

What Parents Need to Know about FIFA 23

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many games which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, tips and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about FIFA 23

FIFA 23, like its many predecessors, is a massively popular football simulator featuring lifelike recreations of thousands of real-world players, drawn from teams around the globe. While the gameplay is subtly improved year on year, the publisher EA Sports' tweaks tend to focus on FIFA Ultimate Team mode, which can tempt gamers of all ages to spend real money recruiting better players for their side. With each new release of FIFA comes a host of new players to unlock – meaning that youngsters can feel pressured to keep buying to compete with their friends.

AGE RATING
PEGI 3

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

RELEASE RAZZAMATAZZ

FIFA 23 will be the last in the blockbuster series, before EA goes solo with its own football title next season. This 'end of an era' vibe – coupled with a huge advertising budget making the new release almost impossible to miss – will encourage FIFA 23 into even more of a 'must have' for football-mad young gamers, no matter how minor the updates are on last year's version.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CHAT

Based on a popular sport which appeals to people of all ages, the FIFA franchise draws a huge audience of both children and adults. Communication is a key element, with many players entering in-game battle chat via headsets. With the mixed age range of players and a lack of regulation, however, abuse can often turn offensive or toxic – especially in the heat of competitive matches.

IN-GAME PROMOTIONS

Unless precautions are taken, dedicated FIFA fans can spend significant sums when attempting to improve their Ultimate Team. Most top-level players can be unlocked by simply participating in matches, but some sought-after stars can be obtained more quickly in limited-time promotions which cost a large amount of FIFA points (the in-game currency, often paid for with real money).

CIRCLING SCAMMERS

The popularity of FIFA Ultimate Team (FUT) mode has led to online scammers convincing many impressionable gamers to pay real money for non-existent FUT coins and player cards, or directing young FIFA fans to phishing sites. If you click on these individuals' social media links, the scammers can access not only their country's built team but potentially your personal information.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

One match on FIFA usually takes around 15 minutes, but often followed by extra time and sometimes several inventory loads to another. It can be a powerful temptation for young players, regardless of whether they're on a laptop or smartphone. If the 'just one more game' mindset starts to impact on a child's daily routine, it could be a sign of gaming disorder: a recognised mental health issue.

GAMBLING-ADJACENT BEHAVIOUR

Ultimate Team has become a major feature in FIFA due to the revenues it generates. It can also be addictive, with children striving to earn coins and level up while sweeping, selling and buying players. Spending FUT coins to open a player pack (which many experts have likened to gambling) is designed to be an exciting 'out' – with bright lights, sirens and attention-grabbing prizes.

Advice for Parents & Carers

BE SELECTIVE WITH CHATS

It's enormous fun for FIFA players to chat online with friends, even as their teams do battle in the game. It's probably the safest idea, though, to restrict contact with strangers, by turning off voice chat in FIFA and allowing cross-party chat in their device's settings, your child can speak to people who are already on their friends list but won't be able to talk to (or hear) strangers online.

STAY ALERT FOR SCAMS

There are some key things to remember about potential FIFA scams. Firstly, EA never contacts users via any method other than email to the account holder (which may well be you), neither will they ever ask for a player's username or password outside the game itself. EA's terms and conditions outlaw the buying of FUT coins, so anyone selling them should be treated as suspicious.

CONTROL SPENDING

If your child plays Ultimate Team mode on FIFA, ensure their account isn't linked to your payment methods – so they'll need your permission to make in-game purchases. Alternatively, you could use parental controls to limit spending – or set up a pre-paid 'allowance'. When excitedly clicking options on screen, it's easy for a young person to forget the real-world repercussions of online purchases.

Avoid 'EXTRA TIME'

If your child's spending a lot of time on FIFA 23 and seems less enthusiastic about other activities in their life, you could consider restricting how long they can play for each day with the parental controls in their device's settings. Even if they're not playing on their console or computer, there's a FIFA companion app for smartphones – but that can be limited through parental controls, too.

Meet Our Expert

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10

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You don't have to be football crazy or an avid gamer to have heard of the all-conquering FIFA franchise. What you might *not* know is that this latest edition will be the last release to bear that name, thanks to a parting of the ways between football's governing body FIFA (that's Federation Internationale de Football Association, acronym fans) and developers EA Sports.

There's no disputing that the game's been an immense success – but what's less impressive is its tendency to look defensively shaky against some online threats. Young players aiming to recreate their football heroes' exploits can be at risk from abusive opponents, expensive in-game purchases and the "just one more game" mentality. This week's #WakeUpWednesday guide tackles FIFA 23.

A frequent complaint from FIFA aficionados is that the marquee 'Ultimate Team' mode doesn't take place on – if you'll excuse the pun – a level playing field. Gaming skill, of course, remains an integral factor – but the odds are increasingly stacked in favour of 'pay-to-win' users, who are prepared to spend real-world money on better in-game players for their team.

That's a bigbear in gaming terms – but in an online safety context, it's a significant risk. This reliance on in-game purchases can compel young FIFA fans to spend serious money on improving their squad or put them at the mercy of internet scammers. We've got tactical tips for helping little superstars to play FIFA more safely in our #WakeUpWednesday guide.

Please [click here](#) to download the guide