

2023/2024

INCIDENT REPORTING

End of Season Review



OVERVIEW

THE 2023/ 24 SEASON

International tournaments have bookended the 2023/ 24 season: from the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia/ New Zealand in July last year to the UEFA EURO 2024 this summer in Germany. In between, the English domestic season provided plenty of football talking points as usual.

Kick It Out has received record numbers of reports of discriminatory behaviour at all levels of the game, and online.

Following last season's 65% increase in reports, this season's total represents an increase of nearly **A THIRD** on the 22/ 23 season total.

In fact, the **1,332** reports received since 1st July 2023 account for **38%** of the total reports received in the last five full seasons.

This review will give an overview of trends within each of the three reporting areas:

 Professional Game  Grassroots  Online

It will also highlight the stand-out increases seen in the following **5** key areas. These trends have stood out within this season's numbers as either increasing significantly from the previous year, or continuing to rise:



- 1 Racism
- 2 Faith-based abuse
- 3 Sexism & Misogyny
- 4 Abuse towards Professional Players
- 5 Abuse within Grassroots youth football



OVERVIEW

PRO GAME



- **440** pro-game reports, 44 less than last season (484) – down **9%**.
 - **HALF** of the pro-game reports received are racist in nature.
 - **30%** more sexist reports.
 - **47%** more non-discriminatory reports: including tragedy chanting, and anti-social behaviour.
- **69** mass chanting reports, down **36%** on last season (107) – although the Premier League accounts for **52%** of these, a rise of **+2%** on last season.
- **131** reports of in-stadia discriminatory abuse toward specific players, down **37%** on last season.
- **40%** of the reports are regarding abuse directed towards other fans, and there is a small increase (**9%**) in abuse directed towards officials.



GRASS ROOTS



- **303** grassroots reports, up **25%** on last season (242).
 - Over **x1.5** times as many Faith reports (including **x7** times as many Antisemitic reports and **40%** more Islamophobic reports).
 - **45%** more reports of Sexism.
- **41%** of all reports are Player on Player abuse, a slight drop on last season's **44%**.
 - A significant rise in abuse toward officials, with over **TWICE** as many reports.
- A **29%** increase in reports from youth football (under 18's and below).
 - More reports from **U12** and **U13** football than any other age group.
- Biggest increase in reports from the **SOUTHERN** County FA region: **60%** increase.
 - Although one CFA in the north of the country had the biggest % increase in reports: up **220%**.



SOCIAL MEDIA



- **589** social media reports: over **TWICE** as many as last season (281).
 - Nearly **THREE TIMES** the number of racist reports.
 - **179%** increase in faith reports (including **x3** times as many Antisemitic reports and **x3.5** times as many Islamophobic reports).
 - **183%** increase in reports of transphobia.
 - **50%** more sexist reports.
- **TWITTER/ X** is still the platform seeing the most abuse. Over **x2.5** times as many reports from this platform than in the 22/23 season. There has also been a big increase in reports of abuse on **INSTAGRAM**: nearly **x4** times as many reports as last year.
- **58%** of all sexist/misogynistic social media reports ever received into Kick It Out have come this season.



2023/ 24 Season
Incident Reporting

KEY AREA:

1 RACISM

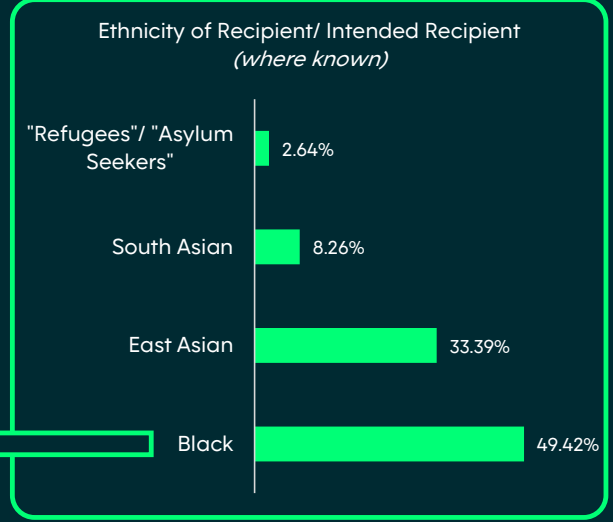
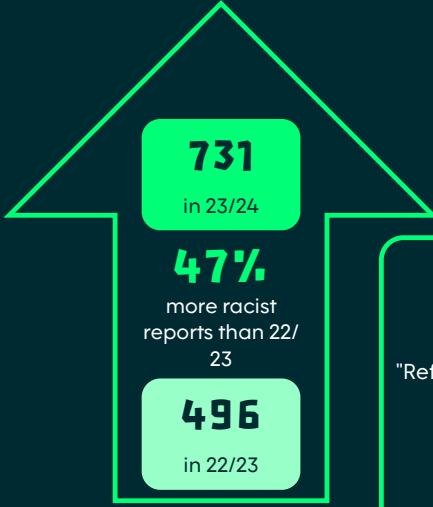
Kick It Out was formed as an anti-racism campaign over 30 years ago. Since then, the organisation has evolved to tackle all forms of discrimination within football.

