



RESPONSIBALL **RANKING** **2021**

The eleventh annual ranking of international football leagues' environmental, social and governance commitments.



THE 2021 RESPONSIBALL RANKING

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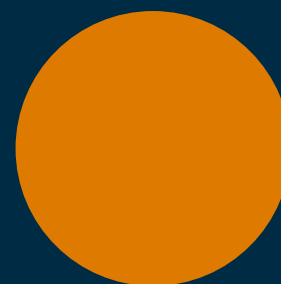
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RESPONSIBALL is the first point of reference for responsible football clubs. It supports the progress of social responsibility at all football clubs.



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FOREWORD

We are pleased to share the eleventh edition of the RESPONSIBALL Ranking. As we begin this next decade of work, we are excited to announce that in this edition 11 women's leagues have been included in the ranking, joining 23 men's leagues. This is the first year that women's football has been included in the research.

It has been said that yesterday's changes become today's routines. The addition of women's football to the ranking is our acknowledgement that, if our goal is to see women's football grow, we must begin to hold it to the same standard that men's is held. However, with women's professional football still in considerably nascent stages, we also encourage clubs, leagues, players, coaches, and fans to explore new ways to take women's football forward without the aim of becoming a carbon copy of their male counterparts.

Looking back on the past season, it is easy to see areas of progress, as well as many issues that have come up in the world of professional football.

While on one hand, more leagues and clubs are beginning to acknowledge and address their responsibility to the environment, many still remain woefully behind in accepting accountability for their impact.

In terms of governance, many heads have been shaking since the now-failed attempt to create a European Super League this past spring. The attempted league may have been thwarted, but it has pointed out the stark inequality in the power structures in clubs, leagues, and associations. While one power structure crumbled, other ones have come out with greater unchallenged control. It is time for real checks and balances to this power.

Ultimately, we are glad the game is back after the first year of COVID, and we are hopeful that positive changes can continue to be made and sustained. We will refrain from airing any further grievances with the game at this point, though we are aware of them and will be monitoring them as this next year progresses.

Finally, we would like to extend our great appreciation to all of the researchers who chose to participate in this year's ranking. It is through their commitment and diligence that we are able to pull together information on so many different leagues each year.

With that, we hope you enjoy the 2021 RESPONSIBALL Ranking!





The RESPONSIBALL Team
November 2021

Ranking 2021 - Men's Overall

1	(1)	Germany			
2	(6)	Denmark			
3	(3)	Sweden			
4	(4)	Japan			
5	(5)	England			
6	(8)	South Korea			
7	(7)	Spain			
8	(9)	Netherlands			
9	(10)	Scotland			
10	(11)	USA/Canada			
11	(12)	Russia			
12	(17)	Italy			
13	(13)	Switzerland			
14	(-)	Norway			
15	(15)	Mexico			
16	(16)	Austria			
17	(-)	Belgium			
18	(19)	Republic of Ireland			
19	(-)	Czech Republic			
20	(-)	Australia			
21	(20)	Greece			
22	(-)	Wales			
23	(-)	India			



Ranking 2021 - Women's Overall

1	England		
2	Sweden		
3	Switzerland		
4	Spain		
5	Czech Republic		
6	USA		
7	Australia		
8	Norway		
9	Italy		
10	France		
11	Japan		



THE RANKING

England's FA Women's Super League achieved the highest overall score, both male and female, in this year's RESPONSIBALL Ranking. However, the English women's league has 12 clubs to its male counterparts' 20. So, the measure cannot be considered the same.

The German Bundesliga has retained its title as the highest scoring league in the men's RESPONSIBALL Ranking. It is not often that there are repeat leaders in this ranking, but the German clubs generally have a consistent commitment to governance, community, and environment.

Scope and methodology

In completing the research, 46 indicators were used for both the men's clubs and the women's for the 2020/21 season. After reviewing the indicators prior to the initiation of this year's research, it was agreed that the indicators are universal enough in scope to be relevant for both men's and women's football.

When looking at clubs' websites, researchers noted that many of the women's club websites were connected with the men's, with information relevant for both. In future rankings, this will be considered, and the RESPONSIBALL team will further develop the report to appropriately share this information.

