

LET ALL PLAY

Yes to Soccer, No to **Politics**



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About Let All Play

Let All Play fosters inclusion in games and sports.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) rainbow does not belong on the kit or the field in soccer.

In international soccer matches, the United States of America and the Republic of Ireland have required players to wear an LGBT rainbow on their jerseys. England required players to wear LGBT rainbow laces on their cleats. Some teams have required captains to wear an LGBT rainbow captain's armband. Some have placed the LGBT rainbow on corner flags.

The LGBT rainbow is a political symbol. The Laws of the Game from the International Football Association Board (IFAB) state, "Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images" (Law 04.5).¹ FIFA's Equipment Regulations add that this includes a ban on any "political or comparable symbol" (Article 8.3).² FIFA needs to enforce its own rules.

Not everyone agrees with the causes represented by the LGBT rainbow. Players who have declined to wear the LGBT rainbow in international and league play have been harassed and now risk being disadvantaged in their careers.

FIFA and IFAB have a responsibility to assure players are judged by their soccer skills, not by their political or religious views. No one should be required to wear a political symbol with which they disagree.

Those who disagree with the politics represented by the LGBT rainbow include some religious believers as well as those who oppose the threat that transgenderism poses to soccer for girls and women. These individuals and others should not be excluded from soccer just because they hold opinions that are at odds with LGBT advocates and vice versa.

FIFA and IFAB need to guarantee all are welcome.



Two Actions FIFA Needs to Take

Discipline teams that place political symbols, to include the LGBT rainbow, on any part of the kit, protective equipment, or captain's armband.

Support fairness and inclusion. (See "Five Recommendations to Assure All Are Welcome" on pages 22-23.)

One Action IFAB Needs to Take

Revise the Laws of the Game to exclude political symbols on corner flags, all other field and technical area equipment, and on the field and its immediate surroundings. (See discussion of Law 01.8 and 01.13 on pages 10 and 12.)

BACKGROUND



LGBT Rainbow in International Soccer

In June 2017 and June 2018, the United States Soccer Federation (U.S. Soccer) required players to wear an LGBT “pride” rainbow on their national team jerseys. The Football Association of the Republic of Ireland (FAI) did likewise in June 2018.

In 2017, the Football Association (FA) of England required players to wear LGBT rainbow laces in an international game.

The Danish Football Association (Dansk Boldspil-Union), German Football Association (Deutscher Fussball-Bund), the FA of England, Football Association of Norway (Norges Fotballforbund), and Swedish Football Association (Svenska Fotbollsforbundet) have required team captains to wear LGBT rainbow captains’ armbands.

The Danish Football Association used LGBT rainbow corner flags in an international match.

The Appendix of this report lists the dates and locations of international matches in which teams have used the LGBT rainbow on the kit and on field equipment.

The FIFA “Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination” explains the need to avoid giving one group special status at the expense of others: “Equality in diversity means that nobody puts his or her own personal freedom above that of anyone else’s. Diversity blooms when nobody uses his or her own freedom to repress or exclude anybody else.”³ Elevating support for LGBT causes to a privileged status in soccer is discriminatory and exclusionary toward those who disagree with these causes. This is unfair.

Moreover, the controversial LGBT rainbow symbol distracts from the game of soccer by fostering tension and division inside teams and among spectators. This makes the game unwelcoming to those in the world who disagree with the political causes this symbol represents.

Inside the vast world of soccer there are many people with many different perspectives. As “FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future” observes, “Truly the world’s game, football permeates the global population and motivates the passions of countless cultures and belief systems.”⁴ **It is the responsibility of FIFA and IFAB to protect soccer from efforts to exclude cultures and belief systems from the beautiful game.**





Political Symbols Banned from Soccer

According to the Laws of the Game, Law 04, Section 5:

“Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images.”

FIFA Equipment Regulations, Article 8, Section 3, explain that **“Decorative elements may...not produce, or by any other means give, the (visual) impression of...a political or comparative symbol** by displaying or stylising or by any other means giving the impression of registered trademarks or recognisable, but unregistered, designs.”

FIFA and its members have in the past enforced Laws of the Game, Law 04, Section 5, along with Equipment Regulations, Article 8, Section 3. Here are just a few recent examples:

- In 2016, FIFA fined the Football Association of Ireland for wearing a jersey with text commemorating the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rebellion.
- In 2017, FIFA issued a warning to Argentina for “Wearing [a captain’s] armband with symbol.”
- In 2018, England’s Football Association fined the manager of Manchester City F.C., Pep Guardiola, for violating the ban on political

symbols by wearing a yellow ribbon in remembrance of Catalan political prisoners during a match.⁵

During the qualifying matches leading up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup, FIFA disciplined 20 teams, i.e. 16 countries plus England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, for politics-related violations during matches. Here is the list of those who were disciplined and their violations:

Albania (“political slogan,” “political chants”), Armenia (“political flag,” “political banner”), Austria (“political and discriminatory banners and political chants”), Azerbaijan (“political banner”), Belarus (“political banners”), Chile (“political chants”), Denmark (“political flag”), Ecuador (“political message”), England (“political banners and flags,” “political symbol”), Greece (“political banners”), Malaysia (“political banner”), Northern Ireland (“political banners and flags”), Norway (“political banner”), Poland (“political banner”), Qatar (“political image...political displays”), Romania (“political banners and flags”), Scotland (“political banners and flags...wearing non-approved armband with political symbol”), Serbia (“political banners, political...chants,” “political chants,” “political...banners and political chants,” “political...banners,”), Sweden (“political banners”), Wales (“political symbols and banners”).⁶

THE LGBT RAINBOW'S RULE VIOLATIONS



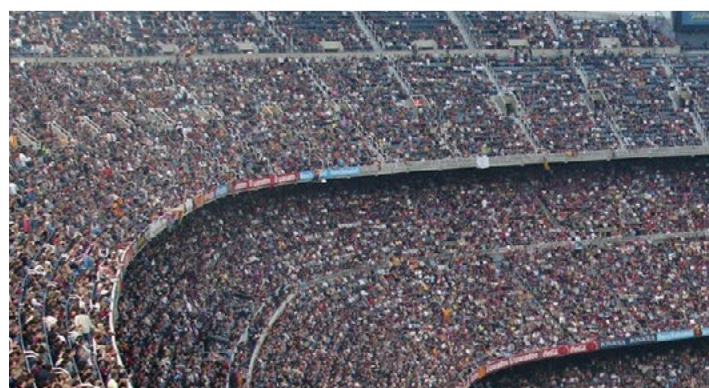
Requiring players to wear the LGBT rainbow political symbol on the kit and featuring this political symbol on field equipment violate multiple IFAB and FIFA regulations, as well as a major international human rights agreement, as detailed below.

