



Child Safeguarding in Finnish football EU & CoE -webinar 26.1.2021

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FINNISH FOOTBALL IN NUMBERS



136 055
REGISTERED PLAYERS



27 304 GIRL PLAYERS
5 100 WOMAN PLAYERS



81 159 BOY PLAYERS
22 488 MAN PLAYERS



2 719
REFEREES



~11 000
COACHES



878
MEMBER CLUBS



66 066
OFFICIAL MATCHES



~375 000
RECREATIONAL PLAYERS



~99 000
VOLUNTEERS



298/310
REGISTERED PLAYERS
IN 298 FINNISH
MUNICIPALITIES



661
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES
IN THE MEMBER CLUBS OF
THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION,
OF WHOM 411 ARE COACHES
OR JUNIOR AND COACHING
HEADS.



1,2 BILLION
EUROS
FOOTBALL'S SROI*

*THE VALUE OF PARTICIPATION IN FINNISH FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES AS HEALTH, SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO OUR SOCIETY ON A YEARLY LEVEL.

The operating field for Finnish football and futsal





Child Safeguarding in football



Roles of UEFA, FIFA, FA and NOC/FINCIS



INTERNATIONAL: UEFA/FIFA

UEFA

UEFA Grassroots Charter -criteria

UEFA FSR / Child safeguarding Team & Terre des Hommes

Child Safeguarding Focal Point Training

UEFA SHARE (Study Group Scheme)

Toolkit & online platform for Member Associations

FIFA

FIFA FSR / Child safeguarding Team

FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Sport Diploma

Toolkit for Member Associations

NATIONAL: FA, NOC and FINCIS

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND

Grassroots Charter → FAF Club Charter -criteria

FAF working group: Focal point, Head of Communications & Lawyer + Club dev. Team

Annual Audit visits to Clubs - process check, feedback and continuous support

NOC, FINCIS, FAMILY FEDERATION, OTHER SPORTS

NOC: Sustainability program

FINCIS: "ILMO" -reporting platform and use of experts

Family Federation: "You are not alone" -service

Other sports: Knowledge sharing

Child Safeguarding in Finnish football



FAF Mission statement:

**”Football is...
...safe for everyone”**

Association

**Clubs and
Teams**

Focal point/
Club Charter/
Audit visits/
Feedback

Toolkit and
continuous
communication

Role of Board and
paid Staff,
Focal point,
communication,
”ABC”: what if...

Training for coaches,
administrators,
players, parents



Case example from Finnish football



The Case



- **15 year-old girl and middle-aged male goalkeeper coach (full-time)**
- **Close relationship, which led step-by-step between autumn 2018 and spring 2019 to sexual harassment in Instagram and WhatsApp**
 - girl told first time about harrashment to her sister and a bit later to her parents (mid June 2019)
 - parents contacted the Club and the coach was asked to give his counterword to the Club
 - police was contacted, but there was not strong enough evidence of crime
 - Club terminated the work contract at the end of June 2019
 - criminal background check had been made earlier - it was clean
 - case was not reported by the Club to FA or other parties, because the family did not want that to happen at the time
- **The Coach signed new work contract with another Club in Autumn 2019 to continue to work as a goalkeeper coach**
 - criminal background check was made - it was clean

FA was informed - the actions took place



- **FA was contacted on 4th of June in 2020** by Managing Director of big youth football tournament
 - girl was interviewed to a tournament podcast and told in the interview, that she has had problems with motivation in football. She has also had challenges with her self-esteem.
 - reason for this was inappropriate behaviour/sexual harassment by her former coach
 - girl also told in the interview, that the coach is currently working in another Club
 - she gave permission to Managing Director to report about her case for the FA

- **FA contacted new and former Club on June 4th in 2020**
 - coach was suspended temporarily from all of his work at the new Club
 - FA asked the statement both from the and the new Club
 - FA informed FINCIS about the case and discussed about next steps
 - FA contacted the parents and recieved both the statement and digital evidence about messages
 - FA informed about the case internally (political/operational)

Media release and the outcome



- **FA published a media release early on June 7th on the website**
 - media plan was agreed between FA, family, old Club and new Club on June 6th
 - it was agreed, that FA's focal point and the presidents of the both Clubs are the ones, who are commenting the case. Key messages were agreed.
 - media coverage was large and the case was in news on daily basis during the first week and it was raised again, when FA's disciplinary process were progressing
- **FA Disciplinary Committee suspended on June 26th the Coach until the end of the year 2020**
 - all the parties (family, old club, new club, FINCIS and internally at the FA) were informed about the decision before the media release was published
 - the Club terminated work contract permanently
 - media release was published
 - FA's internal working group evaluated the process and existing intructions/toolkit and made some minor adjustments for the future needs
 - the case caused a minor "snow-ball -effect" and some other cases from the past was reported to FA

Child safeguarding - where are we now at the FA of Finland?