As with last year, this season was again affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, if to a lesser degree. The greater effect of COVID has been on the ranking itself, having caused delays due to issues that have come up for researchers.



TOPICS

Governance

This year’s men’s governance ranking saw an increase in scores, with clubs’ commitment to good governance becoming more firmly cemented in some areas, while still lagging behind in others.

Increase in average score	●
Decrease in average score	●
Same average score	●
New country added, first score	●

Men's Governance	Results
1. Sweden	● 69%
2. Denmark	● 62%
3. England	● 60%
4. Spain	● 59%
5. Japan	● 54%
6. Germany	● 53%
7. South Korea	● 50%
8. Netherlands	● 43%
9. Italy	● 39%
10. Scotland	● 38%
11. USA/Canada	● 38%
12. Norway	● 35%
13. Switzerland	● 29%
14. Russia	● 25%
15. Austria	● 24%
16. Belgium	● 24%
17. Czech Republic	● 24%
18. Mexico	● 23%
19. Republic of Ireland	● 20%
20. Greece	● 16%
21. Wales	● 16%
22. France	● 13%
23. Australia	● 11%
24. India	● 4%
Total	● 35%

Women's Governance	Results
1. England	● 56.6%
2. Sweden	● 56%
3. Norway	● 32%
4. Switzerland	● 32%
5. Spain	● 31%
6. USA	● 28%
7. Italy	● 27%
8. Czech Republic	● 23%
9. France	● 15%
10. Japan	● 13%
11. Australia	● 11%
Total	● 29.5%



Community

In this year’s men’s community ranking, a number of leagues’ scores decreased, with many curtailing activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other issues.

The women’s leagues ranked highest overall in community, with commitments to player appearances and different social activities making them a growing and strong force in their communities.

Increase in average score	●
Decrease in average score	●
Same average score	●
New country added, first score	●

Men's Community	Results
1. Germany	● 71%
2. England	● 75%
3. Sweden	● 72%
4. Japan	● 71%
5. Denmark	● 71%
6. Russia	● 65%
7. South Korea	● 56%
8. Scotland	● 51%
9. Netherlands	● 49%
10. Australia	● 48%
11. USA/Canada	● 44%
12. Republic of Ireland	● 44%
13. Belgium	● 41%
14. Switzerland	● 40%
15. Italy	● 39%
16. Czech Republic	● 38%
17. Spain	● 37%
18. Austria	● 35%
19. Norway	● 33%
20. Mexico	● 32%
21. France	● 22%
22. Greece	● 11%
23. Wales	● 8%
24. India	● 0%
Total	● 44%

Women's Community	Results
1. England	● 83%
2. Australia	● 45%
3. Sweden	● 43%
4. Switzerland	● 41%
5. Czech Republic	● 37%
6. USA	● 27%
7. Spain	● 23%
8. Japan	● 19%
9. Norway	● 19%
10. France	● 18%
11. Italy	● 18%
Total	● 34%



Environment

Germany has retained its position at the top of the environment ranking, with the league making increasing commitments to the environment, focusing specifically on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In August 2021, it was reported that the German Bundesliga aimed to make sustainability a key part of its overall strategy, with clubs to become carbon neutral.

The more established English women’s league (of the 11 women’s leagues ranked) has the highest score, due in part to its work with frameworks already existing with some of the men’s clubs.

Men's Environment	Results
1. Germany	● 35%
2. Japan	● 25%
3. South Korea	● 22%
4. Denmark	● 18%
5. Mexico	● 17%
6. Spain	● 16%
7. USA/Canada	● 13%
8. Switzerland	● 12%
9. Austria	● 11%
10. England	● 10%
11. Netherlands	● 9%
12. Sweden	● 9%
13. Italy	● 8%
14. France	● 7%
15. Scotland	● 7%
16. Norway	● 7%
17. Russia	● 5%
18. Belgium	● 2%
19. Czech Republic	● 2%
20. Australia	● 2%
21. Republic of Ireland	● 0.56%
22. Greece	● 0%
23. Wales	● 0%
24. India	● 0%
Total	● 10%