However, season on season, racist abuse towards players, club staff, officials, and other fans form a significant percentage of Kick It Out's reports. **731** of the reports received this season are racist in nature – well over half the full total, and a bigger proportion than last season.

Even with record numbers of reports, the fact that the volume of racist reports continues to rise by close to **HALF**, season on season, is cause for concern.

Racism in the game isn't contained to the top leagues. In reports received from grassroots football, the proportion of racist incidents rises to nearly **58%**.

54.9% of all reports received by Kick It Out this season are racist in nature. An increase of over **5** percentage points on the 22/ 23 season.

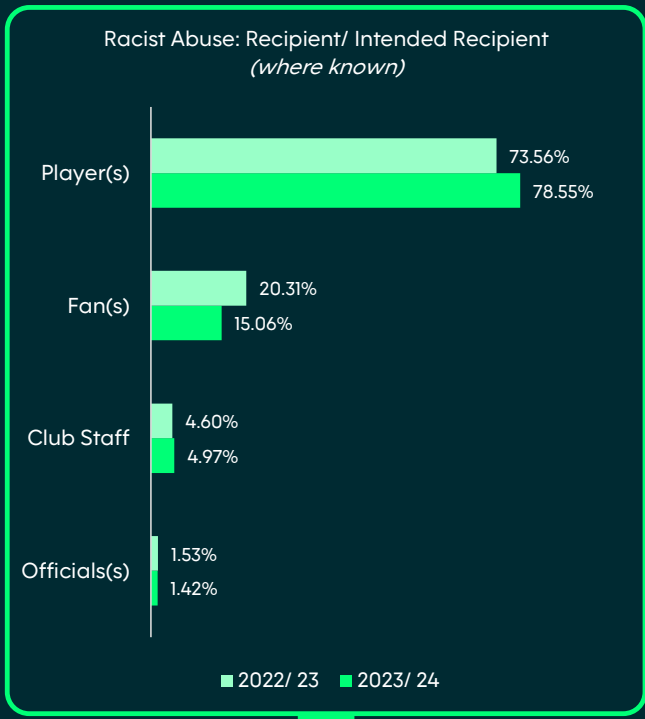


Close to **HALF** of the racist reports received this season deal with abuse directed towards black players, staff and fans.



KEY AREA:

1 RACISM



Compared to last season, the proportion of reports of racist abuse directed at other **FANS** has dropped. However, this relates to an actual **RISE** in reports received, of close to **DOUBLE** last year.

53%

Reports of racism account for almost 3/5 incidents in the grassroots game, and it's on the pitch where most of this abuse is happening. **53%** of racist grassroots reports are player-on-player.

In fact, overall racist abuse towards **PLAYERS** from fans, club staff, officials and other players accounts for **82%** of racist reports at this level.

65%

Kick It Out received reports of racist incidents involving fans from **65%** (60) of the "92" professional league clubs.

PREMIER LEAGUE: Only **2** clubs did not have an incident of racism reported either at their stadium, or regarding their fans this season.

CHAMPIONSHIP: Only **4** clubs' fans not reported for racist abuse. Racist incidents also reported to Kick It Out from **17** different grounds.

LEAGUE 1: Of the 24 teams in the league, **HALF** received at least one report of a racist incident, whilst it was reported at **14** grounds.

LEAGUE 2: Fans from **10** different teams were the subject of racist reports, at **11** different home grounds.

76%

Over three quarters of racist reports of abuse on social media/ online are directed towards players. Most of these are in full public view, either as individual's stand-alone posts or comments under match reports/ club posts. However, **17%** of these reports are regarding direct messages sent to the players themselves over social media.