IFAB Laws of the Game

Law 04.2 Compulsory Equipment ("The Kit")

According to Law 04, Section 2, the "compulsory equipment of the player," also known as "the kit," has five components: shirt, shorts, socks, shin guards, and footwear.

The Law 04.5 ban on "political...slogans, statements, or images" applies to all five of these items as well the "non-dangerous protective equipment" allowed by Law 04.4.



Law 04.5 "political...slogans, statements, or images"

According to Law 04, Section 5:

"Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images...For any offence the player and/or the team will be sanctioned by the competition organiser, national football association or by FIFA."

"Whilst 'religious' and 'personal' are relatively easily defined, 'political' is less clear but slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted:

- any person(s), living or dead
- any local, regional, national or international political party/organisation/group, etc.
- any local, regional or national government or any of its departments, offices or functions
- any organisation which is discriminatory
- any organisation who [whose] aims / actions are likely to offend a notable number of people
- any specific political act / event

"When commemorating a significant national or international event, the sensibilities of the opposing team (including its supporters) and the general public should be carefully considered."





The view that the LGBT rainbow is political is international.



Law 04.5 Violation: “Political”

According to Law 04, Section 5, “**Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images**”; and the FIFA Equipment Regulations, Article 8, Section 3, expand this ban to include “**a political or comparable symbol.**”

The LGBT rainbow is viewed internationally as a political symbol and a political statement.

According to Gilbert Baker, the designer who, in 1978, first used a rainbow as a symbol for LGBT causes, “For the past almost 40 years, the rainbow flag has stood as a politically powerful, meaningful, and also aesthetically effective symbol.”⁷

Justin Parkinson of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) described the LGBT rainbow today as “among the best-known political symbols in the world.”⁸ A 2016 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation report about the rainbow flag explained that its “basic visibility is still deeply political” and “in much of the world, the flag is still as politically charged as it was 37 years ago in San Francisco.”⁹

In 2018, the American magazine *InStyle* explained “today, the rainbow flag is also used to express political solidarity with the LGBTQ community.”¹⁰ Dr. Michael Murphy, an associate professor of Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield, observed the “intuitive power of the rainbow as a metaphor for political unity.”¹¹

The authors of an academic article on the “pride semiotics” of the rainbow observed “the pride rainbow has been part of political and social

intervention for decades,” including at international “pride festivals... that continue to be political acts when flags are flown at pride events held across the world.” The researchers explained that “young people...strengthen these associations when they meet others wearing the rainbow and use it for peer-based politicised campaigns.” Moreover, “the local display of rainbows at school, in health centres, businesses and in neighbourhoods, participates in creating both individual symbolic meanings that help youth navigate and connect with others as well as the political production of global imagined communities.”¹²

The view that the LGBT rainbow is political is international. Murphy explained that “the rainbow flag has been intuitively understood and embraced worldwide.”¹³ Security personnel at a 2016 Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) match between Iceland and Austria prohibited a fan from bringing an LGBT rainbow flag into the Stade de France because they deemed the flag to be a “political statement.”¹⁴ In a recent case in Germany, a landlord was able to bar a renter from hanging an LGBT rainbow flag from a balcony on the grounds that the LGBT rainbow flag is “a political symbol.”¹⁵ The German edition of *Vogue* calls the LGBT rainbow not only a “fashion” statement but also a “political-social” statement.¹⁶ In 2016, an elementary school in the U.S. removed an LGBT rainbow flag because it was deemed “too political.”¹⁷

When the FAI announced that the players on the national men’s team of the Republic of Ireland would wear an LGBT rainbow on their kit in an international match during “pride month” in 2018, the federation tweeted: “The back of tomorrow’s



The back of tomorrow's match kit. Not just a number, this is a statement. Ireland, supporting #LGBT rights. 🏳️‍🌈🇮🇪 #EqualGame #COYBIG #COYGIG #IRLUSA



match kit. Not just a number, this is a statement. Ireland, supporting #LGBT rights. #EqualGame #COYBIG #COYGIG #IRLUSA”.¹⁸ Note: “supporting #LGBT rights.” Rights exist in legal structures. Legal structures exist in governance. Governance is political.

Another example of the political nature of the LGBT rainbow symbol was seen in Germany's Bundesliga. In a 2018 press release explaining its decision to require all team captains on all of its teams to wear an LGBT rainbow captain's armband, the Bundesliga club VfL Wolfsburg proclaimed, “One Team, One Belief.”¹⁹ VfL Wolfsburg was making clear that the purpose of requiring wearing the LGBT rainbow symbol is to require conformity of viewpoint, i.e., conformity of politics, in its club. Ironically, the press release proclaimed that VfL Wolfsburg “stands for diversity,”²⁰ and VfL Wolfsburg tweeted the rainbow armband is “a clear sign against exclusion and for diversity.”²¹ In fact, the requirement to wear this symbol is explicitly exclusionary against those who disagree with the political message of the LGBT rainbow.

Law 04.5 Violation: “Likely to offend”

According to Law 04, Section 5, “slogans, statements or images related to the following are **not permitted**...any organisation who aims / actions are **likely to offend** a notable number of people.”

The LGBT rainbow symbol is most likely to offend players of some religious faiths, such as traditionally oriented forms of Christianity and Islam, as well as individuals who oppose transgenderism.

