



Sport Positive Leagues English Football League 2022/23 Matrix Frequently Asked Questions

We have collated questions we have received about our Sport Positive Leagues this year and in previous years, so you can further understand how and why we work the way we do.

How do you choose the categories?

We started this work 4 years ago by collating all the information for the English Premier League clubs, we have also done it for Bundesliga and Ligue 1 – and now EFL clubs - others are in progress.

We spoke to the clubs about the key areas we know that operationally football has an impact on the environment and focussed on the stadium; energy generation, energy efficiency, travel to games, the food that is consumed, how waste and water are managed. We also wanted to add a category on the way clubs communicate their work, as the power of sport to combat the climate crisis by connecting with fans and citizens is unrivalled.

We then went on to add categories over the following years to cover other areas we know to be crucial to driving true progress in environmental sustainability in sport, from policies and external commitments, to biodiversity and education. You'll see we give higher points for clubs that publicise their efforts, as the potential for sport to play a part in tackling the climate crisis lies pretty squarely within using its platform to influence and inform fans, suppliers, sponsors and more.

The goal of Sport Positive for our Leagues is to support positive progress within the structures that currently exist in football clubs, encouraging increasing action and ambition from the sector.

We have evolved the criteria applied to EFL clubs over a number of years, and for our EFL matrix, we have applied the same criteria we used for English Premier League one year ago.

Why haven't we unified all of English football from Premier League to League Two into one overall matrix?

The collation of data from EFL clubs has taken 11 months, and in that time we have once again evolved the Sport Positive Leagues points system to be more difficult for this year's English Premier League matrix – so EFL and EPL are not currently judged against the same yardstick.

Collecting the data on all 72 clubs started in May 2022 and was to be no mean feat. Now 11 months later, we have received information from 46 clubs, with others deciding not to share information or advising they are focussing on the Green Clubs workstream. We understand, especially for smaller clubs that have limited resources, that an independent organisation like ours asking for data was not a priority for them.

That being said, since over 60% of the clubs did respond to us to share their efforts, we did want to continue our plan to share this data in the public domain. It is a point of stress for our CEO, as every matrix we have ever put out over 4 years has always had input from every club that data has been shared on. This is the first time we're putting out information that hasn't been verified for some clubs.

That being said, they are clearly marked as such – and therefore readers of the matrix should bear this in mind, that this information may be incomplete.

We hope that going forward more clubs will liaise with us on this important work.

Do the clubs know about this?

As mentioned above, every single club was contacted numerous times over the last nearly one year of research, and offered the chance to verify the information the information we had found in the public domain, as well as add information on other initiatives. Ahead of publication, clubs were also advised of what we would release.

We would like to extend our gratitude to clubs who so kindly gave their time and the information for us to share, as well as the ones that shared why they would not. To all clubs that didn't, we understand the time and resource constraints faced and an open invitation to verify the information shared, or share more information with us remains open. We update the matrix year round.

My club is an EFL Green Clubs member. Why would we have participated with the Sport Positive Leagues EFL Matrix and shared additional information?

We are very clear across all of our contact with clubs and also here and other communications, that Sport Positive is an entirely independent organisation, not connected in any way with EFL Green Clubs.

Whilst participation in the Sport Positive Leagues Matrix is obviously not mandatory, many clubs have chosen to share information as an opportunity to share their current environmental efforts, as well as any future plans. Through the Sport Positive Leagues Matrix, your club can view the initiatives of other clubs not only within your league, but across other leagues both nationally and internationally.

Fans and stakeholders are increasingly interested in learning more about what actions their clubs are taking from an environmental perspective and Sport Positive Leagues Matrix provide a club's fanbase and stakeholders with information on the club's environmental efforts that might be more difficult to find elsewhere.

Whilst being entirely separate from our work, with the roll out of EFL Green Clubs, we look forward to viewing the developments of each member club's environmental efforts.

EFL has been aware of our work in this area, but have not been materially involved.

Isn't the climate crisis too important to be seen to compete about?

The climate and biodiversity crises are the most pressing issues of our time. As sports fans, we are all very comfortable with league tables and leader boards. For football fans it is second nature to talk about how their club is going in the league. It's hard to take competition out of sport, but this work is not about pitting one club against another, the league table element is a means to an end, not the

end itself. Whilst we know not everyone will agree with the way we do this, we are comfortable with the fact we have done this work over the last 4+ years and we know categorically it has led to clubs moving forward with key efforts more quickly, and at scale.

When we first started this work, we looked at collating all the work that clubs are doing into a report, but it would have been very lengthy and not easily digestible. So after doing some audience research we decided to do a league table to make it more interesting and accessible to both industry folks and to football fans. Clubs' would be doing this work anyway, but our league has been cited a number of times by clubs themselves as a driving force to show internally how they are doing compared to their peers which has led to action. This wouldn't necessarily have happened with other formats we could have chosen.

We always underline the point that no matter where your team falls, every single team is doing something. There are things to be proud of, no matter who you support. And if you don't like the fact your club is lower down, let them know it's important to you. We need fans and stakeholders to tell sports organisations that they care, it will lead to more action.

My team seems to be doing more work in certain areas, but has the same points as other teams doing less, why is that?

The points system we use is threshold based, so once a club reaches a certain threshold we allocate the points to them. That's not to say that club doing lots above that threshold shouldn't be celebrated for doing great work in the areas they excel at, and the club and the environment are benefitting from that.

Why haven't you got something specifically on football team's flying domestically to games, surely that's a big impact?

There has been a lot of coverage recently about teams flying domestically to Premier League games, but it is not much of an issue with EFL divisions as you will see from the data on train and coach travel. We do have top points in the 'Sustainable Travel' category for teams that have a sustainable transport policy that includes team travel.

Do you have a question that hasn't been answered?

Contact us via our website here: <https://www.sportpositiveleagues.com/contact/>

Thanks,

The Sport Positive Leagues Team