



Let Kids be Kids

issue 20

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Check out the all new Play by the Rules website with many new features and resources:

www.playbytherules.net.au/



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THE EDITOR

What a start to the year! It's March already and we've had two major launches — the new Play by the Rules platform and the 2017 campaign Let Kids be Kids. I'm very happy to report they are both going very well.

Only a week or so after the new website went live on 15 February we launched Let Kids be Kids and we saw record numbers of people going through the site — around 33,500 visits by early March — and the new website held up fine!

Let Kids be Kids addresses poor sideline behaviour in junior sport, an issue that resonates with so many people. It features some powerful videos, with the main kids video reaching 791,553 people on Facebook with 302,000 views so far!

You can find more information and resources in this issue of the magazine which is themed around the Let Kids be Kids message. Enjoy!



Peter Downs
Manager - Play by the Rules

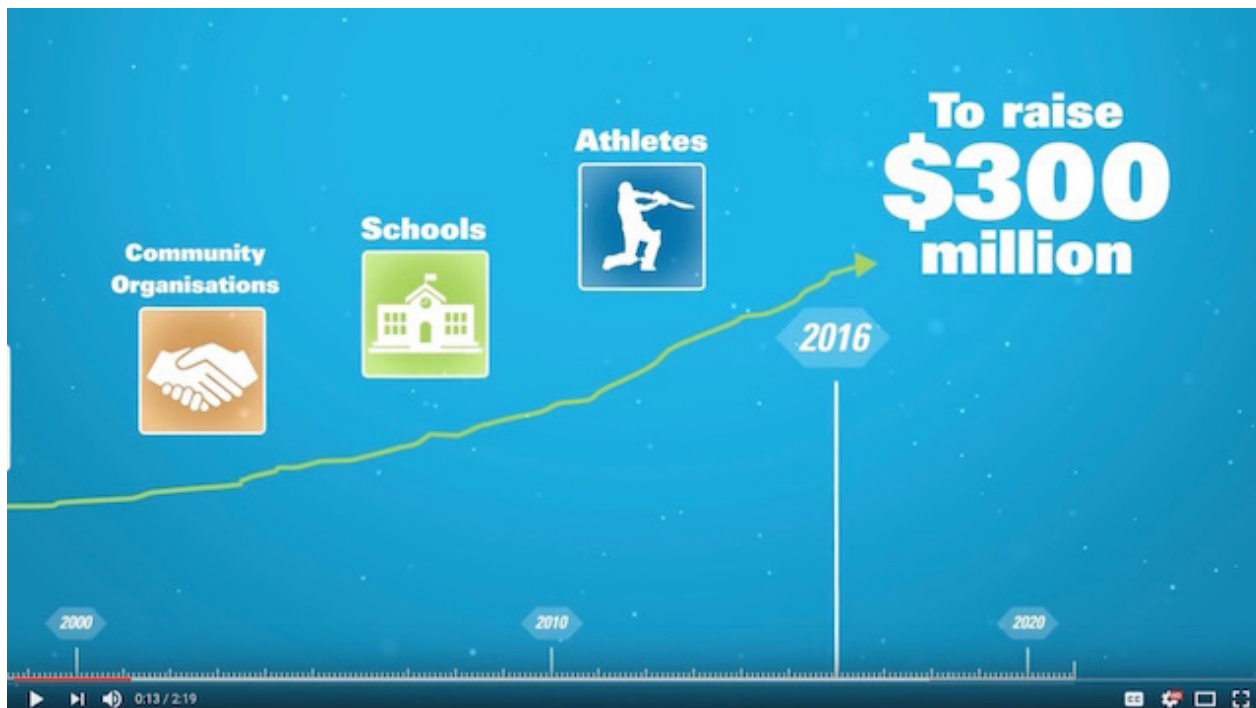
Australian Sports Foundation

Since its inception over 30 years ago, the Australian Sports Foundation (ASF) has been working with sports clubs, athletes and sporting organisations helping them fundraise for their sporting needs. The ASF shares the values of Play by the Rules, that of making sport inclusive, safe and fair, and welcomes any project that encourages these same values.

Any club, team or community group, from grassroots to national level, that has a project which is going to develop their sport, can sign up with the ASF. Athletes who are striving to achieve or have achieved state or national selection can also sign up to fundraise. Best of all, signing up with the ASF means donations to your projects of \$2 or more are tax deductible. And it could mean the end of chocolate drives and sausage sizzles for your club.

Last year the ASF helped raise an extra \$32m in funding for sport and received almost 10,000 donations for things such as equipment, travel costs, new facilities, and all the things that clubs need to survive.