Offense to Religious Players and Fans

For example, consider the case of U.S. player Jaelene Hinkle, a Christian called up to the U.S. Women's National Team (USWNT) in June 2017. She declined to play because she, as a Christian, felt she should not wear the jersey with the LGBT rainbow.²²

In 2018, Croatian player Josip Brekalo declined to wear a rainbow captain's armband when his Bundesliga team, VfL Wolfsburg, initiated a program to “support LGBT communities.” Brekalo explained, “I was raised very religiously, so if someone chooses a different way of life, that's

Read about the case of Jaelene Hinkle at [ThePublicDiscourse.com](https://thepublicdiscourse.com):

- “Rainbow Soccer Jerseys Don't Reduce Harassment. They Provoke It,” by Jennifer S. Bryson, June 18, 2018
- “US Soccer's Rainbow Pride Jerseys Exclude and Divide,” by Jennifer S. Bryson, June 13, 2017

okay with me because that's their thing, but I do not have to and I do not want to wear a special symbol for someone else, which opposed my Christian worldview.”²³

In 2016, during the Premier League's "Rainbow Laces" campaign, in which teams made LGBT rainbow laces available for players to wear on their cleats, "a large proportion of the negative comments" about this came from "the Muslim world."²⁴

From late November to early December 2018, the Islamic Republic of Iran blocked broadcasts of Premier League games during the Premier League's "Rainbow Laces" campaign. The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran considered this offensive to its Islamic values.²⁵

The 2018 Premier League's "Rainbow Laces" campaign included LGBT rainbow laces for players' cleats, LGBT rainbow captains' armbands, an LGBT rainbow corner flag on the pitch, and the LGBT rainbow on substitution boards.²⁶

Offense to Those Opposed to Transgenderism

The LGBT rainbow symbol serves, among other causes, as a symbol for transgenderism. Transgenderism, however, poses an existential threat to soccer, as well as other sports, for girls and women. Those opposing transgenderism should not be required to wear a political symbol that represents an effort to harm fairness and safety in, or even to obliterate, sports opportunities distinctively for girls and women.

Sarah Ditum explains in *The Economist*, "In sports, trans inclusion means trans women (natal males, such as Laurel Hubbard, a weightlifter from New Zealand) competing against and beating female athletes, while trans men (natal females) present little threat to male competitors." She concluded that "trans rights should not come at the cost of women's fragile gains."²⁷

The struggle to include girls and women in soccer has been a long, hard fight and this effort still has a long ways to go. Players should not be required to wear or play on a pitch featuring a symbol that stands for eliminating distinctive soccer opportunities for girls and women.

The U.K.-based organization Fair Play for Women explains that the threat posed by transgenderism to sports for girls and women involves both fairness and safety: "Under Self-ID [transgenderism] policies, participation of biological females will inevitably decrease due to unfairness and lack of safety when competing against people with male bodies. We see this happening already around the world in cycling, athletics, MMA [mixed-martial arts], football, etc., with women sometimes sustaining serious injuries. Take this example in the

US with adolescent males winning girls' athletic competitions.²⁸ The same will happen here unless we use this consultation to say NO. Amateur sports will be ruined for women, and self-ID [of transgenderism] will mean fewer fewer grassroots opportunities – over time this will reduce numbers of biological women reaching national and international levels in sport."²⁹



The Football Association of England previously argued: "The participation of transgender athletes in their acquired gender could threaten the fundamental requirement of a 'level playing field' in sport...mixed football is currently prohibited by the FA rules for players over the age of 10 due to the comparatively greater physical strength of male players – disparity in strength levels would in our view lead to increased risk of physical injury."³⁰

Allowing biological boys who "identify as" girls and biological men who "identify as" women to play on girls' and women's teams, respectively, poses a physical threat to (biological) girls and women on the field because these males have

physically stronger bodies. Male muscles and bone structure are different, even if a natal male has had chemical and external physical alterations to look like a “woman.”³¹

The threat transgenderism poses to soccer for girls and women is already a concrete reality. In 2014, a biological (natal) male who now “identifies as female” played in a World Cup qualifying match for American Samoa’s national team, taking a spot on the women’s team away from a Samoan biological (natal) woman.³² In Iran, where the fight to allow soccer for girls and women has been long and difficult, the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran admitted in 2015 that eight players on their national women’s team were actually biological males who identify as “transgender women.”³³ These eight biological men took spots on the team away from eight biological women. In 2018, a biological male from Spain who now identifies as a “transgender woman” recently switched from men’s soccer to women’s soccer, taking a spot on a professional women’s soccer team away from a biological woman.³⁴ Moreover, in all these situations women on the opposing teams had to play against supposedly women’s teams that were actually fielding biological males.

Allowing biological boys and men to play in soccer for girls and women would end the distinctive, vitally necessary, and as yet widely under-supported opportunity for girls and women to

play soccer as (biological) girls and women. Allowing promotion of transgenderism in soccer would allow biological boys and biological men by their sheer different physical strength to take over and thus harm or obliterate soccer for girls and women.

Those who care about girls’ and women’s soccer as soccer for girls and women should not be required to wear a symbol on the kit from a political movement trying to eradicate soccer and other sports for girls and women.

Law 04.5 Violation: “Discriminatory”

According to Law 04, Section 5, “**slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted: ...any organisation which is discriminatory.**”

Requiring players to wear the political LGBT rainbow symbol on the kit and play on fields featuring this political symbol discriminates against players who do not support this political agenda. It places these players at a disadvantage. Players who reject wearing the LGBT rainbow because they are following their conscience, as Jaelene Hinkle and Josip Brekalo did, harm their careers and face public harassment over their decisions. When the coach of the USWNT called Hinkle up in 2018, the year after she had declined to wear the LGBT rainbow kit, the outcry by LGBT movement supporters was so severe that just days later the coach let Hinkle go.³⁵



Those who care about girls’ and women’s soccer as soccer for girls and women should not be required to wear a symbol on the kit from a political movement trying to eradicate soccer and other sports for girls and women.





“Give fans the opportunity to cheer for their teams, not take up sides in political fights.”

The treatment of Hinkle since she declined to wear the LGBT rainbow has been called “shunning,” a cruel exclusionary practice. University of Southern California law professor Scott Altman observed that “in a society diverse enough to include... warring perspectives, we should not invoke the power and moral authority of boycotts and shunning to isolate Jaelene Hinkle or to punish those who will not” concede to the views of one side of a controversial issue.³⁶

Hinkle and Brekalo declined to wear the LGBT rainbow symbol for religious reasons. Those who oppose transgenderism and the efforts by the transgenderism movement to erase girls and women from soccer and other areas of public life should also be considered. Requiring opponents of transgenderism to wear a symbol promoting transgenderism is directly discriminatory against those who oppose transgenderism. Neither religious players nor players opposed to transgenderism should be discriminated against because of their faith or their beliefs. **No player should be subjected to a political test in order to be considered for a team.**

Law 04.5 Violation: “Specific political act / event”

According to Law 04, Section 5, “**slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted:...any specific political act / event**”

U.S. Soccer said the purpose of their rainbow jerseys was “to celebrate LGBTQ Pride month.”³⁷ FAI’s LGBT rainbow jersey was used in the month of June specially for pride month.

