



READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and do the exercises below.

ENGLAND & SCOTLAND FA_s TO DEFY POPPY BAN DESPITE FIFA SANCTION THREAT

The Football Associations of England and Scotland say they will defy a ban on players wearing poppies when the teams meet on Armistice Day.

The FA_s will let players wear black armbands with poppy emblems and are willing to accept any punishment. Fifa general secretary, Fatma Samba Diouf Samoura, told BBC Sport "any kind of sanction" could follow. World football's governing body prohibits political, religious or commercial messages on shirts.

UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, has called the rule "outrageous". English FA chief executive, Martin Glenn, told BBC Sport that players from both sides would wear black armbands carrying the poppy symbol, traditionally used to remember those who died during World War One, "as a point of principle". The Scottish FA also confirmed it "intends to pay appropriate tribute by having the Scotland national team wear black armbands bearing poppies".

England plays Scotland at Wembley on 11th November in a World Cup 2018 qualifier. The Football Association of Wales has also written to FIFA requesting permission to wear poppies on armbands during their game against Serbia in Cardiff on 12th November but has not yet committed to defying the ban.

Both FA_s say they are continuing to negotiate with FIFA and are hopeful of finding an amicable solution, but Samoura questioned why an exception should be made for England, Scotland and Wales. Asked if the teams could be punished for defying the ban, she said: "It is not really my ambition to punish anybody. They just have to recognise themselves that they are part of the rules of the game and they should be ready to face any kind of sanctions or measures." She added any potential punishment could depend on whether a complaint is made.

What do the rules say?

The laws cover everything from the field of play to the equipment used and how the result of a game is determined. A section of law four, which deals specifically with players' equipment, reads: "Equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images. Players must not reveal undergarments that

show political, religious, personal slogans, statements or images, or advertising other than the manufacturer's logo. For any infringement the player and/or the team will be sanctioned by the competition organiser, national football association or to be justified by FIFA."

It does not specify what the sanctions are for breaching those rules.

Can FIFA still change its mind?

The International Football Association Board meets on Thursday, where the Scottish and English FA chiefs, Stewart Regan and Martin Glenn, have said they will be hoping to convince officials to allow players to wear poppies.

How would a point deduction affect the nations' qualifying chances?

England are top of their 2018 World Cup qualifying group with seven points, two more than Lithuania and Slovenia, after three games, with Scotland fourth on four points. Only the top team qualifies automatically for the World Cup in Russia, with the second-placed side possibly entering a play-off.

Worksheet

1. The poppy is...

- a. An armband to remember those who died during World War One
- b. A symbol, represented by a red flower, to remember those who died during World War One
- c. A symbol, allowed by FIFA, to remember those who died during World War One

2. The FA_s who are determined to contravene the ban are...

- a. The English, the Scottish and the Welsh ones
- b. Just the English one
- c. The English and the Scottish ones

3. If a FA breaches the rule, ...

- a. It will be punished with a point deduction or by not allowing its team to play in the next match.
- b. It will find an amicable solution with FIFA. If it doesn't, it will be punished, for sure, if a complaint is made.
- c. It might be punished just in the event that there is a grievance.

4. The winning team in each group...

- a. Will be eligible to compete in the World Cup
- b. May qualify for the World Cup
- c. Enters a play-off