KEY AREA:

2 FAITH-BASED ABUSE

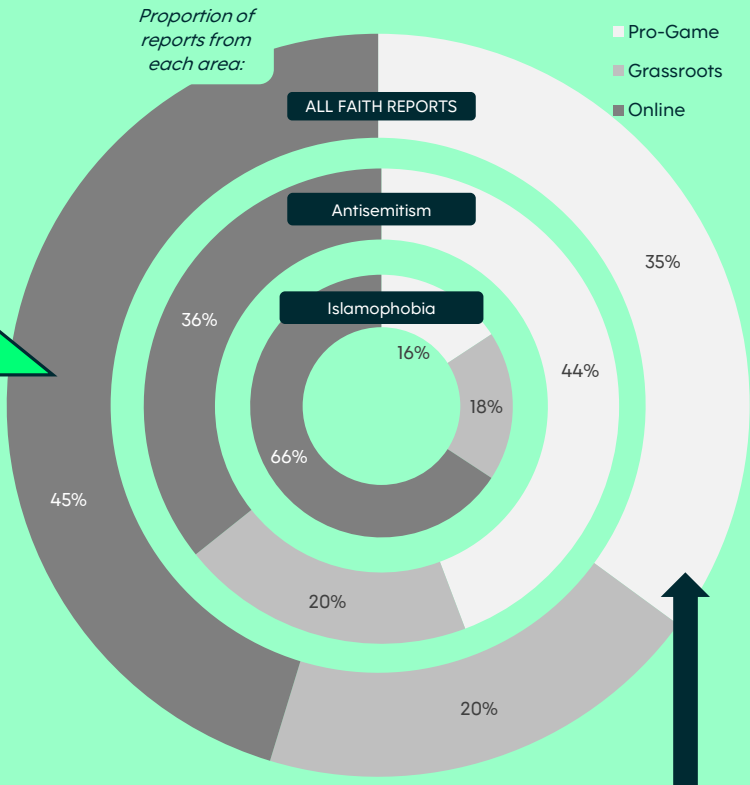
34% Increase in faith-based discriminatory reports received by Kick It Out in the 23/ 24 season

Kick It Out received an increase in reports of faith-based discrimination from across the game. Whilst last season saw a slight decrease in these reports (compared to 2021/ 22), the continuing conflict in the Middle East has contributed to a record number of reports of this type of abuse. An increase of close to a **THIRD** from last season.

Kick It Out received more online faith-based discriminatory reports following the attacks on 7th October 2023, compared to the last 4 seasons combined.

138% more Islamophobic reports than 22/ 23

63% more antisemitic reports than 22/ 23



As the chart above shows, the *overall* majority proportion of faith-based reports comes from comments made online. There are, however, fluctuations with the report source: a higher proportion of antisemitic reports were received from the pro-game (**44%**), whereas more reports of Islamophobia came from online spaces (**66%**).

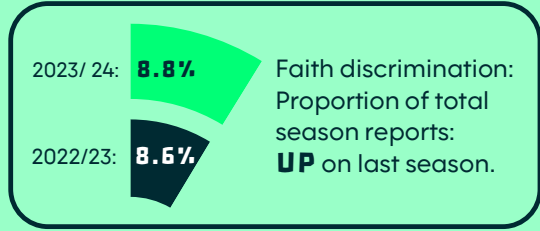
Faith discrimination received from matches involving clubs from **9** different County FAs.

Faith discrimination received from posts/ comments made on **4** different online platforms.

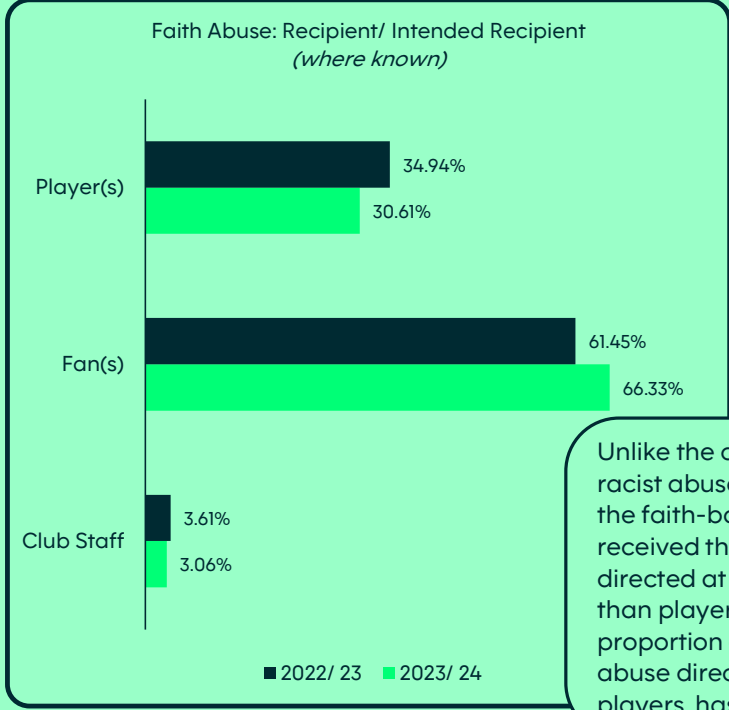
Faith discrimination received from matches at **16** different professional grounds.