Pride month is observed by LGBT advocates each year in June in order to advocate for political policies

supporting their causes. When soccer events use the LGBT rainbow, especially in the month of June, they are making a political statement. As Leana Garfield of *Business Insider* explained, “Pride is a month-long LGBT+ celebration, protest, and act of political activism in the U.S.”³⁸ German Lopez of *Vox* says, “LGBTQ Pride Month is now a mix of celebration, protest, and political activism.”³⁹ A Brazilian leader described participation in a São Paulo Pride March as “a political act, an act of resistance.”⁴⁰ On the homepage for Slovenia’s 2018 Pride March in Ljubljana, march organizer Nina Perger specifically emphasized that in Pride Month “political message[s are] unavoidably intertwined.”⁴¹

U.S. Soccer stated that this political event was their reason for placing the LGBTQ rainbow on the U.S. national jerseys in June in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, the U.S. Soccer Federation explained that the purpose of the LGBTQ rainbow jerseys was “to support LGBTQ Pride Month,” “in recognition of LGBTQ Pride month in June,” and that the rainbow numbers were “pride-inspired.”⁴² In 2018, U.S. Soccer stated that the purpose of the rainbow jerseys was “to support LGBTQ Pride Month” and “to celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month this June.”⁴³ The U.S. Men’s National Team also cited a “pride-inspired” decision to wear the rainbow on their jerseys to “celebrate Pride month” and “in recognition of LGBTQ Pride Month.”⁴⁴

The FAI announced they would require players to wear the LGBT rainbow on their jerseys for the month of June, i.e. “pride month,” saying: “The back of match kit. Not just a number, this is a statement. Ireland, supporting #LGBT rights.”⁴⁵

Violation: Both U.S. Soccer and the FAI used the LGBT rainbow symbol specifically in observance of an annual political event, i.e. “Pride month.”

Law 04.5 Violation: “Sensibilities of...the general public”

According to Law 04, Section 5, “**When commemorating a significant national or international event, the sensibilities of the opposing team (including its supporters) and the general public should be carefully considered.**”

In addition to being a political event, the annual “Pride month” is a “significant...national event” in the U.S. and the Republic of Ireland and it is “a significant...international event.”

The LGBT rainbow political symbol is highly controversial and divisive in societies all over the world. Requiring players to wear this on their uniforms and using this political symbol on field equipment is not only problematic for players and match staff, but also makes soccer unwelcoming to many in the general public, such as fans who do not agree with the policy advocacy associated with this political symbol.

As journalist Fiona Kelly documented, there was public “outrage” in Ireland over the LGBT rainbow numbers on the uniforms of the FAI men’s team in June 2018.⁴⁶ There was also concern about the inappropriateness of sexualizing the 2018 USA versus Republic of Ireland match. Viewers of the game posted comments on social media complaining about the “sexual propaganda” on display.⁴⁷

These campaigns to add the political LGBT rainbow symbol to soccer distract from the game.

As soccer journalist Chelsea Bush observed, the LGBT rainbow in soccer “has very little to do with soccer.”⁴⁸

Give fans the opportunity to cheer for their teams, not take up sides in political fights.

Law 01.8 and 01.13 Flagposts (Corner Flags)

Law 01, Section 8 governs “flagposts” for the field. The Laws of the Game fail to define the appearance of the flags.

During a June 6, 2017, match between Germany and Denmark in Denmark, the corner flags featured the LGBT rainbow symbol.⁴⁹



According to Law 01. 13, Logos and Emblems: “The reproduction, whether real or virtual, of representative logos or emblems of FIFA, confederations, national football associations, competitions, clubs or other bodies is forbidden on the field of play, the goal nets and the areas they enclose, the goals, and the flagposts during playing time. They are permitted on the flags on the flagposts.” What does IFAB mean by “other bodies”? Does IFAB mean other soccer organizations? IFAB should clarify what “other bodies” means.

Note: There is a lacuna in the Laws of the Game. Guidance for the appearance of the corner flag and other field equipment is insufficient. Law 01, Section 13 does not, but should, prohibit “political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images.”

Note: Law 04, Section 5 adds that “The following are (usually) permitted [on equipment]: the player’s number, name, team crest/logo, initiative slogans/emblems promoting the game of football, respect and integrity.” The LGBT rainbow does not qualify for this exception for the following reasons. First, the LGBT rainbow does not promote the “game of football.” This symbol is not related to soccer and it causes fighting and dissention among soccer players, staff, and fans. In addition, the LGBT rainbow’s support for transgenderism is promoting an existential threat to girls soccer and women’s soccer; this harms soccer. Second, the LGBT rainbow does not promote “respect” because it is exclusionary to those who disagree with the agenda of this symbol. The LGBT rainbow promotes exclusion and division in soccer.

IFAB, Laws of the Game

Law 04.5 “political...slogans, statements or images”

“Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images...For any offence the player and/or the team will be sanctioned by the competition organiser, national football association or by FIFA.”

“Whilst ‘religious’ and ‘personal’ are relatively easily defined, ‘political’ is less clear but slogans, statements or images related to the following are not permitted: any person(s), living or dead; any local, regional, national or international political party/organisation/group, etc.; any local, regional or national government or any of its departments, offices or functions; any organisation which is discriminatory; any organisation who [whose] aims / actions are likely to offend a notable number of people; any specific political act / event

“When commemorating a significant national or international event, the sensibilities of the opposing team (including its supporters) and the general public should be carefully considered.”



Recommendations to IFAB for the Laws of the Game:

IFAB should clarify in the Laws of the Game that the Law 04, Section 5, ban on “any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images” includes equipment on the field governed by Law 01.

The Laws of the Game should apply the ban on “any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images” to the technical area.

