

RugbyWA
Community Rugby

“Code of Conduct”

This is the Code of Conduct which is published by RugbyWA to member clubs, affiliated bodies, all rugby players and officials for the purpose of improving relationships between all participants in Western Australian Rugby.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out a Code of Conduct for Clubs and their members participating in WA Rugby. This Code sets out to inform all participants what is considered acceptable behavior within the Western Australian Rugby Community.

This Code of Conduct sits alongside Rugby Australia's current Code of Conduct. If there is any direct conflict between the Codes then Rugby Australia's current Code of Conduct takes precedence.

Ideally, Club Presidents, Directors of Rugby and Head Coaches would communicate with each other on any issues contained within this Code and resolve such issues in an amicable, respectful and cordial way.

Background

RugbyWA has instituted this Code of Conduct because from time to time incidents occur in Rugby between clubs, players and officials which damage relationships both at a club and personal level.

Players and officials participate for enjoyment. Strict observance of the Laws of the Game, may not be enough to maximise that enjoyment. Rugby tradition requires and expects that clubs and players will treat each other with respect, courtesy and hospitality.

The Code does not form any part of the Laws of the Game. It is advisory and aspires to go beyond the strict laws of the game in order to improve relationships between clubs and every participant's enjoyment of the game.

Recruitment of Players

It is a requirement that all Clubs assist in the development of Junior (including school) players. The long term future of Rugby in WA relies upon locally produced players remaining in the game. Local players should be given every opportunity to improve/show their playing abilities by being given opportunities to play in higher senior grades. We encourage all clubs to work with RugbyWA on their club recruitment strategies.

Active recruitment of junior players from other clubs is unacceptable. Players may move at their own/parents initiative, but there should be no encouragement or inducement of juniors to change clubs until a player has completed Junior Rugby. Our experience has proved that in many cases recruitment of such players causes the eventual loss of that player to rugby.

Recruitment of players from interstate or overseas is acceptable. On many occasions these recruited players have then left the clubs which paid for their travel and other costs and this has been a source of animosity between clubs. All clubs investing in recruitment of players should protect their interests by complying with Rugby Australia player contracting requirements.

Generally speaking, players playing club rugby in WA will be amateur players. There should be no payment of match fees for any player including recruited players. It is accepted and understood that recruited players will potentially derive benefits from playing rugby in WA with financial assistance being gained from any of the following categories: subsidised

travel/relocation costs, assistance with rental accommodation, assistance with work opportunities and provision of transportation.

- The future of rugby in Western Australia lies with locally produced players.
- Try to promote local players who may improve their game by playing in higher competition.
- Imported players assist to improve the standard but it is often detrimental for clubs to rely on them totally.
- If recruiting players from interstate or overseas comply with Rugby Australia contracting rules.
- Junior players should not be actively recruited by other clubs while they are still juniors.
- Don't approach players from other clubs to induce them to change clubs. Indications of a desire to transfer should come first from the player.

TRANSFER OF PLAYERS

The RugbyWA Competition Rules set out the requirements concerning transfer of players. These rules will be strictly enforced. Nothing other than these rules will prevent free choice by senior players of which club they decide to play for.

LOCAL PLAYER TRANSFERS

When any player approaches a new club with the aim of transferring, it is recommended that the club to which the player wishes to transfer contacts the player's old club to advise them of the player's intention. This is especially important if a junior player or Colt wishes to transfer. This will allow the local club to clarify the reason for the player transferring and to try to resolve any issues regarding the transfer request.

Any recruited player without a contract may decide to change clubs. The club to which a player transfers will not be expected to reimburse any expenses to the club which originally recruited the player from interstate or overseas. That would amount to the payment of a transfer fee and this is not in the rules or the interests of rugby.

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

All international players should arrive in WA with their clearance papers duly signed and completed by their former club/union. Such players who do not arrive with their "papers" in order will not be eligible to compete in any competition matches until RugbyWA receives confirmation from Rugby Australia that the player has been cleared to play rugby in Australia.

Standard contract templates for players recruited from outside WA are available for clubs to use to try and protect their interests in players recruited. It is strongly recommended that any player recruited from overseas or interstate be asked to complete this contract. Any contracts entered between any player and a club need to be lodged with the Game Development Department. These should be provided in sealed envelopes with the club and player's name detailed on the outside. These contracts will not be looked at unless a dispute with the contracted player arises. No club will accept the transfer of a player under contract to another club. No player contract can have a duration of longer than 2 years. A club may decide to release a player from a contract.