Four strengths

- 1) **Strong commitment to safeguarding from top executives**
- 2) **Clear written policy, processes and templates in place**
- 3) **FAF Club Charter as a tool to evaluate/ measure progress and to implement new content**
- 4) **Active co-operation with external experts, such as**
 - Family Federation of Finland
 - National Olympic Committee
 - Finnish Center for Integrity in Sports (FINCIS)
 - Ministry of Education and Culture/Sports Division

Four “gaps” to cover

- 1) **Promoting the policy to children is not yet implemented well enough - clear need to raise awareness among children and young people**
- 2) **At the moment we cannot guarantee, that all members of staff and volunteers have been trained on child safeguarding**
- 3) **Especially promoting the policy and it’s advice and support to children is not yet implemented well enough - clear need to raise awareness among children and young people as well as among families**
- 4) **Risk assessment processes have not yet been systematically executed at all levels/activities**



Thank You!



Appendix

FINNISH FOOTBALL AND FUTSAL STRATEGY



Our mission is **football for everyone**

Football in its different forms...

is possible
for
everyone

Participation in activities both on and off the field is possible for everyone regardless of income level, age, gender, physical impairments or place of residence. There are different kinds of paths available, and from Finland it is always possible to leap to the absolute top of a sport.

is good for
everyone

FOOTBALL MOVES. Every week football makes hundreds of thousands of people move and engage in sport together. A wide range of club activities, diverse opportunities for participation and constantly developing coaching attract people to a lifelong relationship with sports.

FOOTBALL BUILDS CHARACTER by practising and playing. By winning and losing. Through success and failure. Always together. From the ideals of sport arise values such as courage, persistence, perseverance and respect for others - values that will serve on well in life off the playing field as well.

FOOTBALL CONNECTS. On teams, in clubs and in the stands among fans meaningful communities are born. From these develop lifelong friendships and networks. Football communities prevent exclusion and loneliness.

is safe for
everyone

On the playing field, everyone is equal, and being different gives strength. Football is a game for everyone, and it must be safe for everyone. The football family promotes equality and respectful behaviour both on and off the field.

Our vision 2030 is to be a successful football nation and a promoter of well-being

A successful football nation

A high-quality player path is offered to all players regardless of club or gender. Finland is a top country for football training with highly competent coaches and club actors. Finland's top-quality operating environments compare well with the other Nordic countries.

Finnish national teams, club teams and top players are successful. Football professionals enjoy social recognition both on and off the field. Sport, club and fan cultures are strong and growing.

Conditions are inviting for watching and participating in football.

A promoter of well-being

Active, viable clubs form a firm foundation for the development and well-being of the sport. Football is an attractive activity, one which can be played in many ways throughout life. For every child or youth there is a competent coach supporting his or her growth and development. Clubs provide a meaningful community that strengthens one's well-being throughout life. Children and youth grow up in a sports environment, one in which it is safe to challenge oneself and others. The well-being generated by football in society is significant and widely recognised. Accountability is inbuilt in the activities of the clubs and the Association.

MISSION

FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE

Strategic objectives

GROWTH AS AN ATHLETE AS THE STARTING POINT FOR ACTIVITIES

GOAL-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKED CLUBS

THE GREATEST SPORT ON AND OFF THE FIELD

A PROGRESSIVE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF CLUBS

Strategy options and objectives

A trained and competent coach for every player

Competent club leadership

Increasing number of players

User-friendly digital services

Supportive operating environments in the clubs to enhance quality of everyday-life

Quality player paths through cooperation with clubs

Communication strengthening the football community

Analysis and research data to support decision-making

National team activities to promote the development of top-class football

Valued role of clubs in their local communities

A commercially interesting sport with attractive conditions

An organisation that meets the needs of the clubs

Competitions to serve player development needs

Indicators

Number of competent coaches in relation to the number of teams

International rankings of clubs and national teams

Number of full-time employees in the clubs

Number of players

Satisfaction of the clubs with the services of the Football Association

VISION 2030

A SUCCESSFUL FOOTBALL NATION - A PROMOTER OF WELL-BEING