The Laws of the Game should apply the ban on “any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images” to equipment at the side of the field, such as substitution boards and scoreboards.

FIFA Statutes

Article 2.E Violation: “For All”

Article 2.E: **“The objectives of FIFA are...[E] to use its efforts to ensure that the game of football is available to and resourced for all who wish to participate, regardless of gender or age.”**

Violation: Placing the LGBT rainbow on the kit excludes those who disagree with and thus do not want to wear the message of this image.

Article 4 Violation: “Discrimination”

Article 4: **“Discrimination of any kind against a country, private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation or any other reason is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion.”**

Violation, “religion” & “political opinion or any other opinion”: Placing a political symbol on the kit, in this case, a symbol of an agenda with which many devout religious believers in the world

(e.g. many Christians, many Muslims) disagree discriminates against these religious believers.

Violation, “political opinion or any other opinion”: Placing a political symbol on a jersey discriminates against those who do not share the opinion of this political agenda, including those who oppose transgenderism.

FIFA Code of Ethics

“FIFA bears a special responsibility to safeguard the integrity and reputation of football worldwide,” explains the preamble to the FIFA Code of Ethics. All those bound by this code, the preamble declares, shall “respect the core value of fair play in every aspect of their functions. They shall assume social...responsibility.”⁵⁰

Assuming “social...responsibility” involves valuing all human beings, not just a select group that shares a particular political opinion.

Article 23 Violation: Protection of Physical and Mental Integrity

According to Article 23, Paragraph 1: **“Persons bound by this Code shall protect, respect and safeguard the integrity and personal dignity of others.”** Paragraph 5 further explains, **“Threats, the promise of advantages and coercion are particularly prohibited.”**⁵¹

Violation: U.S. Soccer, FAI, and the FA of England violated the “personal dignity” of players by subjecting them to pressure to wear an LGBT rainbow on their person in order to be allowed to play, potentially creating a requirement that players violate their conscience in order to play. U.S. Soccer enabled the advantage of career progression for those who were willing to wear this the LGBT rainbow, and, by contrast, disadvantaged Jaelene Hinkle for declining to wear this symbol.⁵²

FIFA should also consider the relevance of Article 23, Paragraph 3: **“Harassment is forbidden.”**

Harassment is defined as systematic, hostile and repeated acts intended to isolate or ostracise or harm the dignity of a person.”⁵³ In 2018, fans of the Portland Thorns team carried mocking signs about Jaelene Hinkle, chanted to harass her, and booed when she touched the ball, because of Hinkle’s refusal to wear the LGBT rainbow on a jersey.⁵⁴

Neither U.S. Soccer nor the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) took disciplinary action against the Portland Thorns for this behavior. This occurred at a NWSL match between the North Carolina Courage and the Portland Thorns on May 30, 2018, in Portland, Oregon, United States.

So, too, at the level of international play it is worth considering whether the systematic and repeated hostility of several national associations that support LGBT causes toward those who do

Violation: Placing a political symbol on a jersey is unfair. This privileges those who support the agenda of the symbol while placing those who disagree with that political agenda at a disadvantage. This also breaks social bonds because it fosters division.

ICCPR Article 18 (no coercion), Article 19 (opinions without interference).

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is an international human rights agreement to which the countries cited in this report are parties.

Article 18, 1-2: *“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or*

“Everyone means everyone. FIFA should not privilege those who support LGBT political causes and in this way disfavor and disadvantage those who have different views.”

not share their political opinions constitutes harassment. (To be clear, civil disagreement with and refusal to affirm LGBT politics, by declining to wear the LGBT rainbow, for example, is different from harassment, such as shouting degrading chants at those who identify as homosexual. This report applauds FIFA for disciplining of such degrading chants; see “FIFA’s Anti-Discrimination Mechanisms” on page 21.)

FIFA Human Rights Policy

“Through its competitions and activities to develop football, FIFA generates jobs and investment in infrastructure, promotes the values of equality and fairness and strengthens social bonds among people and countries. With such a great impact comes responsibility.” FIFA Human Rights Policy, May 2017.

belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.”

Article 19, 1-2: *“Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”*

According to FIFA’s Human Rights Policy of May 2017, **“FIFA recognises its obligation to uphold the inherent dignity and equal rights of everyone affected by its activities. This**



responsibility is enshrined in article 3 of the FIFA Statutes, according to which: 'FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights.'

Violation: Requiring players to wear a political symbol with which they have profound disagreement and which they may be unable to support in good conscience makes soccer an arena in which players such as Jaelene Hinkle and Josip Brekalo are in effect punished for manifesting their belief by refusing to wear an LGBT rainbow political symbol. Threatening players' careers over failure to comply with expressing, or in this case physically manifesting in attire on their body, belief in the LGBT political agenda is a form of coercion. FIFA needs to honor its "obligation to uphold the dignity and equal rights of everyone." Everyone means everyone. FIFA should not privilege those who support LGBT political causes and in this way disfavor and disadvantage those who have different views.

FIFA Equipment Regulations

Articles 5 and 6 Violations: Colours and Numbers

Article 5.2: "Save as explicitly stated otherwise under these Regulations, no Playing Equipment item worn by an outfield player or goalkeeper may consist of more than four Colours."

Article 5.4: "Notwithstanding art. 5 par. 2 above, a fifth Colour may be used for numbering and naming purposes (e.g. Player's name, numbers)."

Article 6.3: "A number (i.e. one or more digits) must consist of one single Colour only or the same group of a basic Colour provided that, in FIFA's reasonable discretion, in such case the visual impression of one single Colour is created and a light and dark contrast of Colours between the stroke of the number and the specific Playing Equipment items is equally achieved."

Violation: U.S. Soccer's and FAI's LGBT rainbow-colored numbers outlined in white or black each had seven colors: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and white/black.

Violation: The FA of England's LGBT rainbow laces had six colors.

Article 6.10: "Except for the Official Member Association Emblem, a number shall not contain, or give the visual impression of, any identification of the Member Association, a Manufacturer's Identification, identification of a Supplier or elements which in FIFA's reasonable discretion create an association with the Member Association, Manufacturer, Supplier, a sponsor or any third party."

Violation: The LGBT rainbow on the kit identifies the Member Association teams with LGBT political causes, i.e., with third parties.

