LA-PONA

Gamba Osaka (J League - Japan)

Gamba Osaka has joined with an eco-activity partner, Teijin Frontier Co., to carry out a plastic awareness campaign and activities, ensuring that all PET bottles used at the club's stadium are collected and sorted, with caps removed and any remaining liquids discarded appropriately. The collected PET bottles are recycled and turned into polyester fibres, which are then repurposed into Gamba Osaka goods. Since February 2019, 80,000 PET bottles have been collected and recycled as part of this programme.

https://www2.gamba-osaka.net/supporter/plasticbottles_recycle.html

St. Pölten (Tipico Bundesliga - Austria)

St. Pölten encourages family access at home football matches, with a specific family section within the NV Arena. The section includes 800 covered seats, as well as special admission prices incentivising parents to bring the whole family. The club also offers a stroller storage room, an artificial turf playground, a nursing room, and other facilities.

https://www.skn-stpoelten.at/de/arena/arena/familien-kinder

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 in reporting its makeup and activities.

Analysis

The data analysis was based on 46 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.

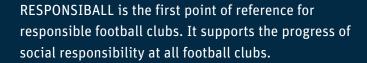
Limitations to the methodology

Each year, new researchers participate in the RESPONSIBALL Ranking. 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 nonspecific 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 overall sustainability performance of all of the clubs in the league, not that 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





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.