Women's Environment	Results
1. England	● 39%
2. Switzerland	● 13%
3. Spain	● 11%
4. France	● 9%
5. USA	● 6%
6. Italy	● 4%
7. Czech Republic	● 4%
8. Sweden	● 3%
9. Japan	● 3%
10. Australia	● 2%
11. Norway	● 0%
Total	● 9%

Increase in average score	●
Decrease in average score	●
Same average score	●
New country added, first score	●

Governance

GOOD PRACTICES



SK Sturm (Austria)

The club provides its statutes, from information on general assemblies to the duties of the Board of Directors, and more. In providing this information, the club shows that it has thought out and determined the roles and duties of those in control of the club.

<https://www.sksturm.at/de/klub/sportklub/statuten/>

Everton FC (England)

Everton FC provides an annual report that chronicles information for both the men and women's clubs. The report looks at finances, community efforts, and return to play following COVID-19. In weaving together the information on both the men's and women's clubs, the report highlights the importance and value of both clubs to the overall Everton community.

<https://resources.evertonfc.com/evertonfc/document/2020/12/11/d54e5284-1986-42ac-b9a7-0123a328aabf/CLUB-0746-2019-20-Report-and-Accounts-230x280mm-SCREEN.pdf>

Rosenborg Ballklub (Norway)

Rosenborg Ballklub is a member-owned club. The website provides information on the role of members, as well as prices (discounted for children, seniors, and young adults), and voting rights and opportunities.

<https://www.rbk.no/om-rbk/medlem>

Community

GOOD PRACTICES



Standard de Liège (Belgium)

The Standard de Liège Community unit, with the help of the Fan Coaching of the City of Liège, developed various social programs for its community, with funds coming directly from the Standard de Liège Foundation. The activities supported by the unit include extracurricular school assistance for students who encounter difficulties in their primary or secondary education.

<https://standard.be/fr/aider-les-enfants-a-semerveiller>

Adelaide United (Australia)

In recognition of the importance of playing an active role within the community, Adelaide United is committed to assisting the growth of local organisations. The majority of Adelaide United player appearances are undertaken at local schools, junior clubs, and Adelaide United events.

<https://www.adelaideunited.com.au/player-appearances>

FC Dallas (USA/Canada)

FC Dallas has provided a wide variety of dining options for fans and visitors to its stadium, including healthier meal choices and vegan and vegetarian options. In doing so, the club has created a venue that is not only more welcoming to people who may have different dietary needs or desires. It has also taken a step to promote healthier eating choices.

<https://www.fcdallas.com/dining>

Environment

GOOD PRACTICES



Seongnam FC (South Korea)

Seongnam FC supports opportunities for fans to apply for carpooling and shuttle buses to away games.

https://www.seongnamfc.com/fan/away_apply

Pec Zwolle (Netherlands)

PEC Zwolle want to make their home region more sustainable, which is why the club now generates solar energy together with its partners. The club even offers fans the chance to use the green energy from PECPOWER and receive either a gift or a discount as a result of the electricity and gas agreement. The club's partner energy supplier ENGIE makes the energy available to fans.

<https://peczwolle.nl/pec-power>

Arminia Bielefeld (German Bundesliga)

Players and members of the club are involved in environmental sensitization projects, including an environmental protection campaign to protect the region's forests.

<https://www.arminia.de/der-dsc/verantwortung/umwelt>



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

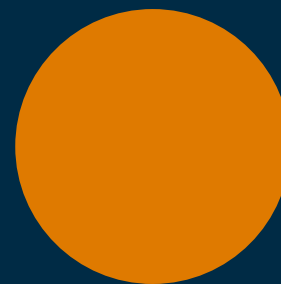
Each year, new researchers participate in the RESPONSIBALL Ranking. As such, and because there are numerous researchers each year, there may be inconsistencies within the research due to (conscious or unconscious) biases, comprehension and language abilities, and adherence to the indicators and guidelines.

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 their work on their website. The indicators used are nonspecific and not approved standards. They were chosen because they should and can 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 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

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.