KEY AREA:

2 FAITH-BASED ABUSE



61% of all antisemitic and Islamophobic reports received this season, came in the two months following the 7th October attacks.



- Examples of discriminatory incidents reported to Kick It Out following the escalation in violence in Israel and Palestine include:
- A university-based Jewish football team **REFUSING TO PLAY** a match based on the ethnicity of their opponents.
 - Parents of players for a youth **UNDER 14'S** team refusing to let their children play in a game against a predominantly Jewish team.
 - A former chairman of a grassroots club filmed embarking on an anti-immigration, anti-Islam **RANT** directed at peaceful pro-Palestine protest at a London train station – posted across social media.
 - Professional players from both Jewish and Muslim backgrounds receiving **ONLINE HATE** regarding either their faith or content they shared/ posted.

Unlike the chart regarding racist abuse, **TWO THIRDS** of the faith-based abuse received this season was directed at other **FANS** rather than players. In fact, the proportion of this type of abuse directed towards players, has fallen this season

Anti-Catholic sectarian abuse reports fell by nearly 3/4 this season from last. Whilst Kick It Out has never received many reports of this type of faith discrimination, it is still encouraging to see less than the previous season.

73% less Sectarian reports than 22/ 23.

KEY AREA:

3 SEXISM & MISOGYNY

Following on from the massive five-fold increase in reports of sexism/misogyny from 2021/ 22 to 2022/ 23, this season sees a further **43.8%** increase. This means that in the last two seasons alone, Kick It Out have seen close to **SEVEN TIMES** as many sexist reports than the organisation has ever received.

These reports highlight not only ever-increasing incidents of abuse towards women players (both professional and grassroots), but fans, officials and club staff involved in the men's game – at all levels.

The rise is more predominant online: up by a **HALF** from last season. Sexist social media comments and posts reported to Kick It Out form **60%** of all reports of this type received in 2023/ 24.

43.8% overall increase in reports of sexism/ misogyny received into Kick It Out this season, compared to 2022/ 23.

2023/ 24 saw 12 reports of sexist abuse directed towards:

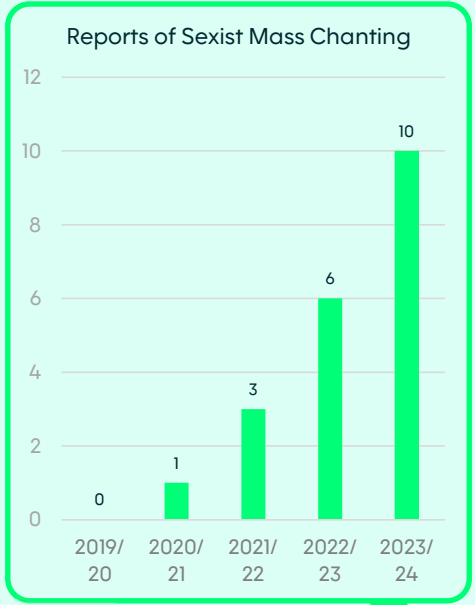
8 DIFFERENT WSL PLAYERS

The highest number of professional women players Kick It Out has received specific reports of sexist abuse towards in a season.

Up from the 6 reports regarding 4 players last season

2023/ 24: **8.7%** Sexism/ Misogyny: proportion of total season reports

2022/23: **7.9%** **UP** on last season.



Kick It Out has received a worrying increase in reports of sexist mass-chanting this season. In fact, chants of this nature this season account for **13%** of all discriminatory chanting reports – the highest it's ever been (5% in 2022/ 23).

As many sexist mass-chanting reports have been received this season (**10**) than the previous four combined.

