Sporting Behaviour Marks Guidance

As part of our ongoing commitment to making football fun, safe and enjoyable for every young person involved in the Cornwall Youth Football League (CYFL), we want to make sure everyone understands the importance of Sporting Behaviour Marks and how they should be completed.

You are receiving this guidance to help explain how scores should be awarded, what the League does with the information submitted and what happens when concerns are identified.

We know that grassroots football relies on the hard work and dedication of volunteers. From coaches and managers to Club Welfare Officers, referees and committee members, we are all giving our time because we want young people to enjoy playing football.

Sporting Behaviour Marks are one of the ways we can work together to keep football a positive experience for everyone.

These marks are not about getting clubs into trouble. They are about recognising good behaviour, understanding any concerns and making sure we can offer support where needed.

They also help us celebrate the positive side of grassroots football, with scores recorded throughout the season and used to help determine our end-of-season Fair Play Awards.

We would ask all clubs to take a few minutes to read through this guidance and share it with the relevant people responsible for submitting Sporting Behaviour Marks.

How should I score?

We appreciate that everyone may view situations slightly differently, so we've put together the following guidance to help clubs score as fairly and consistently as possible.

Score | Standard | What does this mean?

| **100–91** | Excellent | Fantastic sporting behaviour throughout. Respectful, encouraging and a brilliant example to others. |
| **90–81** | Very Good | Positive and respectful behaviour throughout, with perhaps the occasional minor issue.
| **80–71** | Good | Generally good behaviour, although there may have been a few minor concerns. |
| **70–61** | Acceptable, with concerns | Some noticeable or repeated issues that affected the overall match experience.
| **60–41** | Poor | Significant concerns about behaviour that negatively affected the fixture. |
| **40–0** | Very Poor | Serious or persistent poor behaviour that had a substantial impact on the match. |

These scores are intended as a guide rather than a strict scoring system for individual incidents.

Please consider the seriousness of any concerns, how often they occurred and the overall behaviour throughout the fixture.

Remember to assess the behaviour of players, team officials and spectators separately.

Things to consider before submitting your marks

1. Consider the whole match

Try to reflect on the overall behaviour throughout the fixture rather than focusing on one frustrating moment.

We know emotions can sometimes run high during football matches, and a single minor disagreement shouldn't necessarily overshadow an otherwise positive experience.

However, one serious incident can still justify a low mark, even if the rest of the match was played in good spirit.

2. Be fair and proportionate

For example, if an opposition manager makes a frustrated comment about time-wasting but later apologises, consider this alongside their conduct throughout the rest of the match.

We are not expecting perfection from everyone, but we do expect respect, good sportsmanship and appropriate behaviour.

3. Don't let the result influence your score

Whether you've won, lost or drawn, your Sporting Behaviour Marks should reflect behaviour, not the result.

A disagreement over a referee's decision or disappointment with how a match went should not influence the marks you award.

4. Please be honest and provide accurate information

This is probably the most important part of the whole process!

Honest and accurate reporting is essential for the League to understand what's happening across our fixtures.

If you have concerns, please don't feel you need to give a higher score to avoid anyone being contacted. Equally, please don't award an extremely low score simply because something frustrated you during the match.

If you're submitting a low mark, please make sure you leave comments explaining why.

A score on its own doesn't tell us what happened or why you felt that score was appropriate.

When submitting a low mark, please provide a short, factual explanation covering:

- What happened during the fixture?
- Who was involved (players, team officials or spectators)?
- Was it an isolated incident or did the behaviour continue throughout the match?
- Was anything done to address the behaviour at the time?

Please don't simply submit a low score without providing an explanation.

If comments are not provided, the League will need to contact your club to establish why the score was awarded. Providing this information when submitting your marks helps us understand the situation and avoids unnecessary follow-up.

If you have concerns arising from a fixture, please also make sure you follow these up with your Club Welfare Officer so they are aware and can help address any issues where necessary.

The more accurate the information we receive, the better we can support our clubs.

What happens if I submit a low score?

