

Inclusion

Greater representation from Black and Asian players must be encouraged and in places demanded. Integration and inclusion of opportunities should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to allow action to be taken in areas that are needed.

To deliver strategic systematic change to the system, initiatives and programmes must work together and involve the grassroots community in the design of programmes and decisions that will ultimately affect them. Only a joined up approach can make any sustained improvements to the way governing bodies' work with players and clubs.

Inequalities in football can be felt even by those outside of sport, the scales must be balanced before they are forced to topple by the hands of those with nothing to lose

-Anonymous Aged 39

Conclusion

The conversation of race, equality and discrimination is of key importance to generations across the country, as many remain frustrated with developments to improve broken systems. The voices and experiences that speak within this report demand clear routes to debate, be heard and influence policies and procedures that will create a more inclusive holistic sporting community.

In order for the culture of football to change it is important to recognise that openness and transparency will allow for lessons to be learnt and provide an opportunity for staff, players, teams and communities to impact improvements. To restore any trust from the grassroots community there must be honesty at all levels of the football system

The grassroots community must be included and represented in discussions in order to help develop better ways of working with an emphasis on the essential duty to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The importance of communication must not be forgotten whilst working to improve the system. In effect it is vital to bridging the knowledge and information gap between players, clubs and authorities. Messages must be clear and target all those that will be benefit from hearing them.

Nirvana will continue work with communities to fuse football and the sporting development of individuals, with the wider support of advocacy to influence public and sporting policy and the decisions that ultimately affect members.

Leicester Nirvana FC
100 Sandhills Avenue
Hamilton, Leicester, LE5 1LU

 Leicester Nirvana Fc

 LeicNirvanaFc

 info@leicesternirvana.co.uk

 LEICESTERNIRVANA

www.leicesternirvana.co.uk



Consulting Communities

Volume 1

Nirvana Conference 2013
Key Feedback



Key feedback from Nirvana conference in 2013

The purpose of this report is to feedback the views of delegates that attended the Nirvana conference event in partnership with the launch of the Race For Football Roadshows held in 2013. The feedback is based around two headings – Is the football system failing all those involved in it regarding discrimination, race and equality; and what measures need to be taken or put in place to deliver better outcomes for those affected.

These views demonstrate that there is a real need for solutions and a constructive and informed debate not just within the Black and Asian community in football but also within the wider community itself.

Is the system failing?

A series of questions were asked of the audience at last year's event in order to provide some context regarding their experiences of direct and indirect discrimination. They gave the following responses:

- 73% of respondents said they had witnessed or experienced racism in football
- 64% of the respondents found the reporting process to be poor
- 64% of respondents had witnessed or experienced racism in football and not reported it to the FA
- 65% said that it was because they did not think they'd be taken seriously by the FA
- 29% of respondents thought that racism in football had stayed the same over the last 10 years
- 29% thought racism has got worse

These shocking statistics are underpinned by the attendee's feelings, views and experiences that the system has failed football by the lack of determination in solving the problems of inequality, discrimination and racism in such a popular sport.



Delegates felt that the football governing bodies have the resources to make change but lacked the commitment to use their power, which is affecting football and all those who play the game.

Delegates commented that as racist abuse is a crime, the system is failing to implement justice by shying away from a culture change. Delegates also said that the punishments were not severe enough for racist abuse and discriminative behaviour in football.

These failings were believed to have filtered in to the grassroots arena. At a grassroots level there are many unreported incidents due to lack of confidence in the system. The perception is that players and those in authority at times brush incidences under the carpet and those that play the game often feel that it is 'part of the game' to accept the situation, live with it and move on.

Recommendations: What measures need to be taken or put in place?

The one thing that is clear from the feedback is that there is no one single solution to overhaul the system that is clearly not working. Attendees agreed that it is vital to have more consultation with players and clubs in order to help divine and solve issues within the game. To be truly committed to bettering the system, there needs to be meaningful discussions both open and transparent.

“With no realistic confidence in the system, whom do we go to for support?”
-Anonymous Aged 34

Many of the suggested areas for recommendations and improvement fall in to five categories, which are education, safeguarding, representation, sanctions and inclusion. Below are some of the comments that were captured through table discussions at the conference in 2013.

Education

Local experiences have determined that a form of cultural learning is necessary to provide understanding to all those involved in football. Team members need to be educated about how to behave especially when involving diverse and hard to reach communities.

Coach education and referee education should have a race element to the training and as part of best practice; football should seek to learn from other sports.

Issues of race and discrimination should be prioritised and success rates of cases monitored and shared, along with open channels to challenge authorities to change attitudes.

Although outside of the scope of football, cultural learning should be encouraged and incorporate in to the school syllabus. Many attitudes are adopted and confirmed in the school playground and could be restricted by classroom learning.

“Racism is just part of the game, it's something that I have to deal with so I just get on with it”
-Anonymous Aged 14

There is massive concern over the safeguarding of victims of racism and discrimination especially those under the age of 18 years of age. This should be inline with government safeguarding policies and flagged to the authorities if there is a concern or incident. Filters should be in place to monitor decisions that may affect the welfare of children and young people.

Representation

Membership of governing boards should seek to reflect diversity in order to bring a holistic viewpoint to discussions. A consideration maybe the placing of a young person on executive boards or a shadow young peoples board to consult with on major decisions, including scholars and grassroots players.

Role models for ethnic communities to look up to must be given the freedom and the opportunity to meet communities. This in part can be achieved through targeted approaches and programmes for BME players allowing equal access to professional football clubs and paid work within the football industry.

BME clubs and players locally should be given every opportunity to share best practice and challenge decisions collectively.

Sanctions

Sanctions for clubs and players found guilty of racism should be seriously reviewed and sit inline with the professional game. Information for cases should be scrutinised similar to a legal case and possibly require a lower burden of proof where race and discrimination is concerned.

There should be a greater financial loss for the clubs found guilty of discrimination and to those who do not respect equality. A rule to stop games with racist incidents should be an option for the victimised team, with penalties for the perpetrators.