Increase in Sexist Reports from last season:




KEY AREA:

3 SEXISM & MISOGYNY

58% of the sexist social media/ online reports received in the last 5 years have come **THIS SEASON**. Increases in reports from most of the prominent social media platforms have been seen:

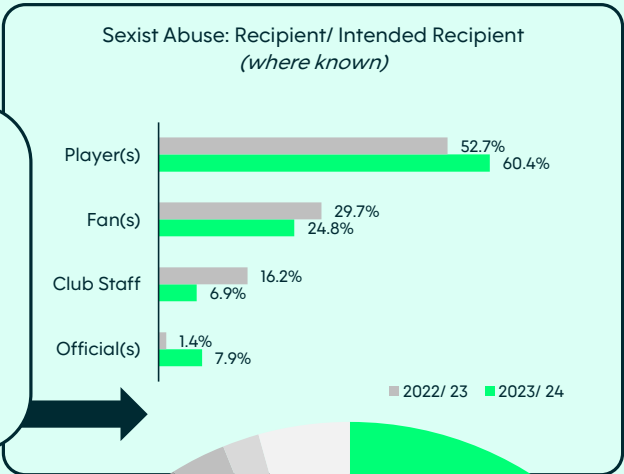
35% ↑  increase in reports of sexist comments on Twitter/ X posts.

450% ↑  increase in reports of sexist comments on Instagram posts.

29% ↑  increase in reports of sexist comments on YouTube videos.

THREE FIFTHS of the sexist abuse reported to Kick It Out this season has been directed towards players/ex-players.

The other point of note is the substantial rise in sexist abuse towards officials – up **6.5** percentage points on last season, on the back of the Premier League’s first woman referee.

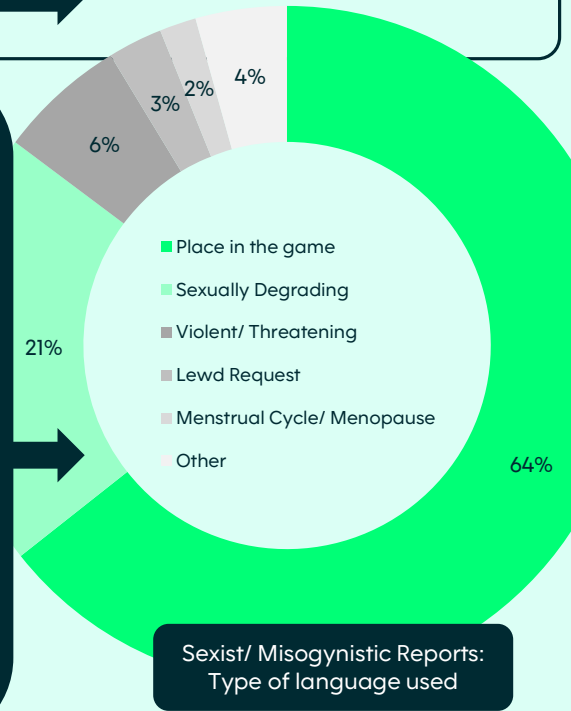


Analysis of the language reported at all levels of football, and online, shows that almost **TWO THIRDS** of reports contain questioning of women’s place in the game. Either as a player, coach or fan.

A worrying **21%** contained sexually degrading language and insults.

Broken down into the reporting types, the use of sexually degrading language is far more prominent in reports from professional matches (forming **47%**).

In online spaces, comments surrounding women’s validity in football (usually at a professional level, either as player, coach or pundit/ presenter) are by far the most prolific. These form **86%** of sexist online reports received.



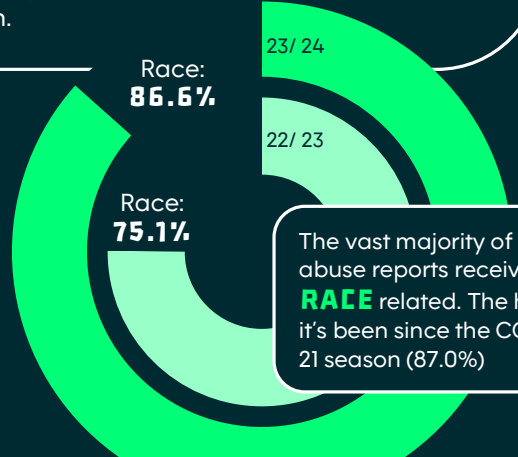
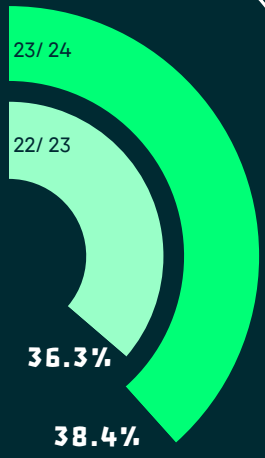
KEY AREA:

4 ABUSE TOWARDS PRO PLAYERS

Kick It Out has received more player-specific discriminatory reports this season than ever before.