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Article 7 Violation: Players' Names

Article 7.4: "The letters used for the Player's name shall not contain any identification of the Member Association, Manufacturer's Identification, identification of a Supplier, sponsor/product advertising, commercial or further message of any kind, Decorative Elements, design features or other elements. In the event that the Colour of the letters used for the Player's name is different from the Colour used for the number displayed on the back of the shirt, the Colour of the letters used for the Player's name shall be considered one of the four colours used on the surface of the shirt pursuant to art. 5 par. 2 above, and in such case a fifth Colour pursuant to art. 5 par. 4 above may only be used for numbering purposes."

Violation: There are eight colors on the June 2017 U.S. jersey: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, and black.

There are seven colors on the June 2018 U.S. and FAI jerseys: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and white.

Article 8 Violation: Decorative Elements, "political or comparable symbol"

Article 8.3: "Decorative Elements may form part of a Manufacturer's generic product line, provided these Decorative Elements do **not produce, or by any other means give, the (visual) impression of**

a Manufacturer's Identification, identification of a Supplier, sponsor/product advertising, a commercial or further message of any kind, or any other elements which, in FIFA's reasonable discretion, create an association with a sponsor, Manufacturer or Supplier (e.g. slogans), the shape of a country, a Religious Symbol, **a political or comparable symbol** by displaying or stylising or by any other means giving the impression of registered trademarks or recognisable, but unregistered, designs."

Violation: The U.S. and FAI jerseys with the LGBT rainbow display "a political or comparable symbol."

Violation: The FA England laces with the LGBT rainbow display "a political or comparable symbol."

Article 10 Violation: Identifications of Member Associations

Article 10.1: "Subject to the restrictions set out in arts. 11-13 below in relation to the respective Playing Equipment item, Member Associations may display the following types of Member Association-related identification on their Playing Equipment: a) Official Member Association Emblem; b) Official Member Association Mascot; c) Official Member Association Symbol; d) Official Member Association Name; e) National Team Nickname; f) Foundation Year; g) Country Name; h) National Flag; and i) other marks and insignia (as described in arts. 14-18 below) as applicable to the Member Association."



Violation: The LGBT rainbow does not qualify as an allowed “identification of a member association.”

Article 10.2: “Any type of identification of the Member Association listed in art. 10 par. 1 above must be registered with FIFA.”

Note: Even if the U.S. or the Republic of Ireland were to claim that the LGBT rainbow has been elevated to the level of being a symbol of national identification, neither country has registered it as such with FIFA.

Article 10.5: “Any type of identification of the Member Association listed in art. 10 par. 1 above must not interfere with other elements of the Playing Equipment identifying the Player (e.g. Player’s number).”

Note: Even if the U.S. or Republic of Ireland were to claim that the LGBT rainbow has been elevated to the level of being a symbol of national identification, placement of this symbol inside the Player number would not be allowed.

Article 17 Violation: Matchday Customisation of Shirts

Article 17.1: “The shirt for any Match may be customised with the following Match-related information: a) Country Names or the two National Flags of the opposing teams; b) Match date; and/or c) name of the host city and/or country of the Match. The Member Association must not display on any Playing Equipment item the official name of the relevant FIFA Event or any alteration, abbreviation or translation thereof.”

Article 17.2 “Any such Match-related information must be displayed on the front of the shirt at chest level only.”



Violation: The LGBT rainbow does not qualify for allowed matchday customisation of shirts.

Violation: The LGBT rainbow customization, even if the symbol were to be allowed, should not be placed on the back of the jersey. Also, IFAB Laws of the Game Law 04, Section 5 states, “Permitted slogans, statements or images should be confined to the shirt front and/or armband.”

Article 20 Violation: Captain’s Armband

Article 20.1: “A captain’s armband exclusively provided by FIFA must be used for all Matches of Final Competitions. FIFA may provide two captain’s armbands in contrasting Colours or two different types of captain’s armbands.”

Question: Did FIFA supply the rainbow captain’s armbands for the following games and team captains?

Violation: The LGBT rainbow captain’s armband has six colors, not contrasting (i.e., two) colors. The six colors are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

Article 20.3: “Captain’s armbands shall remain free of, and shall not produce, in FIFA’s discretion, the visual effect of an identification of a Member Association other than a National Flag, a Manufacturer’s Identification, identification of a Supplier, a sponsor, any Decorative Element or any further elements such as marks, statements or slogans, except for the word “captain” or an abbreviation or translation thereof.”

Violation: The LGBT rainbow on the captain’s armband violates the prohibition against “any Decorative Element or any further elements such as marks, statements or slogans.”

These team captains wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband during the followings matches:

- Michael Bradley (USA) at USA vs. Ecuador, June 16, 2016
- Julian Draxler (Germany) and Christian Eriksen (Denmark) at Germany vs Denmark, June 6, 2017
- Carli Lloyd (USA) at USA vs. Sweden, June 8, 2017
- Becky Sauerbrunn (USA) and Maren Mjelde (Norway) at USA vs Norway, June 11, 2017
- Ellen White (England) and Pernille Harder (Denmark) at Denmark vs England, July 1, 2017
- Wil Trapp (USA) at USA vs. Ireland, June 2, 2018
- Alex Morgan (USA) and Carli Lloyd (USA) at USA vs. China, June 7, 2018
- Wil Trapp (USA) at USA vs. France, June 9, 2018

Article 30 General Principle

Article 30.3: **"FIFA may, from time to time, issue Competition Regulations and/or Media and Marketing Regulations governing the Final Competitions and/or the Preliminary Competitions containing specific rules for Special Equipment to be used in the Controlled Stadium Area by Players, Match Officials and Team Officials during the warm-up phase and prior to, during (only if a substitute player) and after the Match."**

Question: Did FIFA issue any special "Competition Regulations" for "Special Equipment" for the international matches featuring the LGBT rainbow? (See Appendix: International Matches with LGBT Rainbow.)

Article 61 Approval Requirement

Article 61.1: **"The Member Association is responsible for full compliance with these**

Regulations and further applicable laws, regulations, guidelines and decisions issued by FIFA in relation to any Equipment items used for Matches."

