

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

FIFA 23

FIFA 23 is a massively popular football simulator featuring lifelike recreations of thousands of real players, drawn from teams around the globe. While the gameplay is subtly improved year on year, the publisher's tweaks often focus on Ultimate Team, which can tempt players to spend real money recruiting better players for their side.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

RELEASE RAZZAMATAZZ

FIFA 23 is the last in the series, with EA since going solo with its own football game. This 'end of an era' – coupled with a huge advertising budget making the new release almost impossible to miss – elevated FIFA 23 into even more of a 'must have' for football-mad young gamers, no matter how minor the updates from 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 enjoying in-game voice chat via headsets. With the varied age of players and a lack of regulation, however, chats can turn offensive or toxic – especially in the heat of a competitive match.

IN-GAME PROMOTIONS

Unless precautions are taken, FIFA fans can spend significant sums 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 has led to online scammers convincing many impressionable gamers to pay real money for non-existent game currency and player cards or directing unwary FIFA fans to phishing sites. If a child gives these individuals their login details, the scammers can access not only their account in the game, but potentially your payment information as well.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

One match on FIFA (usually around 15 minutes, but often lengthened by extra time and penalties) almost invariably leads to another. It can be a powerful temptation for young players, regardless of unfinished homework or an approaching bedtime. If the mindset of "just one more game" starts to impact 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 revenue it generates. It can also be quite addictive, with children striving to earn in-game currency and level up while swapping, selling and buying players. Spending currency to open a player pack (which many experts have likened to gambling) is designed to be an exciting act – with bright lights, fanfare, and attention-grabbing prizes.

Advice for Parents & Educators

BE SELECTIVE WITH CHATS

It can be fun for FIFA players to chat online with friends, even as their teams clash 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, children can speak to people who are already on their friends list but won't be able to talk to (or hear) strangers while playing 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 emails to the account holder (which may well be you), nor will they ever ask for a player's username or password outside the game itself. EA's terms and conditions outlaw the purchase of in-game currency from third parties, so anyone selling them should be treated as suspicious.

CONTROL SPENDING

If a 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

Lloyd Coombes is Games Editor of technology and entertainment website Dexerto and has been working in the gaming media for three years. A long-time fan of the FIFA franchise, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have also been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar, among others.



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