

sport rage

A prevention guide
for coaches



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NSW Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation

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Fair Play – It's Your Call A Resource Manual for Recreation Directors

Fair Play – It's Your Call A Resource Manual for Officials

Fair Play – It's Your Call A Resource Manual for League Organisers

Produced by American Sport Education Program

SportParent Survival Guide

www.soccerparent.com

Soccer – Sideline guide for Parents

Produced by NSW Department of Sport and Recreation

Kids' Sport – A very real guide for grown ups – Author Dennis Baker

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about sport rage

We all know that sport is a great pastime and an important part of Australian life.

For children in particular, sport is a great outlet to learn lessons about teamwork, rules, winning and losing – while keeping them fit and healthy.

So it's a crying shame that for many young people sport is not what it should be due to the growing incidence of '**sport rage**'.

Sport rage is violence, bad language, abuse and general bad behaviour by players, coaches, officials or spectators.

Sport rage, like road rage, is a growing concern as we live in a faster more stressful society.

While friendly rivalry on the sporting field is a healthy part of growing up, when the line between competition and aggression is crossed there are no winners.

Simply put, **sport rage** is bad for children and bad for sport as a whole. At its worst, **sport rage** reduces a child's enjoyment of sport, undermines the benefits and can lead to drop-out.

Dealing with **sport rage** is becoming a major challenge for clubs. Not only does it reflect badly on their sport, it can deter participation at all levels. The effect on volunteer coaches, referees and officials is especially serious, with many 'hanging up their whistles' because they are fed up with the abuse and harassment.

It's important that everyone involved in junior sport unite to combat **sport rage**.



tips 1

Don't make winning the only goal

Reward the effort of the children not the outcome of the game

Be reasonable in your demands on young players' time

Don't let players leave training or a game feeling as though they are not valued

preventing sport rage

Coaches can play an important role in preventing **sport rage**.

While **sport rage** is often the result of many factors, coaches can help reduce incidents by being a good role model and creating a positive sporting environment.

There are six important considerations for all coaches:

- 1 Understand what children want from sport
- 2 Encourage fair play
- 3 Communicate with parents
- 4 Respect referees
- 5 Uphold the coaches code of conduct
- 6 Good coaching technique.

Each is explained in more detail on the following pages.

1 Understand what children want from sport

Sport provides many valuable learning experiences. But for most children enjoyment is the most important outcome. If they don't have fun, they will not want to play.

Ask a child and you'll discover the scoreboard is not that important. They may not remember the score from a game played just two weeks ago – but will recall a funny incident or who they played with after the match. In fact, one of the most satisfying things about sport for children comes from being with their friends and being part of a team.

As a coach, you can help each player enjoy their sport by focussing on the things that they like about the sport.

And remember to keep it all in perspective. Less than 3 per cent of children who play competitive sport will ever reach an elite level. But 100 per cent can have a chance to enjoy their sport if we let them!

2 Encourage fair play

Sport provides children the opportunity to learn the principles of fair play – respect, integrity and fairness. As the coach, you have the perfect chance to reinforce these principles and integrate them into training and game day.

By doing this, you'll make sure that children get the best out of sport and, importantly, demonstrate good sporting behaviour both on and off the field.

To show your commitment to fair play, why not give an award to the player that best demonstrates fair play and good sporting behaviour each week?

3 Communicate with parents

At times, one of the biggest challenges for coaching at the club level is not the athlete but the parent.

Because of their love for their children and their interest in seeing them succeed, parents can push too hard and limit their child's chance to enjoy the sport. Although parents mean well, they sometimes get carried away.

Open communication between you and each parent is extremely important. If you take the time to explain to parents how you approach sport, you will probably gain their support and cooperation. Having



tips 2

Show respect for players from both teams, spectators and officials

Teach your players not to hate their opponents but to admire their skill

Encourage all players to participate in the FIFA handshake

Don't allow the rules to be bent or broken – they are mutual agreements

Don't show favouritism and ensure fair game time for all players

Visit www.playbytherules.net.au to learn more about fair play.



tips 3

Always greet and welcome parents when they arrive at training or the game

Communicate your plans for the whole season – keep parents in the loop

Work with parents and make them part of the team

Listen impartially – parents have good ideas too

tips 4

Always set a positive example to your players

Encourage all players to thank the referee

Accept and respect the referee's decision

Deal with refereeing issues appropriately.

that support can make a big difference to the overall success of the season.

One of the best ways to get parents on side is by meeting with them at the beginning of the season. If a separate meeting is not feasible, invite all parents to the first training session of the season where informal links can be established. This will give you the opportunity to discuss with parents your aims and expectations of both children and parents for the season. If you find too much of your time is being taken up by parents requests – ask the team manager to intervene or that all requests of you go through the team manager.

