



# sport rage

play your part. **stamp out**  
ugly sporting behaviour

# Prevention kit for officials



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## Preventing sport rage: tips for **officials**

### About sport rage

Sport rage can come in many forms – an unruly parent abusing an official, a player punching another player, or a spectator shouting racial taunts.

These moments of madness can result in serious injuries, disciplinary action and even lifetime bans.

Dealing with sport rage is now a major challenge for clubs. Not only does sport rage reflect badly on the clubs involved, it can deter participation at all levels.

It is important that everyone involved in sport unites to combat sport rage.

While sport rage is often the result of many factors, officials can help reduce incidents by creating a positive sporting environment. Officials should consider the following four points:

#### **Encourage fair play**

- Always be fair, impartial and consistent
- Encourage and praise good sporting behaviour
- Visit [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au) to learn more about fair play

#### **Communicate**

- Communicate honestly, generously and fairly
- Express decisions clearly
- Keep your emotions in check
- Avoid getting upset when confronted with emotional reactions

#### **Uphold the code of conduct**

- Support and uphold the code of conduct for officials
- Respect other officials' decisions and don't publicly criticise them
- Don't drink alcohol at matches, or arrive intoxicated

#### **Good officiating technique**

- Know the laws of the game and the spirit of the laws
- Be conscientious, well organised and punctual
- Show concern to injured players
- Don't compromise safety by allowing situations to get out of hand.



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## Preventing sport rage: tips for **officials of junior sport**

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### Kids' comments

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

*"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."*

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

*"My dad is great – he just watches."*

Taken from sport rage seminar and *Kids Sport - A Very Real Guide for Grown Ups* by Denis Baker

While sport rage is often the result of many factors, officials can help reduce incidents by creating a positive sporting environment. Officials should consider the following four points:

#### What children want from sport

Sport provides many valuable learning experiences for children, but for the most part they do it for the enjoyment.

Ask a child and you'll discover the scoreboard is not that important. In fact, one of the most enjoyable aspects of sport for children is being with their friends and being part of a team.

#### Encouraging fair play

As an official you have the perfect chance to reinforce the principles of fair play – respect, integrity and fairness – during the game. Be a role model for fair play by upholding the rules and regulations.

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.

When the opportunity allows, why not support good sporting behaviour with a kind word to players, coaches or parents of both teams when deserved?

#### Communicating

Open communication between you and the players is important, so try to express your decisions clearly to them.

Coaches or team managers may approach you at the end of a match for an explanation of a ruling. If this happens, either explain the decision in a clear and courteous manner or ask them to raise their concerns through the appropriate channel. Gaining their support and cooperation will make a big difference.

When confronted with emotional reactions from players, coaches, parents or spectators, keep calm. By remaining professional and in control you will be setting an excellent example.

#### Code of conduct

It is important you understand, support and uphold the code of conduct. Your club or association is entitled to enforce this code. For example, while it may not be a criminal offence for you to verbally abuse another official, such behaviour may well breach the code of conduct and disciplinary action may be taken.



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## Dealing with sport rage

Despite everyone's best intentions, sport rage incidents sometimes occur.

While it is mainly the responsibility of ground officials and club committee members to deal with incidents, it is important that everyone understands and supports the process. Here are some of the steps that can be taken, depending on the seriousness of the incident.

■ **Reporting inappropriate behaviour** – *Responsibility of everyone*

Behaviour that contravenes the code of conduct should be reported to the ground official. Any person who is unsure who the ground official is should report the incident to a club committee member.

■ **Approaching the offender** –

*Responsibility of the ground official / club committee member*

Only the ground official or club committee member should approach the offender.

■ **Issuing warnings** – *Responsibility of the club committee member / ground official*

The first time a person breaches a code of conduct, they might be issued with a warning. The person may not be aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and should be notified of club rules.

■ **Taking disciplinary action** – *Responsibility of the club committee*

If the conduct is repeated or of a serious nature, the club committee should consider taking disciplinary action in accordance with its rules. This might result in counselling, suspension or expulsion.

■ **Removing people from the field of play or venue** –

*Responsibility of the ground official / club committee*

The referee/umpire should communicate directly and immediately with the ground official to remove a person from the field. If the club is in a position to control ground entry, it will be able to evict persons from the ground. Where attendance is not controlled, clubs can request offenders leave the venue, or otherwise can discipline the person for breach of the code of conduct.

■ **Suspending play** – *Responsibility of the referee / umpire*

The referee/umpire may suspend play and refuse to restart until appropriate action has been taken. They may request that a person is removed from the sideline and, in serious cases, abandon the game altogether.

■ **Involving the police** – *Responsibility of the ground official / club committee*

If you feel the behaviour of an individual constitutes a criminal act the police should be notified immediately by the ground official. 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 this is done only as a last resort. Club officials are able to exercise reasonable force in detaining a person who has committed a criminal offence until the police arrive, but this should not be disproportionate to the conduct of the offender.

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## Quiz: which official are you?

Is your refereeing style providing a safe, happy sporting environment? Or could your actions be creating tension and sport rage?

Take this quiz – which official are you?

### The Party Pooper

The Party Pooper kills the fun for the players. They pick up all the mistakes in a negative way and the players feel they can't get anything right. **The Party Pooper** needs to keep the fun in the game.

### The Weekend Warrior

The Weekend Warrior takes the power of the whistle to the extreme by using the authority of their position to boost their own ego. **The Weekend Warrior** needs to understand that the players want to have fun and that the game is not about them.



### The Blind Eye

The Blind Eye pretends not to see unfair play on the field. They allow sledging and verbal abuse as part of the game. **The Blind Eye** needs to learn how to prevent and deal with harassment and discrimination in sport.

### The Five Star Official (You?)

The Five Star Official controls the match to the skill level of the players. They are consistent and emphasise the spirit of the game, not the errors. **The Five Star Official** is courteous and encourages all players, they understand that the players expect the rules to be upheld fairly.

### The Grudge

The Grudge does not referee fairly, they show bias to one team or several players. **The Grudge** needs to understand that the rules are a mutual agreement to all involved and players show respect when the rules are upheld without favouritism.

### The Out of Date

The Out of Date has not stayed up to date with the rules. They confuse players, the spectators and themselves. **The Out of Date** needs to keep up to date.



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r u a sportrager?



r u a sideline rager?



r u a dummy spitter?