Find out more about how the ASF is working with sport to help grow funding by watching this short video, or visit www.asf.org.au.



Play by the Rules platform goes live

It was two years in the making but the all-new Play by the Rules website was launched on 15 February. This is a significant upgrade to the platform that has served us well for the past decade. Apart from the new look and feel, there are a number of new features and functions you might find interesting:

- All the website content has been reviewed and updated, including downloadable resources such as fact sheets, templates, promotional material and ebooks.
- The navigation and site structure has been rationalised and 'cleaned up' to provide a logical and consistent user experience. You will be able to find your way around quite easily.
- The platform meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards and we continue to add features such as downloadable videos with subtitles and transcripts.
- We have added a 'Select your role' function for administrators, coaches and officials, players and parents. This means, for example, that if you select 'parent' we'll be able to feed you related material in the sidebar and throughout the site relevant to your role. It also helps us track who is using the site.
- We have prioritised core issues for Play by the Rules. You'll see links and widgets for child protection, the online courses and current campaigns on the home page and throughout the site.

There are many other upgrades and features both in the front end (what you see) and the back end (what you don't see). It's a massive step forward for Play by the Rules and we hope you like it.

The new website was made possible through the support of all the Play by the Rules partners. The technical expertise and support of our new partners Switch (<http://www.switchit.com>) has been outstanding.



Let Kids be Kids

stage 1 launch

On 28 February, Play by the Rules launched a major national campaign — Let Kids be Kids — to address poor sideline behaviour and reinforce the importance of kids having fun when playing sport with their mates.

‘We’ve seen national campaigns in the US (Changing the Game) and the UK (Respect) that address these issues from grassroots to elite level,’ says Jenny Priest, co-Chair of Play by the Rules.



‘In Australia, we’ve seen junior football games played behind closed doors and numerous local initiatives such as SHOOSH for Kids that encourage silence on the sidelines and good behaviour. But, to date, there has been no national campaign addressing poor behaviour.’

The campaign features a host of sports stars, including Ange Postecoglou, Ellyse Perry, Usman Khawaja, Caitlin Thwaites, Sam Thaiday, Liesl Tesch, Nick dal Santo, Dean Mumm and Matt Ryan, supporting the message for people on the sideline to let kids be kids — to let them enjoy their sport and have fun with their mates.

‘The lessons we learn on the sporting field as children continue to shape us as adults,’ says Play by the Rules co-Chair and Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins.

‘That’s why we need to work together on campaigns such as Let Kids be Kids to make sure sport is safe, fair and inclusive, particularly for kids.’

The campaign also features powerful messages from kids talking about the impact of poor sideline behaviour on them.

National Children’s Commissioner Megan Mitchell welcomed the campaign.

‘All children have a right to engage in play and recreational activities in an environment that is free from verbally and physically abusive behaviour,’ says Commissioner Mitchell.

‘The messages from the children and young people in this campaign are an important reminder that sport is about having fun with your friends, and it’s not always about winning.

‘We need to listen to what young people are telling us about the importance of respectful behaviour in sport. As parents and adults, it’s our job to set good examples and support our kids from the sidelines.’

You can sign up to promote Let Kids be Kids and get access to all the campaign materials by going to <http://pbtr.com.au/partner>

You can also access the Let Kids be Kids toolkit of resources at <http://playbytherules.net.au/let-kids-be-kids>

The day a dad ruined junior football

My parents only ever encouraged their sporting children, so I was 12 before I first heard a dad abuse his son at a football game.

It was after a match in the rain. We were being herded into our suburban change room, filling it with steam and laughter, picking the mud from our ears.

Most of our parents were pressing in, folding umbrellas, whispering small but important words — ‘Good game, son’ — just as we wanted. Warming our hands in theirs.

I can’t remember whether we won or lost. Five minutes after most kids’ games, no-one cares much about the score.

One player, William, was being given more back slaps than any of us because he had just played the game of his life. I remember telling him he was ‘best on ground by a mile’.

His father, skinny and mean, disagreed.

William’s dad bent down and said to his child loud enough for a few of us to hear:

‘Don’t believe anything they say, you were shit today. You didn’t even go in hard’.

I watched for William’s reaction but the boy didn’t flinch, wince or even look up at his old man. He just stared at the floor in cold silence, waiting for the moment to pass. I can only imagine the harrowing critiques his insecure father gave him in private.

William didn’t play many more games of footy.

It’s not surprising some parents, even the most well-meaning, say the wrong things to their children before, during and after games of junior sport.