Close to **TWO FIFTHS** of all pro-game and social media reports received in total this season is a report of player abuse.

Isolated, player abuse accounts for **29.8%** of all pro-game reports, and **44.8%** of all social media reports this season.



The vast majority of player-specific abuse reports received this season are **RACE** related. The highest proportion it's been since the COVID affected 20/21 season (87.0%)

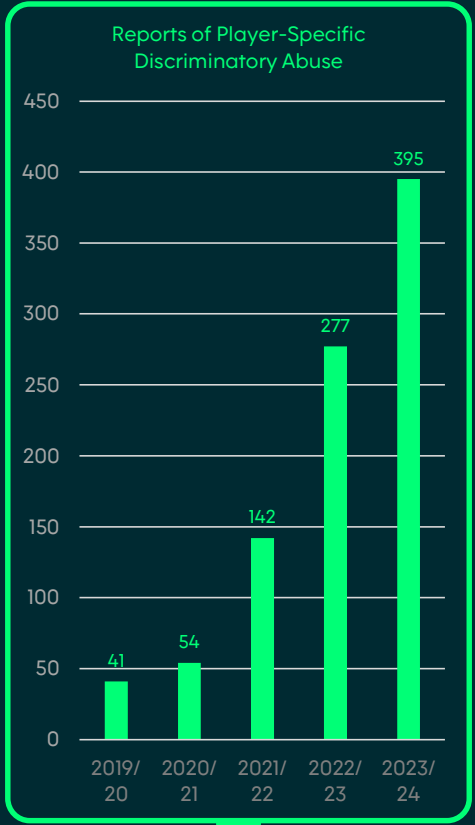
As with the constant rise in the numbers of racist reports received, it's perhaps of little surprise to see the numbers of discriminatory player-specific reports rise season on season.

As a proportion of all pro-game and online reports received, the 2023/24 seasons'

38.4%

is as high as it's been for three years. (46.9% in the COVID affected 2020/21 season)

Considering the staggering rise in reports received in general over the last two seasons, the fact that within this, player abuse continues to rise, is a cause for concern.



42.6%

Increase in player-specific reports from 2022/23 to this season.

KEY AREA:

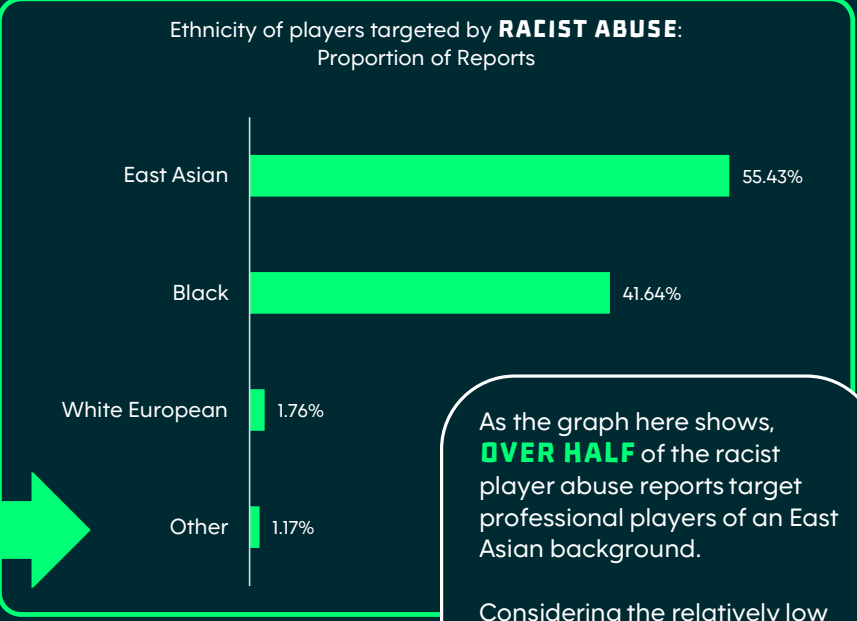
4 ABUSE TOWARDS PRO PLAYERS

299

299 different players have been the subject of a discriminatory abuse report over the last 5 seasons. More and more individual players have been targeted each season:



8%
of the player abuse reports received in the last 5 seasons are **HOMOPHOBIC** in nature.



4.3%
of the player abuse reports received this season are regarding **WOMEN** players.

As the graph here shows, **OVER HALF** of the racist player abuse reports target professional players of an East Asian background.

