

#WakeUpWednesday

What Parents and Carers Need to Know about EA Sports FC 24

All 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 nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, tips and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about EA SPORTS FC 24

After two decades of holding the official FIFA licence, EA Sports' phenomenally successful football video game series has embarked on a solo run at goal. This season's iteration marks the debut appearance of a new name and branding, but don't let those fool you - EA Sports FC 24 is still a very similar proposition to last year's FIFA 23. Popular features such as Ultimate Team remain a big focus, meaning that potentially costly in-game spending is still among the line-up of risks that parents and carers should be aware of.

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI 3

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

RECURRING RELEASES
EA Sports FC 24 effectively picks up the FIFA template - meaning that after a year, we can expect EA Sports FC 25 to hit the shelves. Updates between versions of the FIFA franchise tend to be minor, but young fans of the game are almost certain to want the new edition in around 12 months' time, so they can keep playing with updated team kits, players and squad lists.

OFFENSIVE VOICE CHAT
FIFA 22 introduced cross-platform play, and EA Sports FC 24 goes a step further with Clubs, Seasons and Ultimate Team cooperative modes across PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and S, and PC. That's exciting news for youngsters who love to play with friends online - but connecting a much wider audience does potentially open lines of communication between children and far older online gamers.

IN-GAME PURCHASES
In FIFA, Ultimate Team proved to be a profitable innovation for developers Electronic Arts (EA), and is now found in many of their other titles. Players spend in-game currency to recruit better footballers for their teams, but this process can take a frustratingly long time - so young fans may be tempted to skip the grind by paying real-world cash to unlock that coveted star midfielder.

ULTIMATE TEAM SCAMMERS
Since the mode was introduced, Ultimate Team has been a target of scammers who attempt to coax players into buying or selling outside the terms of service from EA and console manufacturers. This shady practice can lead to accounts being banned and in-game items being lost. In some cases, young gamers have also been hoodwinked into handing over their payment details to the fraudsters.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION
Just like real-life football, EA Sports FC 24 offers a thrilling, dynamic blend of tactical awareness and skill that fans find absolutely engaging. Among younger players in particular, this could lead to identifiers of a gaming disorder as they spend for just one more game. Before bedtime or school, practically all weekend playing more matches to earn additional Ultimate Team packs.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONTROL SPENDING
If your child enjoys Ultimate Team mode, check that your payment details aren't linked to their account. Purchases of FC Points (the game's currency) start at just £1, so multiple payments can easily slip under the radar. You could consider setting your child on an in-game allowance, perhaps through a prepaid card, which will help them to realise that online spending has a real-world effect.

DEFEND AGAINST SCAMMERS
EA does contact players via email (although not to ask for usernames or passwords, so watch out for that scam tactic), but never through the game itself - so be wary of incoming messages and consider blocking and reporting suspected spam. Your child should avoid buying coins (the in-game currency) from external sites; it could end with them losing their money and being banned from the game.

AVOID EXTRA TIME
Many parents of young football-oriented gamers worry about their child playing too much EA Sports FC. There's now also a companion mobile app, which can also often provide another indicator that a child is struggling to disengage from the game. You could initiate discussions around set hours of play - or take stronger action by utilising the parental controls on their console or phone.

SHOW TOXIC CHAT THE RED CARD
Playing EA Sports FC 24 with friends is highly enjoyable, but if competitive types start to turn toxic debate, it can ruin everyone's fun. You should occasionally listen in on the voice chat of your child's game for any warning signs that things may be about to boil over. This goes double when playing online with strangers; voice contact with unknown players can be turned off in the game's settings.

CELEBRATE THE VARIETY
Ultimate Team may be the game's 'star player', but there's plenty more to do in EA Sports FC 24 - including modes which allow access to all of football's big names without needing to spend money on packs to unlock them. This new version of the game includes even more women's teams, marking another step forward in representation; an important subject to discuss and celebrate with children.

Meet Our Expert
David Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site DDBase and has worked in the gaming industry for around four years. A huge category fan of the latest apps, games and online trends, he's the ideal person who understands the importance of online safety, writing every year about tech and trends he wishes had been addressed or enhanced when it came to his kids.

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What's the most prolific partnership in recent football history? □ Son and Kane? ✗ Ronaldo and Benzema? ✗ How about EA and FIFA? Their collaboration produced the most popular sports video game series of all time, with 325 million copies sold worldwide.

EA Sports FC 24 – the makers' new solo offering – now hopes to emulate FIFA's legendary success. While it's almost certain to hit the back of the net in commercial terms, does it keep a clean sheet against FIFA's traditional online safety risks? Find out in today's #WakeUpWednesday guide.

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