Watching your boy or girl compete is an emotional ride from elation to frustration and back. If you’re not careful, you start to feel part of the action and imagine your child’s performance reflects your worth.

The Let Kids be Kids campaign is a beauty because it reminds us that we don’t have to be as cruel as William’s dad to ruin our child’s sporting experience.

Caring mothers and fathers who shout out incessantly during games — ‘Get moving. Don’t run there. Go after it. Shoot. Pass it.



Go quickly, Get'im. Get'er. Oh C'MON!' — can inadvertently suck the fun out of it.

Good coaches know too much instruction limits development of decision making which is vital for enjoyment.

From a child's perspective, all that yelling increases the weight of expectation until the load is too heavy to lug around the field.

For their health and happiness, it's better to stick with encouragement, no matter how many mistakes you see, and best if you can support both teams with generous applause.

Don't be a back-seat coach.

Post-game feedback is a test of patience for some sporting parents who have 'played the game'. We have an impulse to pass on our 'knowledge'.



Paul Kennedy (PK) is the national sports presenter on ABC News Breakfast and presents sports news through the morning on ABC News 24. He also runs the Facebook page FunCoachMovement – a page to help junior sporting parents, coaches and clubs run their games – check it out - <https://www.facebook.com/FunCoachMovement/>

I tried giving wisdom to two of my sons after their first cricket training.

In the car on the way home, I lectured them on the merits of 'playing with a straight bat' and 'respecting the bowler', ignoring that at their age I was only ever a wild slogger who respected no-one. The hypocrisy was shameful and the boys looked miserable hearing me go on.

'Dad, we just wanna try and hit sixes,' one of them said, almost pleading.

Thankfully, it wasn't too late to see my error and apologise. I now give my advice on request.

Seems a good rule for any parent, coach, team or club — reverse the roles and let the children teach us.

Do as the Let Kids be Kids campaigners did and line your children up in front of a camera and ask them to tell you why they play sport.

Play it for all to see the next time someone on your side has a go at the kids while they're trying to have some fun with their friends.

Kids call timeout on pool sideline behaviour

Parents all want their children to shine on the sports field. Yet there's nothing that will dull a child's sparkle more than having parents and spectators pressure them from the sidelines.

It can be an easy trap to fall into as an adult. We go to adult sports events where the noise of the crowd masks all but the voices of those nearest us. We comment out loud at players' performances, roar at mistakes and vocally urge our favourites to do better and go harder.

We call it atmosphere.

But at a child's sports event, we are likely to be one of only a few dozen spectators. When we scream instructions or yell in disgust, our child and other children on the field can hear every comment, and they know where it comes from.

What they hear can have a marked impact on them for the rest of their sporting lives. Some may rise above it. Many can't.

Now in his fifties and one of Australia's most successful football leaders, Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou is at the top of his game, revered for his energy and confidence, and with a reputation for not suffering fools gladly. It may come as a surprise then to learn that Postecoglou harbours a discomfiting memory from his childhood of huddling frightened with his team-mates and opposition players as parents argued on the sideline.

Throwing his support behind the Play by the Rules 'Let Kids be Kids' campaign to raise awareness of the impact of poor sideline behaviour, Postecoglou recounts the story of how an enjoyable weekend sports match suddenly turned ugly.

'I must have been 10 or 11 and the parents started arguing and fighting amongst each other,' he says in a video message for 'Let Kids be Kids'.

'And the thing that struck is that the kids — us, both teams — just huddled together in the centre circle, each of us frightened for ourselves and I guess for our parents.'

'And even at such a young age it made such an impression on me that the people arguing

and fighting outside the field forgot why they were there ... because why they were there were the kids, and their kids were scared, huddled together, opposition and team alike, trying to protect one another.'



Postecoglou is one of a number of high-profile sportspeople endorsing the Let Kids be Kids campaign. Netball and volleyball player

Caitlin Thwaites says children find shrugging off sideline comments very difficult. Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja says sideline abuse often robbed him of his childhood fun both on and off the sports field.

Former Australian rules footballer Nick Dal Santo observes that even parents who are trying to encourage their children, frequently do it in a *'bit of a degrading way'*. *'And if it just keeps chipping away at them, eventually they'll either one, drop out of the sport, or two, just purely not enjoy it for what it's meant to be.'*

By far some of the most moving stories recorded as part of the 'Let Kids be Kids' campaign come from children themselves. Children's comments about sideline abuse range from: *'It makes me feel like I'm useless and can't do anything'*, to *'Sometimes it makes me sad, but sometimes it makes me feel angry at the same time'*. One child pleads:

Play by the Rules has released a toolkit with practical advice and steps to help sports groups stamp out poor sideline behaviour and power junior sport with positive support.

