

Sport rage prevention

A planning guide for clubs



Office
of Sport
Sport & Recreation

sportandrecreation.nsw.gov.au/sportrage

Hey club committee – listen up!

Here it is

Sport rage prevention: a planning guide for clubs.

It's simple, easy-to-use and will help rid your club of sport ragers like me.

Remember I'm bad news – risking your members' safety, damaging your club's reputation and increasing your liability.

And I'm not going away until you do something about me.

Open up the plan and you'll see two strategies:

PREPARE

the groundwork your committee needs to do to manage sport rage.

PROMOTE

straight-forward education and promotional ideas for sport rage prevention.

If you PREPARE and PROMOTE, you'll go a long way to creating a sport rage free club.

Well, I'm out of here. I've got some officials to insult, a few spectators to get physical with and a coach to abuse the daylights out of.

I'll leave the planning to you. But get a move on – I might just be at your next game day.

How to use this planning guide

- 1 At your next committee meeting, set some time aside to discuss sport rage
- 2 Provide a copy of this planning guide to your committee members
- 3 Review the PREPARE side of the plan – ensure your club has got all the strategies in place
- 4 Review the PROMOTE side of the plan – choose some ideas to implement at your club



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Prepare

Prepare your club to effectively manage sport rage.

To help prevent and deal with sport rage, all clubs will need to do some pre-season groundwork – putting in place some critical policies, processes and personnel.

Before you start, it's worth reviewing your constitution and rules. They operate as a contract between your club and members – and members are bound by them.

Develop codes of conduct

Your club needs codes of conduct for administrators, coaches, officials, players and parents. They outline an agreed standard of behaviour for everyone. Check with your national and state sporting organisation first. If they don't have codes for you to adopt, establish your own using our samples.

Establish disciplinary procedures

Your club constitution or by-laws must contain a procedure for the discipline of members who breach codes of conduct. Once your club has adopted these rules, then it is entitled to apply and enforce them.

When setting up disciplinary procedures, it's advisable you seek legal advice, as well as speak to your national and state sporting body.

Establish an incident process

With your codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures in place, your club should map out a clear process for dealing with sport rage incidents. Establish what the response is – step by step – and who is responsible for each step. A suggested approach is outlined below.

Bind non-members

While members are bound by your rules, other people such as spectators, officials and parents of visiting teams are not. Ways to enforce club rules over non-members include applying conditions of entry or asking parents to sign registration forms at the start of the season.

Appoint ground officials

Ground officials play a key part in effectively managing sport rage. Appoint

ground officials for every game day to deal with incidents. Ground officials should be trained and confident to deal with difficult people and situations.

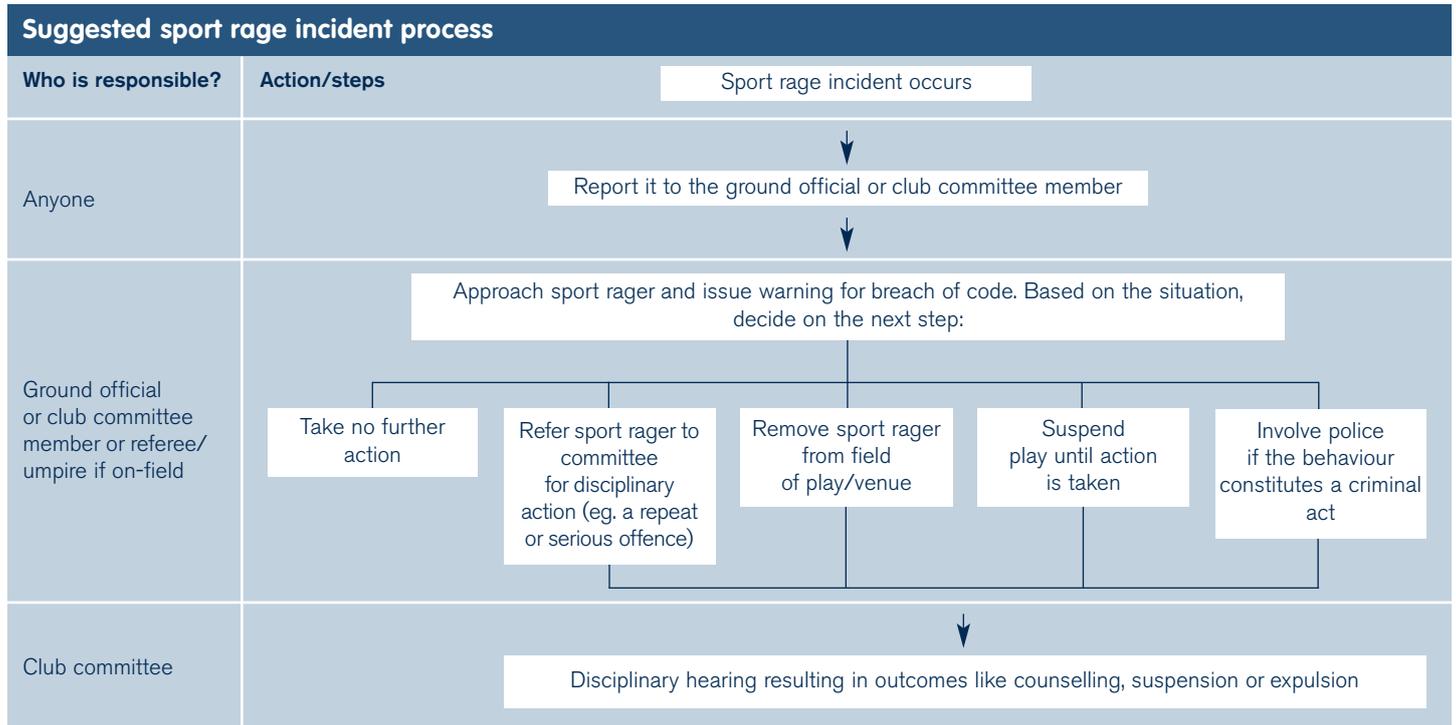
It's also a good idea to provide a job description and information on their role.