4 Respect referees

Referees are there to help make the game fair and more enjoyable for everyone. They are human and may occasionally make mistakes.

It is important that you understand this – and that you explain it to your team.

Importantly, don't forget that your behaviour toward referees will affect the attitudes of your players and their parents.

If you do experience consistently poor refereeing, raise the issue in a controlled and professional way with the relevant authority (the Blacktown Soccer Referees Association). This should be done after the game and with the appropriate support.

5 Uphold the coaches code for conduct

The Blacktown and Districts Soccer Football Association (BDSFA) has implemented codes of conduct for coaches, referees, administrators and parents.

It's important you understand, support and uphold the coaches code of conduct.

The BDSFA and your club are entitled to enforce this code. For example, while it may not be a criminal offence for a coach to verbally taunt an opposition team, such behaviour may well breach the code of conduct. As such, the BDSFA and your club are entitled to discipline members in accordance with their disciplinary procedures.

Refer to the back of this booklet for the coach's pledge: coaches code of conduct.

6 Good coaching technique

Being an organised, informed and skilled coach will help you create a positive sporting environment.

Understand and implement the basic coaching principles and techniques. Also make an effort to learn new skills and improve yourself as a coach when possible.

Getting the small things right is important. For example, always being organised and ensuring that both the equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of players. Getting this wrong could have a big impact on game day and cause unnecessary tension and frustration among players, parents and officials.



tips 5

Support and uphold the BDSFA codes of conduct for coaches

Be a positive role model

Don't drink alcohol at junior matches, or arrive at the field intoxicated

tips 6

Be conscientious, punctual and well organised

Provide positive, constructive feedback

Be able to motivate the players

Always be willing to learn more about the game

Make it fun for the players and their parents

Is your coaching style providing a safe, happy sporting environment?

Or could your actions be creating tension and sport rage?

Take this quiz – which coach are you?

self test: Which coach



The Screacher

The Screacher will see all the negative things on the field. Everything is going wrong and they yell constantly. They yell at all the players and the referee.

The Screacher focuses on the negative and is sometimes verbally abusive to the players.

The Screacher must learn to see the positive things in the game and make an effort to store the negative things so that they can be practised at training.

The Over Analyst

The Over Analyst sees the players as little professionals. They are so focussed on perfection that the players feel pressured and the game loses the fun factor. The approach of the **Over Analyst** is more appropriate at elite sport and they should remember that junior sport should be fun for the players.

are you?



The Wannabe Player

The **Wannabe Player** is reflecting their own skills on the players. They do not understand that children develop at different rates and are not miniature adults. The **Wannabe Player** remembers their own skill levels (usually higher than they actually were) and assumes that all players should have the same skills. The **Wannabe Player** should focus on the different aspects that each player brings to the team.

The Demoraliser

The **Demoraliser** makes the players feel as if they cannot get anything right with comments like "What are you doing you idiot?" or "That's not what we practised".

The **Demoraliser** should place less value on the way they are viewed as a coach and more on the role they should be playing in developing the self-esteem of their players. Children who feel crushed by **The Demoraliser's** comments will not want to play again.

The Five Star Coach (You?)

The **Five Star Coach** focuses on the effort and not the outcome. They know that skill development balanced with fun is the key to a successful team and that kids rate improvement and feeling like they are valued as a team member higher than winning. **The Five Star Coach** respects the officials who are providing their players with the opportunity to play and remembers to thank them each week.

dealing with **sport rage**

Despite everyone's best intentions, **sport rage** incidents will occur. While it's your club's responsibility to deal with incidents, coaches should understand and support the process.

Here's what you need to know about dealing with **sport rage**.

Codes of conduct can be enforced

Familiarise yourself with the BDSFA codes of conduct for parents, referees, coaches and administrators. You should be aware of the people who have agreed to abide by each code and against who they can be enforced.

Inappropriate behaviour should be reported

If you witness behaviour which contravenes the BDSFA's code you should approach your club's appointed ground official for the day and notify them of the behaviour. It is not your role to approach the offender(s) as this can further escalate the situation. If you're unsure who the ground official is, report the incident to a club committee member.

Warnings are issued

The first time a person engages in inappropriate conduct, they might be issued with a warning that their conduct is inappropriate and breaches the code of conduct. If the action is serious, immediate disciplinary charges can be made.

Disciplinary action can be taken

The BDSFA and each club is responsible for taking disciplinary action against persons who breach their codes of conduct. While this may involve a warning, it can also include suspension, expulsion or require the person to participate in a counselling session. You may need to assist the BDSFA or a club if it is hearing a charge laid against a person for inappropriate behaviour directed towards you or another person at a game which you attended.

People can be removed from the field of play

People can only enter the field of play with the permission of the referee. Referees should communicate directly and immediately with the ground official to remove unauthorised people from the field.