Firstly, please don't worry!

Submitting a low score doesn't automatically mean a club or team has done something wrong, and it certainly doesn't mean disciplinary action will follow.

Our aim is to understand any concerns and help clubs where necessary. All Sporting Behaviour Marks are monitored by the League.

- Scores of 60 or below will be reviewed and may result in further enquiries.
- Scores above 60 are also monitored, and we may follow up where concerns are identified.
- Repeated low scores can help us recognise patterns that may need further attention or support.

How does the League follow up concerns?

Where concerns are identified, the League will follow a supportive, stepped approach:

Stage 1 – Email to the Club

The League will initially contact the club by email to ask for further information about the low score and understand the circumstances surrounding the fixture.

If no comments have been provided with the original score, we will need to ask the club to explain why the mark was awarded.

Stage 2 – Telephone call with the Club Welfare Officer

If further clarification or discussion is needed, the League will arrange a telephone conversation with the Club Welfare Officer to explore the concerns and establish whether any support is required.

Stage 3 – League visit to a fixture

If concerns continue, or further monitoring is considered appropriate, a member of the League may attend a future fixture to observe the environment and behaviour first-hand.

This is a supportive process designed to help us understand and address concerns, rather than a disciplinary procedure.

We understand that there can be different perspectives on the same match, and we always aim to consider the circumstances fairly.

Please remember, the purpose of reviewing these scores is to help improve the football experience, not to frighten clubs or discourage honest reporting.

Serious safeguarding or misconduct concerns must still be reported through the appropriate FA and League procedures, regardless of the score submitted.

Recognising and rewarding good sporting behaviour

It's not all about identifying concerns!

One of the really positive reasons we collect Sporting Behaviour Marks is to recognise and celebrate the teams and clubs that consistently demonstrate excellent sportsmanship.

We keep a record of marks throughout the season, and this information helps us determine our Fair Play Awards at the end of the season.

These awards are a lovely opportunity to recognise the teams that consistently show respect, encouragement, fairness and positive behaviour, regardless of their results on the pitch.

This is another reason why accurate and honest scoring is so important.

When you submit your marks, you're not only helping us identify concerns — you're also helping us recognise those who are setting a fantastic example across the League.

Why does the League need this information?

With so many teams, fixtures and volunteers involved in CYFL, it's simply not possible for the League Committee to attend every match.

We rely on the information submitted by our clubs to help us understand what's happening throughout the season.

Your marks help us to:

- Recognise and reward excellent sporting behaviour through our Fair Play Awards.
- Identify positive examples of sportsmanship across the League.
- Spot repeated concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed.
- Offer advice and support to clubs, coaches and welfare officers.
- Encourage respectful behaviour towards players, referees, coaches and spectators.
- Make grassroots football a safer, happier and more enjoyable experience for everyone.

Your reports really do make a difference, and every accurate submission helps us build a better picture of football across Cornwall.

We're all working towards the same goal

We know how much time and effort our clubs and volunteers put into grassroots football, and we genuinely appreciate everything you do.

Nobody expects every match to be perfect. There will occasionally be disagreements, frustrations and challenges along the way.

What matters is how we respond, how we support one another and how we continue to improve.

The League isn't looking to catch clubs out. We're here to work alongside you, celebrate the positives and help address any concerns before they become bigger problems.

We want clubs to feel comfortable reporting honestly, knowing that the information they provide is being used constructively and fairly.
A final reminder

Please be fair. Please be accurate. Most importantly, please be honest.

If you award a low mark, please leave comments explaining why. A score without an explanation means we will need to contact your club to establish what happened.

Please also remember to follow up any concerns with your Club Welfare Officer.

Your Sporting Behaviour Marks are valuable, not just for identifying concerns but for celebrating everything that's good about grassroots football.

We are all volunteers working towards the same goal: making football fun, safe and enjoyable for every young player.

Thank you for everything you do and for helping us create a positive football environment across Cornwall.

Cornwall Youth Football League

Working together to make grassroots football a positive experience for everyone.