Train officials and other club members

Ensuring people in your club value fair play is essential.

www.playbytherules.net.au offers free online training on fair play. Suitable for officials, coaches, players and parents. Consider making it part of your accreditation processes.

You can also visit www.sportandrecreation.nsw.gov.au for information on how to run your club.



Promote

Promote your club's position on sport rage, as well as educate people about fair play and being a good sport.

To create a positive sporting environment and manage sport rage, you will need to promote:

- ✓ Club policies and procedures
- ✓ Club process for dealing with incidents
- ✓ Fair play and good sporting behaviour.

Here are some suggestions for how to do this:

Code compliance

Have players, parents, coaches and officials sign your code of conduct as part of registration.

Ground officials

Communicate throughout your club who your ground officials are and what they do. It's a good idea to arrange for ground officials to wear something distinctive on game day.

Education brochures

Distribute sport rage education brochures at registration or orientation day. They'll help people understand what sport rage is and how they can play a part in preventing it.

Articles

Publish articles and tips in your newsletter and/or website. Articles could focus on topics such as codes of conduct, the ground official, fair play and what to do if sport rage occurs.

Meetings

Think about arranging pre-season meetings between key groups, such as parents and coaches, to discuss club policies, fair play and expectations.

Role models

Arrange for role models from your sport to talk to players, parents and coaches. This can have a huge impact on members, especially young people.

Ground announcements

Play announcements on game/event days that remind people to keep their emotions in check.

Positive messages

Communicate simple fair play messages via:

- banners
- posters
- stickers
- animated banners on your club website.

Slogan competition

Try running a fun competition asking club members to come up with catchy fair play slogans. Award a prize for the best effort.

Fair play day

Arrange a fair play day each season to reinforce positive messages. You could hand out information brochures, stickers, invite sport celebrities to talk, hang banners at your venue and play ground announcements.

Good Sport Award

Adopt a Good Sport Award to recognise positive behaviour by teams and individuals. Decide on winners via a nomination system. Use a certificate or prize to reward your good sports.

Coloured Vest Program

Build support for beginner officials by adopting the Coloured Vest Program. New officials are mentored and wear bright vests identifying them as beginners. For details visit www.sportandrecreation.nsw.gov.au/sportrage.



Posters



Brochures



Certificate

The law and sport rage

It's important for all club committee members to have a basic understanding of the law in relation to sport rage.

Sporting clubs and associations have a responsibility to address behaviours which offend community standards, as well as those standards set by the association itself.

It is not uncommon for a person to be sued for financial compensation if association or competition rules have been broken resulting in physical or emotional damage to another person. Similarly, the association itself may be sued for breach of its duty of care owed to members, officials and visitors, by virtue of the conduct of individuals at its games or activities.

Discrimination and vilification of persons on the basis of attributes such as gender, age, religion or race is against the law. Breaching such laws can result in large penalties for individuals and sporting associations, not to mention the damage to reputation which may result from the publicity surrounding these issues. If the behaviour of individuals or groups at your sporting event or activity is sufficiently serious that it offends the criminal law, then formal criminal charges and legal sanctions may follow.

Criminal law

People involved in grass roots sport are not immune from the criminal law just because their behaviour might occur at a sporting contest.

There are many instances where both on-field and off-field conduct by players, officials and spectators have attracted the attention of the criminal law.

For example, a female soccer player was recently fined \$250 after being found guilty of common assault for spitting at a referee during a women's soccer match. The complaint was laid with the police by the referee. Interestingly, by the time the criminal sanction was handed down, the player had already received a life suspension by the soccer association for the offence.

Criminal assault

Criminal assault is the most common form of unlawful abusive behaviour which might arise at a sporting contest. It can arise in either of two ways:

- Through behaviour that causes the victim to feel threatened by the actions of another. Words by themselves do not amount to an assault. There must be some act or gesture accompanying the words which together indicate an intention to assault or which a reasonable person would understand as indicating such an intention
- Behaviour which results in the actual infliction of unlawful force on the body of another.

Common assault is the least serious form of assault and may or may not involve physical contact (eg. spitting). Common assault charges often result in a fine if the offender is convicted. In order to establish an offence of common assault it is necessary to establish an intention by the offender to cause harm, or recklessness where the accused person appreciates the risk of harm involved with their conduct but proceeds to carry out that conduct anyway.

More serious assaults include those involving actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm. These offences require actual bodily harm to occur whereby the health or comfort of the victim is interfered with.

There have been numerous instances of on-field sports participants and off-field sports spectators being charged with assault involving actual bodily harm and courts have clearly demonstrated that they will not tolerate such behaviour whether in the sporting context or otherwise.