People can be removed from the venue

If your club is in a position to control ground entry, it will be able to evict persons from the ground if they contravene the code of conduct. Where attendance is not controlled, clubs can request offenders leave the venue, or otherwise discipline the person for breach of the code.

The referee may suspend the game

The referee may suspend play and refuse to restart the match until appropriate action has been taken if there has been a breach of the code of conduct. The referee may request that a person is removed from the sideline area to a place where they can no longer interfere in the game. In the case of a serious breach the referee may abandon the game all together.

The police should be involved if appropriate

If you feel the behaviour of an individual (including players, coaches, officials or spectators) constitutes a criminal act the police should be immediately notified. You should notify the ground official and request that the police be called.

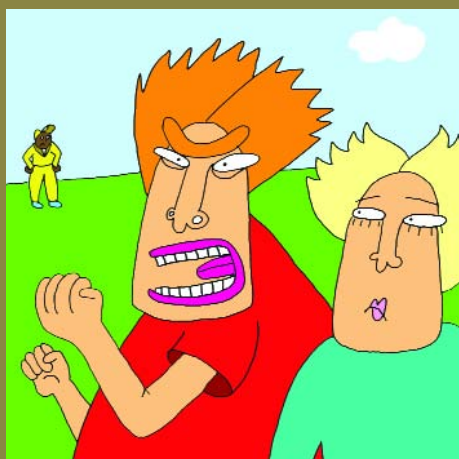
While it is lawful for a club to detain a person who has committed a criminal offence until the police arrive, it is recommended that they only resort to this if necessary. Club officials are able to exercise reasonable force in carrying out such action, but not disproportionate to the conduct of the offender.

case study: **handling sideline abuse**



Joe coaches an under 10 soccer team. During the third game of the season he had cause to approach two parents of players in his team and warn them that their constant shouting and derogatory comments directed at the game referee were inappropriate and in breach of the club's code of conduct for parents.

The individuals responded that they were not aware of the code of conduct but would "pull their heads in" in any case. Joe followed this up by presenting each of the parents with a code of conduct the following week which they agreed to sign and abide by.



During the sixth game of the season one of the parents became upset at the referee's off-side ruling against his son and proceeded to verbally abuse the referee.

Joe responded to this situation by requesting the nominated ground official report the parent for breach of the Association code of conduct.

The ground official notified the parent of the report and his requirement to attend a hearing before the association committee during the week.



The association committee subsequently suspended the parent from attending three matches and required him to meet with Joe to discuss the impact of his behaviour on the team.

The club arranged for other parents to transport the suspended parent's child to and from the next three games.

Coach's pledge: coaches code of conduct

BDSFA has implemented codes of conduct for all its stakeholders including coaches.

Please make yourself familiar with the code as it applies to you as a coach.

- I will remember that junior players participate for pleasure and winning is only part of the fun
- I will never ridicule or yell at junior players for making a mistake or not winning
- I will be reasonable in my demands on players' time, energy and enthusiasm
- I will operate within the rules and spirit of the game and teach my players to do the same
- I will ensure that the time players spend with me is a positive experience. All junior players are deserving of equal attention and opportunities
- I will avoid overplaying the talented players and understand that the average players need and deserve equal time
- I will not use bad language nor will I harass players, officials, spectators or other coaches.
- I will ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all players
- I will display control, respect and professionalism to all involved with the sport including opponents, referees, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators. I will encourage my players to do the same
- I will show concern and caution toward sick and injured players and follow the advice of a physician when determining whether an injured player is ready to recommence training or competition
- I will obtain appropriate qualifications and keep up to date with the latest coaching practices and the principles of growth and development of young players.
- I will not drink alcohol at junior matches or arrive at the field intoxicated.

I agree to abide by this code of conduct and to be subject to the rules and policies of the club/association.

This is my coach's pledge.

Coach's signature

The Coach's pledge has been adopted from the Australian Sports Commission's Coach's Code of Conduct

kids' comments

'I play sport because it's fun and you'll be able to still move when you grow old.'

'My dad is great – he just watches.'

'We don't have a score board, but we do have the best meat pies.'

'I don't play anymore because mum used to yell too much. I got sick of it.'

'I play sport because I enjoy it and it's fun. I met my best friend playing netball.'

'When people won't shake hands at the end of the game – that's bad sports behaviour.'

'I don't really care who wins as long as I have fun... although it's good to win at least once.'

'One of the refs got his car scratched just because one of the teams lost the game.'

'When spectators yell at the referees it's like that person has wrecked the game for everyone.'

'I don't mind if I don't win every time I play – in every game someone has to lose.'

'I feel good when we score a goal, I guess the other team must feel the same when they score.'

Taken from Sport Rage seminar and extracted from Kids Sport – A Very Real Guide for Parents (Denis Baker)

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