Considering the relatively low number of players in the top leagues from this part of the world, the proportion of reports is massive.

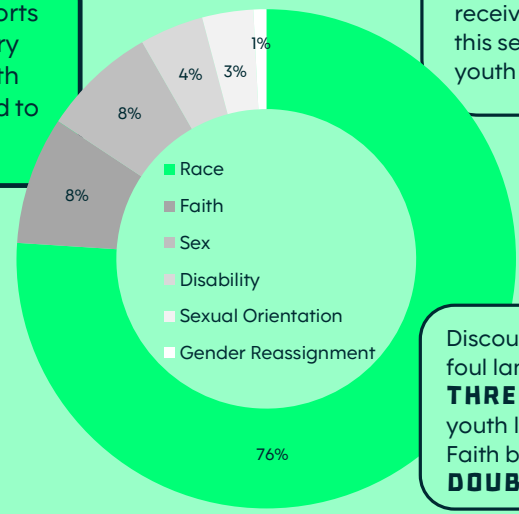
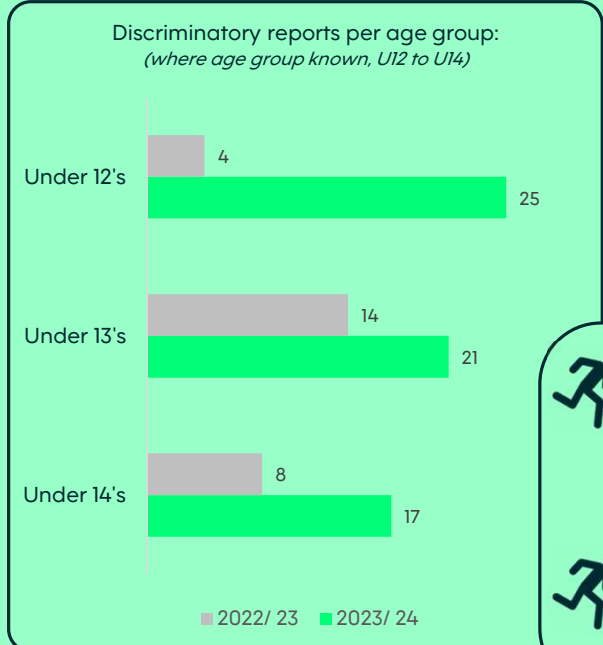
For context, only **4.5%** of the players Kick It Out has received reports of abuse about are East Asian – yet they constitute **55%** of the reports.



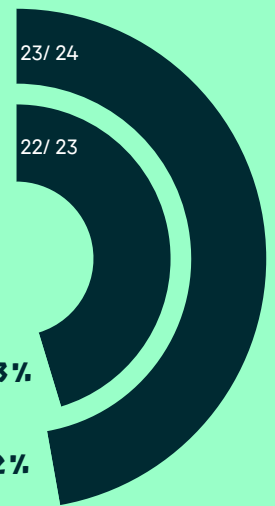
KEY AREA:

5 ABUSE WITHIN GRASSROOTS YOUTH FOOTBALL

↑ 28.8% Increase in reports of discriminatory abuse at a youth level, compared to last season.



The proportion of discriminatory reports from youth football (under 18 and below) continues to rise. Close to **HALF** of all grassroots reports received into Kick It Out this season are from youth football.



Discounting non-discriminatory incidents (general foul language etc), racism accounts for over **THREE QUARTERS** of reports received at a youth level. Faith based discrimination in this space has almost **DOUBLED** from last season (4.4% in 22/23).

🏃 Abuse, discrimination and hate exist at all levels of the game. Within the rise in reports from grassroots football, is an increase of more than a **FIFTH** on last season from games involving 18-year-olds and below. The pinnacle of this increase this season has come from football played at **UNDER 12** level. A seven-fold rise in reports from this age group alone. In fact, the three age-groups indicated on the chart to the left account for **44%** of all the youth reports received this season.

🏃 **19%** of the reports Kick It Out received involved discrimination from **PLAYERS** in under-12 age groups and below. Within U12 teams, players can potentially already be 12 years old. However, County FA's only charge players aged 12+ with offences, meaning that potentially players on the same team, committing the same offence, would receive very different repercussions to their words or actions.

KEY AREA:

5 ABUSE WITHIN GRASSROOTS YOUTH FOOTBALL


Although reports from youth football have been received from all parts of the country, there is a particular concentration on the South-East, and the North-West. However, reports have been received from youth football in:

78%

of the County FAs governing the grassroots game in England. Examples of some of the incidents are shown here:





 Abusive, threatening and racist language used towards players on an U10's girls' team from the **OPPOSITION COACH**.

