



DON'T X THE LINE

Press Release

GRASS ROOTS RADIO

121
on the internet

reFspect

Referee Awareness Weekend 12th-13th March 2016

We at the Don't X The Line Campaign, are working closely with The Professional Footballers Association, The FA, Professional Game Match Officials (PGMOL), The Football Association of Ireland & County Football Association's including Professional Football Clubs, by raising awareness and help to eliminate problems experienced by referees at all levels of the game especially at grassroots level.

The reFspect awareness weekend is an initiative aimed at improving the behaviour of parents and spectators.

By reducing the number of incidents of poor touchline behaviour we aim to maintain the current number of referees and help to attract many more new referees to the beautiful game.

We would like all football clubs to raise awareness of reFspect by signing up to support the weekend.

This can be done online at www.dontxtheline.com or by calling 07951 442 480

NO REFEREE - NO GAME

Notes to Editors

Don't X The Line (DXTL) was established in December 2003 by founder Malcolm Lee, to support a zero tolerance among those people involved in football refusing to tolerate constant aggression, verbal abuse, bullying & racism on and off the field.

The PGMOL, over several years have supported the awareness weekend by wearing reFspect t-shirts around Premier League grounds during warm-ups, this helps to encourage improved behaviour from the touchlines & more referees into the game at junior level.

Mal was commended for his dedication around the communities Nationally with the DXTL campaign in 2009 by The FA, receiving the Sir Bobby Moore, fair play & respect award presented by HRH Prince William & and Stephanie Moore.

DXTL Ambassadors include:

Keith Hackett

www.you-are-the-ref.com

Dr Esther Burkitt Psycol, CSci, FHEA, Reader in Developmental Psychology





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Why We Began

I have been involved in grassroots football over 30 years; throughout those years I have witnessed first hand, aggression, verbal abuse, racist comments and bullying, we now have the added attraction; of smoking illegal substances throughout our touchlines, this we should also address and eliminate.

I have witnessed children crying because their parents are involved in fighting with the opponent parents, referees abandoning games and walking away from them, never to return to the game because of threats and abusive comments directed at them.

Committee members have stepped down due to aggressive parents, and sometimes managers. Campaigns like **Don't X The Line** must be continued to be supported by the decent people who support the sport for all the right reasons.



Don't X The Line Founder Mal Lee receiving his Bobby Moore Award.

Together we must protect our children and referees, and bring the sportsmanship and fair play back into grassroots football.

I was at one of the local parks one Sunday morning, I stopped to listen to a few abusive parents at a junior league game involving under 16s. It was a game that the referee was questioned by spectators for every decision that he had made during the game, suddenly All hell broke loose between some of the parents and players. The referee started running for his life as he was also an unfortunate target. Luckily for the referee it was brought to a halt by ourselves the committee and no one was seriously hurt. Why should anyone have to put up with this sort of behaviour at any sporting event, as this is a learning process for our youngsters is it not.?

This was the moment that I decided something had to be done, especially to defend the referees, as unfortunately they are the ones in the firing line from all sides.

I discussed a campaign being formed with one of the local referees who told me something had to be done. Once I had returned home I started to put pen to paper with ideas; and came up with the title of **Don't X The Line**, after my wife Shirley put her input of the X instead of the word cross, which was a brilliant idea. Early that morning when I awoke at 4am, in my head were the ideas for forming the campaign. I got up went downstairs and wrote all the details down; after just 48 hours I had all the literature back from the printers and I was ready to launch **Don't X The Line**.

In January 2004 I met first with Everton Football Club, shortly followed by Liverpool FC, they both approved of the campaign and gave us their full support, with the use of logo's and museum tours for the teams and spectators who showed the best sportsmanship throughout the season within their leagues. Before long I was nominated for a Barclaycard award by Everton FC, which to my astonishment and embarrassment, I won. **Don't X The Line** became an award winning campaign. Years on we are still attracting high profile support and in years to come, and as long as it takes to improve a better life for our referees and children, we will still be here.

Referees **E**xpect **S**portsmanship **P**articipation **E**nthusiasm **C**ommunication **T**eamwork





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Don't X The Line Campaign is credited as the forerunner for the FA's, Respect Programme; we are a CIC and voluntary organisation. We are very proud of its achievements to date. Also, we will continue to make a difference at grassroots level by relying on the ongoing work carried out by our many volunteers

Last year professional football clubs supported the **Don't X The Line** reSpect awareness weekend, by promoting the message over the public address system, on the club websites and in the match-day programme.

Some clubs further responded by providing the use of the logo for the campaign website, a few managers also responded and participated by wearing a lapel badge in support of the awareness weekend.

Don't X The Line would like to request the media, football clubs and County FA'S to offer active support wherever possible for the reSpect awareness and fair play weekend at grassroots football.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Further contact for interviews and photo opportunities are as follows:

Mal Lee (Founder **Don't X The Line Campaign**): AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW 07951442480

Website: www.dontxtheline.com

Email: mal@dontxtheline.com



Barriers A Visual Deterrent.



Touchline Barriers Help Referees To Combat Pitch Encroachment.