Note: While Article 4.4 of "International Matches" (see below) asserts that it is the responsibility of the host country of a match to "ensuring compliance with the applicable regulations," according to Article 61.1 of the "Equipment Regulations," the Member Associations placing the political symbol of the LGBT rainbow on the uniform bear responsibility for this rules violation.



Article 61.2 “In connection with any Equipment items used for a Final Competition, the Member Association must seek the approval of FIFA for any such Equipment items pursuant to the terms and conditions of arts. 63-67 below.”

Article 61.3: “Notwithstanding the principle that the use of any Equipment item on the field of play remains subject foremost to the referee’s authority as defined in the Laws of the Game as set out in art. 2 par. 5 above, unless FIFA explicitly requests the submission by the Member Association of an Equipment item for

inspection and approval, in connection with any Equipment items used for the Preliminary Matches and all Preliminary Olympic Matches, the Member Association may seek the approval of FIFA for any such Equipment items. In such cases, the terms and conditions of arts. 63-67 below shall apply accordingly.”

Question: Did the Member Associations hosting international matches featuring the LGBT rainbow on player gear or field equipment seek approval from FIFA for such soccer-specific use of the LGBT rainbow? (See Appendix: International Matches with LGBT Rainbow.)

Questions: If FIFA granted such approval, why? Who made the decision to grant such approval?

Article 71 Disciplinary Matters

Article 71.1: “Any violations of these Regulations or any other FIFA regulations, circulars, guidelines, directives and/or decisions that do not come under the jurisdiction of another body shall be dealt with by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the FIFA Disciplinary Code and all relevant circulars and directives.”

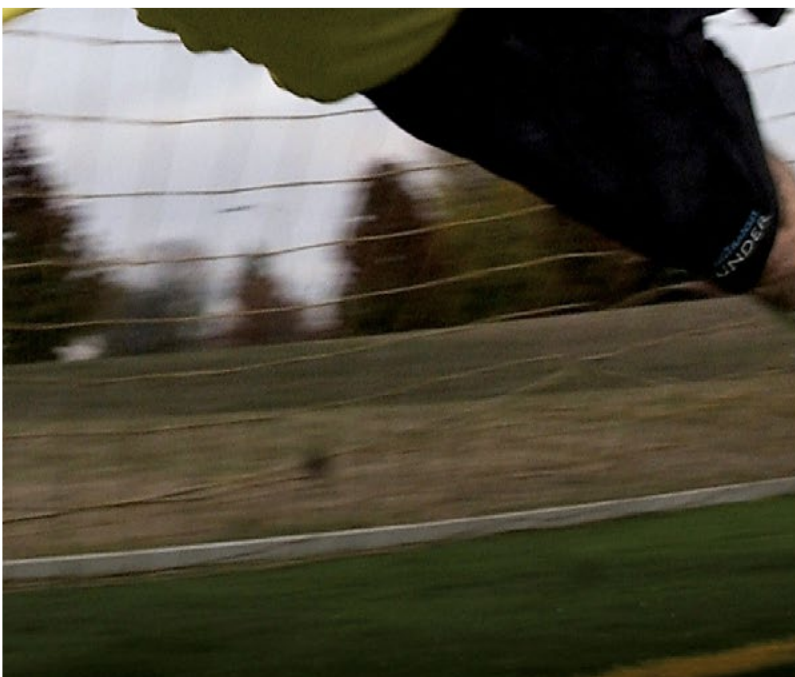
Note: The FIFA Disciplinary Committee should fulfill its responsibility to address these rules violations.

FIFA Regulations Governing International Matches

Article 4 Violation: Duties of Members

Article 4.4: “The Member on whose territory an International Match or competition will be played shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the applicable regulations.”

The Member Associations listed in the Appendix failed to ensure compliance with the Laws of the Game and FIFA regulations when hosting the following international matches.



FIFA's ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS

It is good that FIFA has and exercises mechanisms to counter the problem of degrading treatment, such as chants, against those who identify as homosexual. For example, FIFA disciplined the following countries for “homophobic chants” by spectators at qualifying matches leading up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Serbia, and Uruguay.⁵⁵

Through exercise of such mechanisms, FIFA can continue its efforts to end discrimination based on sexual identity without fostering new forms of discrimination such as discrimination against people with particular political viewpoints or religious beliefs, as the U.S Soccer Federation, the Football Association of Ireland, and the Football Association of England did in requiring all players to wear the political LGBT rainbow on the kit. As the FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination explains, “Equality in diversity means that nobody puts his or her own personal freedom above that of anyone else’s. Diversity blooms when nobody uses his or her own freedom to repress or exclude anybody else.”⁵⁶

FIFA’s structure for “the promotion of diversity and anti-discrimination in football” has five

pillars: 1: Regulations, 2: Controls and sanctions, 3: Education, 4: Networking and cooperation, 5: Communications.⁵⁷ This broad approach offers many avenues to continue fighting against discrimination against those who identify as homosexual. Therefore, requiring all players to support a political symbol is not necessary to continue these efforts.

As we read in the FIFA “Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination,” “the qualities being encouraged here are very human: showing dignity, kindness and empathy.”⁵⁸ These qualities are all a two-way street. Teams should not demand “dignity, kindness and empathy” for advocates of LGBT causes while denying “dignity, kindness and empathy” to those who have different viewpoints on these issues.

It is a social reality that soccer players, officials, and spectators have many different political views, some in opposition to the views of others. We need to be mindful that dignity, kindness, and empathy are not just for any one group of people, but rather need to include all, regardless of political views or belief systems.



FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE ALL ARE WELCOME



Promote the values of equality and fairness.

Welcome all to compete. Do not burden players with a requirement that they assent to a political platform as a prerequisite to be eligible to play. Do not force players to face a choice between wearing a message that violates their conscience versus being able to play.

As the FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination explains, “FIFA is developing its vision of an inclusive global football community that treats everyone equally. Every person should be welcomed with respect and appreciation, and should have the same opportunity to access all levels of football. Many millions of people see football as an important part of their lives and thus want to become involved in it in the best possible way. To ensure that they can contribute to the social and economic aspects of the game, any barriers need to be identified, examined and removed. FIFA has always made it clear (and always will do) that football is all about teamwork – in other words, it is what you do that counts, not who you are. Football is for all!”⁵⁹



“Celebrate diversity in all its forms.” - FIFA President, Gianni Infantino⁶⁰

Celebrating diversity does not mean mandating “pride” in one form of diversity by means of shaming another form of diversity. No. Instead, soccer needs to welcome genuine diversity, “in all its forms.”