- Transfer of players between clubs is only restricted by the current competition rules. The payment of transfer fees is not approved.
- If a player approaches a new club with the aim of transferring, the club to which he wants to transfer should advise the player's old club of the player's intentions.
- If clubs outlay money on the import of a player, they have the opportunity to get the player to sign a contract to remain with that club.
- Any such contracts entered into, to potentially be enforceable, must be lodged with the Game Development Department.
- Players who are contracted are not to be actively recruited by other clubs.

BEHAVIOUR OF PLAYERS

The Laws of Rugby Union prohibit misconduct on the field. It is expected that appropriate behaviour will continue before and after games. A Code of Behaviour for players is attached as Appendix 1.

Any violence that is outside the Laws of the Game can subject the perpetrator(s) to criminal and/or civil action should the injured/aggrieved party elect to pursue the matter before the courts. Unnecessary violence can put victims under considerable financial strain and bring the game into disrepute. This is a warning that court action may follow overly violent action on or off the field.

Players who develop a reputation for actions outside the bounds of acceptable behaviour, should be disciplined in an appropriate manner by club executives. It should not be left to the players or to the judiciary or finally the courts to sort out unacceptable behaviour.

Clubs should be particularly severe on known violent players, players who verbally abuse opponents, match officials or who exhibit racist/homophobic attitudes on or off the rugby field.

- Players should observe the Code of Behaviour both on and off the field.
- Violence on or off the field can result in legal action and this can bring the game into disrepute.
- Known violent players should be disciplined by their club. It should not be left to the referees and Judiciary to do this.
- No verbal abuse of players/match officials or expression of racist/homophobic attitudes should be tolerated.

COACHES

Coaches play an important role in improving the standard of the game and the conduct of players through developing a positive culture in their team. Coaches should not coach or encourage illegal play, in fact there should be active discouragement of dangerous and foul play. Coaches should discipline players who consistently employ such methods. It is in the interests of all clubs and coaches to have all their players fit and available for selection. Loss of players through suspension can be damaging to a club's prospects.

RugbyWA offers a full coaching suite of accredited and advanced coaching seminars to assist and upskill coaches in their development. Clubs are strongly encouraged to ensure their coaches are represented at these seminars.

Coaches must not refer to racial or personal characteristics, of their own or opposition players.

The coaching of juniors is particularly important in encouraging a positive culture. This is the responsibility of clubs and of the affiliated bodies organising Junior Rugby. Any coach found coaching inappropriate tactics should be disciplined by the affiliated body.

- Do not coach illegal play.
- Do not condone unfair, dangerous or foul play.
- Do not use racist or personal slurs to encourage your players to greater efforts.

BEHAVIOUR OF SPECTATORS

Spectators are often not members of clubs and it may be difficult to exercise control over them from a club level. Where a club association is unknown it is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that reasonable standards of behaviour are maintained. The following are considered to be against the spirit of the game:-

- abuse of players
- abuse of the referee or other match official
- racist and/or homophobic remarks of any kind.

If spectators can be identified as a supporter of a particular club and they are causing problems it is the responsibility of the club with which they are associated with to encourage acceptable behaviour.

On no account should spectators enter the field of play. It is not the referee's responsibility to prevent this but rather appointed club Ground Marshalls. It is up to the clubs and in particular the home club if the person concerned cannot be identified as associated with a particular club.

Spectators and participants are **NOT** to bring alcohol to a ground. Nearly all clubs have premises at which alcohol is sold. Club liquor licensing arrangements would be in jeopardy if liquor of any kind, not sold by the clubs, is consumed at rugby grounds. It is the responsibility of the home club to police this.

- Where spectators are known to be associated with a particular club it is the responsibility of that club to encourage acceptable behaviour.
- Other spectators are the responsibility of the home club.
- Verbal abuse of players, referees or other spectators is **UNACCEPTABLE**.
- Spectators and participants are **NOT** permitted to bring alcohol to grounds.

REFEREE HOSPITALITY

Club officials and players should show respect to referees/match officials. Where possible host clubs should meet and greet and provide separate changing facilities for the referees/match officials. Clubs, where necessary, also need to provide competent touch

judges and anything else which will aid in the conduct of the game (eg. Match balls, ball kids and water).

The Referee should be invited to join in the social activities associated with the matches. Any discussion of interpretation of laws should be in a non-confrontational and informative way. It is recommended that any such discussions should occur at least 15 minutes after the referee has left the field of play. Don't blame the referee for the loss of a game. Any formal complaint about a referee should be directed to the Referee's Association and the Manager of Game Development.

