

## **\*\*Anti-Asian Racism in Football\*\***

**Report.** Puppo, E. & Tsuji, S. (2025). Anti-Asian racism in football. FIFPRO

**Link.** [fifpro-asiaoceania-anti-asian-racism-report\\_digital\\_pages.pdf](https://www.fifpro.org/asiaoceania-anti-asian-racism-report_digital_pages.pdf)

**Aim.** Football is often celebrated as a global and inclusive sport, but a growing body of evidence reveals a disturbing reality: anti-Asian racism is a significant and often overlooked problem within the professional game. This report has been developed by FIFPRO Division Asia/ Oceania to address the urgent issue of anti-Asian racism in the professional game, understand its impact, and propose solutions.

**Methods.** The report is based on direct interviews with players, a review of existing Players Union work, and existing research and literature on the topic.

**Key findings.** The research finds that anti-Asian racism manifests in many ways, ranging from overt verbal abuse – including racial slurs and pandemic-related insults – to more subtle, everyday forms of discrimination known as “microaggressions.” These microaggressions can include stereotypes, exclusion, and dismissive comments. Worryingly, the abuse isn’t limited to fans. Players also report experiencing racism from teammates and even within club environments. A disproportionate amount of abuse is directed towards players of East and Southeast Asian descent, despite them representing a small percentage of professional players. The impact of this racism is profound. Players experiencing discrimination report feeling isolated, lacking confidence, and suffering mental health issues. It can also hinder their career progression. A key finding is that many players don’t report incidents of abuse, fearing backlash or a lack of support from their clubs or governing bodies. Furthermore, the report highlights that many non-Asian fans don’t even recognize anti-Asian abuse when they see it, demonstrating a lack of awareness.

Addressing anti-Asian racism in football is crucial for creating a truly inclusive environment and ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all players. This report provides a foundation for developing targeted solutions, including education for players, clubs, and fans, improved reporting mechanisms, and stronger sanctions for perpetrators.

**Limitations.** As the report often relies on reported incidents and available data, the true extent of the problem is likely to remain underestimated. Many instances of abuse go unreported. Moreover, the research primarily focuses on professional football, potentially overlooking experiences at other levels of the sport.