 Monkey gestures from players towards their opposition at an **U12's** game.


 Homophobic insults from a goalkeeper to opponents in an **U14's** match.

 Racist insults shouted at an 11-year-old girl by a **PARENT** of an opposition player.

 Monkey gestures/ noises and racist language from an **U11** player towards players on the home team.

 "N-word" used towards a player multiple times from an opposition defender in an **U14's** game.

 South-Asian specific racist insults levelled at the opposition from home team players in an **U12's** game

 Homophobic and ableist slurs from a player towards an opponent in an **U17's** game.

OTHER FINDINGS:

ABLEISM

Although it tailed off in the second half of the season, reports of disability discrimination in the first 6 months of 2023/ 24 were far outpacing the previous season for grassroots. At the mid-point in the season (31/21/23), Kick It Out had received:



as many Ableist reports from grassroots football than 22/ 23.

Although the final total is down, the end of season total does, however, show a significant rise in anti-disability insults/ language being reported:



An increase of over a third in reports of the use of this language from the last year.

TRANSPHOBIA

Although the volume of reports remains small, Kick It Out received:

DOUBLE

the number of reports of Transphobia (22) than in 2022/ 23 (11).



“**MORE** reports have been made, and **MORE** incidents have been reported. Again suggesting, that fans are less tolerant of the discriminatory abuse heard and witnessed in stadia, on playing fields and online.”

HOMOPHOBIA

12.2%

23/ 24

15.5%

22/ 23

Kick It Out has seen a small rise in the overall number of homophobic reports received (up from 156 to 162). However, the proportion of the overall total (see above) has **FALLEN** by 3 percentage-points on the 2022/ 23 figure.

Breaking this down, the number of homophobic reports received from grassroots (down 24%) and from the professional game (down 9%) fell. However, abuse of this nature reported from online spaces rose sharply - a **51%** increase on last year.

RPI: 1.51

RPI: REPORTS PER INCIDENT

Once again, the 1,332 reports received this season have been distilled into the number of actual incidents they relate to. Many of the incidents seen over 23/ 24 resulted in multiple reports. For the **FIFTH SEASON IN A ROW**, the Rpi figure has risen, this season standing at over one and a half reports for every incident.

SEASON	REPORTS	INCIDENTS	Rpi
2019/ 20	244	231	1.06
2020/ 21	196	171	1.15
2021/ 22	612	502	1.22
2022/ 23	1,007	730	1.38
2023/ 24	1,332	883	1.51
Overall	3,391	2,517	1.35



THE NUMBERS

		Age	Disability	Antisemitism	Islamophobia	Sectarianism	Other	Faith (Total)	Gender Re-assignment	Race	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Other	Total
2019/ 2020	Professional Game	0	5	7	1	4	1	13	0	72	17	54	11	172
	Grassroots	6	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	66	1	15	3	92
	Social Media	0	6	1	1	0	0	2	2	27	2	4	2	45
	Total:	6	11	9	2	4	1	16	2	165	20	73	16	309
2020/ 2021	Professional Game	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	3	0	34
	Grassroots	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	4	12	0	87
	Social Media	0	2	5	0	1	0	6	0	89	1	10	0	108
	Total:	0	7	5	0	1	0	6	0	186	5	25	0	229
2021/ 2022	Professional Game	0	8	48	3	19	1	71	2	183	8	107	1	380
	Grassroots	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	2	109	7	24	0	156
	Social Media	0	1	13	1	9	1	24	0	37	1	9	2	74
	Total:	0	23	61	4	28	2	95	4	329	16	140	3	610
2022/ 2023	Professional Game	5	23	33	4	21	1	59	2	261	23	75	36	484
	Grassroots	5	19	2	5	1	1	9	3	123	11	38	34	242
	Social Media	0	19	8	7	4	0	19	6	112	46	43	36	281
	Total:	10	61	43	16	26	2	87	11	496	80	156	106	1,007
2023/ 2024	Professional Game	4	19	31	6	4	0	41	2	223	30	68	53	440
	Grassroots	0	18	14	7	0	2	23	3	176	16	29	38	303
	Social Media	2	14	25	25	3	0	53	17	332	69	65	37	589
	Total:	6	51	70	38	7	2	117	22	731	115	162	128	1,332



2023/ 24 Season
Incident Reporting

**TOGETHER
WE CAN**