- Make referees feel part of the game; they enjoy the game and social activities too.
- Provide separate changing facilities if possible.
- Provide competent touch judges where required as well as match balls, ball kids and water.
- Invite the referees to socialise after the game and acknowledge their contribution in after game speeches.
- Don't blame referees for the loss of a game. Use appropriate channels for feedback.
- Submit any formal complaints about referees to the Referee's Association and to the Manager of Game Development.

JUDICIARY MATTERS

Club officials who appear before the Judiciary to defend their players are expected to be objective about the evidence they give. It is not satisfactory to claim extenuating circumstances where a player is sent off if none exist. The judiciary is not a law court where sentences are handed down after a judgment of the mental state of a player subjected to the judicial process.

The referee's word/report is the fact. The Laws of the Game confirm this. The role of an official will be simply to corroborate the evidence given or to state facts which may have escaped the referee's attention.

Co-operation with the Judiciary will improve the game.

- Club official(s) should not mislead the Judiciary when appearing for a player.
- The referee's decision about a matter which comes before the Judiciary is taken to be the fact. Only extenuating circumstances may modify any penalty imposed.
- Discipline your own players if their actions on or off the field are unacceptable. Don't leave it to the referees and the Judiciary.

SPONSORS

RugbyWA arranges sponsors who contribute significantly to the financial support of the code. Clubs should encourage their players to support these sponsors. Clubs who are seeking sponsorship themselves are advised to consult with RugbyWA and ensure that there are no substantial conflicts with existing RugbyWA sponsors.

- Support the RugbyWA Sponsors and don't agree to conflicting sponsorships without referring them to the RugbyWA.

RUGBYWA OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES AND THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH CLUBS

Officials and employees of the Union must not use their position to improve the position of any club with which they have an association.

Any such allegation should be drawn to the attention of the RugbyWA Board through the Chief Executive Officer of RugbyWA. RugbyWA will, if the charge is proven, take appropriate action with the official or employee.

The following restrictions apply, particularly to junior players, and officials and employees of RugbyWA should be particularly careful in their approach to these players.

Unacceptable actions would include:-

- Providing names and addresses of players in representative teams;
 - Recruiting players in representative teams with the intention of having them change clubs;
 - Promising easier selection into representative teams if the player belonged to a particular club.
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- Union Officials and employees are not permitted to use their positions to give any particular club an advantage over another.
 - A complaint that an official or employee is favouring a particular club or actively advancing their own club should be referred to the RugbyWA Board for investigation.
 - Junior players may be advised on their future advancement in Rugby by RugbyWA employees and coaches. Such advice must not deliberately favour one club above another.
 - Coaches and Managers of representative teams should return all lists of addresses and telephone numbers to the Rugby Union at the completion of the Coaching or Management appointment.

DISPUTES

Matters which arise and are subject to this Code of Conduct, or reasonably could come within its scope, should be notified to RugbyWA. If considered appropriate, RugbyWA will facilitate the clubs to consult on the issue. Should there be no resolution to a conflict then RugbyWA will appoint three (3) club Presidents to hear the complaint and mediate the matter. Any such mediation is not binding on the club subject of the complaint but all clubs will be informed about the decision relating to the matter under dispute.

Club Presidents should also advise whether there are additional matters which need to be addressed in this Code of Conduct.

- Refer any disputes which relate to this Code of Conduct to RugbyWA.
- Advise RugbyWA of any matters which are not covered by this code that should be.

APPENDIX 1:

PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Player of Rugby Union I will at all times respect the traditions of the game and will not do anything deliberately to bring the game into disrepute. In particular, I will try to observe the spirit of fair competition in play. I will seek to enhance the enjoyment of the game of both my own team mates and my opponents both during and after the games.

I therefore declare that:

- I will respect the laws of the game and attempt to observe them;
- I will not engage in any violent acts on or off the field;
- I will play Rugby for the enjoyment of the game and for the friends which I will make both within my club and in the opposition;
- I will respect my opponents and will not seek to reduce their enjoyment of the game;
- I will not criticise the refereeing or blame the referee for the loss of a match;
- I will respect the decisions of the Referees and acknowledge their participation in the game;
- I will not engage in any racist activity or offer any verbal abuse based on racist attitudes and/or homophobic slurs;
- I will make my opponents welcome in my club following our club's home games;
- I will play for what I can do for the sport of Rugby Union not for what Rugby Union can do for me.