To welcome all is truly “For the Game.” The FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination explains “diversity expands the pool of talent, which makes an association stronger and more competitive both at home and abroad.”⁶¹





Strengthen social bonds.

Love for soccer unifies. Political disagreements, by contrast, divide. Keeping politics out of soccer helps strengthen unity on teams and among fans, while strengthening the social bonds among all involved. Recognize and welcome the vast diversity of all who love soccer. Welcome all.



Solve political disagreements in politics, not on the pitch.

On the pitch and in the stadium, we can agree to disagree about politics, and get on with playing and enjoying the beautiful game together. On the pitch and in the stadium, we need to be sure everyone is welcome.



Protect the kit and the pitch, keep them free of politics.

The kit and the pitch are for soccer. Neither the kit nor the pitch should be used as a platform for promoting political, personal, or religious messages.

CONCLUSION

Teams should not compel players or team staff to express or affirm political views.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino emphasized, “Football is for all. That statement does not come from me, or FIFA: it is a defining trait of the game and that is what makes it such a powerful cultural phenomenon. FIFA’s role is to foster and safeguard this precious attribute.”⁶²

Soccer, the world’s most popular sport, can only remain a wonderful shared space for everyone if the focus remains on soccer while differences of opinion on other matters are kept outside.

FIFA should “fight discrimination...while supporting diversity,” as FIFA General Secretary Fatma Samoura has said.⁶³ Diversity includes diversity of viewpoints.

FIFA’s official slogan is “For the Game. For the World.” In this spirit: yes to soccer, no to politics. Let the whole world play.

A soccer ball with a white and black pixelated pattern sits on a green grass field. In the background, several players in white and black uniforms are visible, though they are out of focus. The text "Diversity includes diversity of viewpoints." is overlaid on the image in a bold, italicized black font.

Diversity includes diversity of viewpoints.

IFAB, FIFA, Human Rights Documents in This Report

International Football Association Board (IFAB)

IFAB Laws of the Game, 2018/2019

<http://www.theifab.com/document/laws-of-the-game>

International Federation of Association Football (FIFA)

FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future. October 13, 2016

https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/generic/02/84/35/01/fifa_2.0_vision_low_neu.17102016_neutral.pdf

FIFA Code of Ethics, 2018

<https://resources.fifa.com/image/upload/fifa-code-of-ethics-2018-version-takes-effect-12-08-18.pdf?cloudid=uemlkcy8wwdtlll6sy3j>

FIFA Disciplinary Code, 2017

<https://www.fifa.com/governance/disciplinary/index.html>

FIFA Equipment Regulations, 2015

https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/tournament/competition/51/54/30/equipmentregulations-inhalt-e_neutral.pdf

FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination, 2015

<https://resources.fifa.com/image/upload/good-practice-guide-2709434.pdf?cloudid=wg4ub76pezwcxsaaj98>

FIFA Human Rights Policy, 2017

https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/89/33/12/fifashumanrightspolicy_neutral.pdf

FIFA Regulations Governing International Matches, 2014

<https://resources.fifa.com/image/upload/regulations-governing-international-matches-2325685.pdf?cloudid=pywuiivvlfl5aqvhs2i7>

FIFA Statutes, 2018

<https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/who-we-are/the-statutes.html>

Human Rights

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

Notes

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² Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). “Equipment Regulations,” Article 8.3, Zurich: 2015, https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/tournament/competition/51/54/30/equipmentregulations-inhalt-e_neutral.pdf.

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Appendix: International Matches with LGBT Rainbow

Denmark

Julian Draxler (Germany) and Christian Eriksen (Denmark) wore LGBT rainbow captains' armbands at Germany vs Denmark, June 6, 2017, in Brøndbyvester, Denmark. The corner flags featured the LGBT rainbow symbol.

Ellen White (England) & Pernille Harder (Denmark) wore LGBT rainbow captains' armbands at Denmark vs England, July 1, 2017 in Søborg, Denmark.

England

England Women's National Team wore LGBT rainbow laces vs Bosnia-Herzegovina Women, Nov. 24, 2017 in Walsall, United Kingdom.

France

USA wore LGBT rainbow jersey and Wil Trapp (USA) wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband USA vs. France, June 9, 2018 in Lyon, France.

Ireland, Republic of

Both Republic of Ireland and US men's national teams wore LGBT rainbow jerseys, and Wil Trapp (USA) wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband, June 2, 2018 in Dublin, Ireland.

Norway

Becky Sauerbrunn (USA) and Maren Mjelde (Norway) wore LGBT rainbow captains' armbands, and USA wore LGBT rainbow jerseys, June 11, 2017 in Sandefjord, Norway.

Sweden

USA wore LGBT rainbow jerseys and Carli Lloyd (USA) wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband vs. Sweden, June 8, 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

USA

Michael Bradley (USA) wore an LGBT captain's armband at USA vs. Ecuador, June 16, 2016 in Seattle, Washington, United States.

USA wore LGBT rainbow jerseys vs. Venezuela, June 3, 2017 in Sandy, Utah, United States.

USA wore LGBT rainbow jerseys and Alex Morgan (USA) and Carli Lloyd (USA) wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband vs People's Republic of China, June 7, 2018, in Sandy, Utah, United States.

USA wore LGBT rainbow jerseys and Alex Morgan (USA) wore an LGBT rainbow captain's armband vs. People's Republic of China, June 12, 2018, in Sandy, Utah, United States.

This list of international matches at which teams have required players to wear the LGBT rainbow and at which teams used the LGBT rainbow on field equipment is not necessarily exhaustive.

Football is for All.

That statement does not come from me, or FIFA: it is a defining trait of the game and that is what makes it such a powerful cultural phenomenon. FIFA's role is to foster and safeguard this precious attribute.

Gianni Infantino,
President of FIFA

Rainbow on the Kit
Politics Soccer

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Equality in Diversity

means that nobody puts his or her own personal freedom above that of anyone else's. Diversity blooms when nobody uses his or her own freedom to repress or exclude anybody else.

FIFA GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE
ON DIVERSITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

