



6.a

## Dealing with **far-right fans**

In a number of countries, the politics of the far right are being played out regularly inside football stadiums. This may take the form of fan groups affiliating themselves with far-right views or through individual fans who may be members of such groups attending matches.

Paolo di Canio recently justified a right-hand salute given with a straight arm, known in Italy as the Roman salute, by saying that he was “a fascist but not a racist”.

If they are within the scope of the law, all individuals are entitled to their private political views. But we should recognise that some political views will encourage prejudice and discrimination against minority groups. And some right-wing groups will also place the paraphernalia of neo-Nazism on a pedestal.

Far-right groups can often be identified through the symbols used on banners, T-shirts and badges. Some symbols may be well known – such as the Celtic cross or perversions of the swastika – but others can be esoteric and difficult to identify. For help in identifying these symbols contact FARE [www.farenet.org](http://www.farenet.org)

The most obvious symbols, such as the swastika, will be illegal in some countries, but regardless of legality, the UEFA ten-point plan asks clubs to be alert to these types of symbols and to erase them where they appear in graffiti.

Clubs have the right to confiscate materials with neo-Nazi symbolism, though some may wish to do so as much through dialogue and persuasion as through stewarding checks.





*In England during the 1980s, fans challenged the presence of neo-Nazi groups by distributing their own anti-racism leaflets and simply physically occupied the spots normally frequented by the right-wing groups. English clubs have a firm policy of refusing far-right groups permission to congregate.*

*In 2005, Polish first division club Korona Kielce held meetings with fan groups before signing a Brazilian black player – Hernani. The groups consulted were opposed to the move on the basis of his race.*

*The player was signed and during the first game of the season Hernani was subjected to monkey chants from supporters, including the club's own. The club took advice from a Polish NGO, the Never Again Association, and officials reacted immediately by criticising the incident, providing the police with pictures of neo-Nazi fans taken during the game and announcing that these fans would be banned from visiting Korona's stadium.*

*The majority of Korona's supporters agreed with the decision and supported the signing of the Brazilian player.*

*A month later, before the Korona Kielce v Odra Wodzislaw Slaski game, pictures of six recognised neo-Nazi fans were displayed at the ticket office and they were banned from the stadium when security officials stopped them at the gates. Korona's players appeared on the pitch in T-shirts with the "Never Again" campaign logo, "Let's kick racism out of the stadiums". Hernani was loudly applauded by the crowd whenever he touched the ball.*

*In Hungary, the Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation, a community organisation working with asylum seekers, refugees and people of African descent, formed a partnership with several Hungarian professional football clubs to coordinate a series of anti-racism activities during the FARE action week in 2005. As a result, clubs which have historically had a major far-right following were involved in actively challenging their own supporters.*