'Would you please like stop yelling at me on the court because it's making me feel like i can't do it anymore'.

The message being sent is clear: let kids have fun and do what they love. On the sports field, let kids be kids.

Download your free toolkit including a copy of this article for your use at www.playbytherules.net.au/let-kids-be-kids

The Ride Home

Any number of studies and analyses over the years have shown that among the reasons children and teenagers quit sport for computer games, toenail picking or, worse, doing nothing at all, parent pressure and expectations are some of the most damaging and persuasive, sapping children's self-confidence and turning sport from fun into frustration.

Feeling as if they have lost ownership of their own experience and are now captive to someone else's dreams and goals, they give up or continue to endure something which should be one of the reasons they get out of bed every day, until they often quit anyway.

In his cartoon, 'What we say to dogs/what they hear', the biting insightful cartoonist Gary Larson depicts a man reprimanding his dog Ginger, but the dog hearing only 'Blah blah blah blah Ginger, blah, blah ...'.

As sports parents we sometimes bear a remarkable resemblance to Ginger's owner. **Driving in the car on the Ride Home after the game, we regale our children about the match they have just played or the race in which they have just competed, oblivious to the fact that while they probably hear the tone of our words, they may not actually be listening.** They've turned their brain gears to neutral. There have been times after one of my son's or daughter's basketball matches that I have thought I should call the ride home 'The tortured journey' and rename both of my children Ginger.

The conversation, if that is what one could call a one-way diatribe, starts off inoffensively enough. The game ends and, after the requisite debriefing with other parents and a thanks to the coach, parent and child head to the carpark. If the game has been a good one, glowing parent and effusive Ginger exchange happy banter. The world is a happy place. If, however, the match was lost, Ginger did not get enough time on court or for any other of the multitude of reasons parent or Ginger has a grievance, the path to the car is a tormented funeral procession.

The Ride Home has begun — blah, blah,blah, Ginger ...

Trapped in the back seat of the car, like inmates being transported to Supermax, there is no escape for the defenceless child as the post mortem begins, win, draw or absolute disaster. Securing the windows, activating the child safety lock and ignoring red lights so Ginger can't escape to freedom, we catapult the prison van along the Road Home, intent on telling our child everything that was wrong/right and indifferent about the way they and/or their team played.

This is especially the case when their team has lost or they haven't performed as we/they expected. After all, isn't it universally accepted that you learn more from loss and disappointment? Get ready to learn Ginger! No matter that they might already be feeling miserable about the missed free throw, dropped catch or first-ball duck, it is our sacred parental right to regale and hector so that our child learns what they did wrong.

Are you listening Ginger?



So, as we hurtle home, we parents begin firing the questions, like bullets at an execution. So, what happened out there today? I see that you were open but you need to get into clearer space when you call for the ball. Remember to bend your knees at the free throw line. You've got to move up quickly in defence. I don't think you moved your feet quickly enough. Some of your team-mates ...

Blah, blah, blah Ginger ...

As the tortured journey home continues, after answering our probing inquiries and incisive observations for a time, our son or daughter eventually stops responding and begins to take an unhealthy interest in the piece of chewing gum stuck to the back of the seat in front of them. An awkward silence pervades the twilight zone. Watching the road and our child's increasingly blank expression in the rear vision mirror, we can hear ourselves but we are not really listening. We are going to tell them what we REALLY think of the day's game and THEY ARE GOING TO LISTEN!

Or course, we try to include a few positive, encouraging ingredients in the magic pudding of sporting wisdom we are concocting as we drive, like the kidney treats we give dog Ginger if he obeys the vet or waits patiently for his food. We try to remind our child of all the good things he did on court today, as if a few straggly bones of encouragement are enough to sweeten the bitter taste of the lecture they have just endured.

Unfortunately, we probably lost him in our tangled, weedy forest of words, so he probably didn't hear, or even listen, for that matter. We are talking, but at what point is our child no longer listening?

Blah, blah, Ginger, blah, blah ...

Enveloped in a fog of self-righteousness as we drive the Highway to Hell, or to the game, to practice, in the backyard or at the neighbourhood oval, we are so certain of our parental infallibility that **we unsurprisingly fail to appreciate how counterproductive and soul destroying it can be for a child to hear how much they have to improve, or that they need to practise more, when all they want is a smile, a pat on the back, to learn and have some fun.** Much like Ginger.

No one doubts that driving through fog is hard. You can't see clearly and the road twists and turns like a snake. Signposts materialise as if from nowhere but by the time you've realised they are in front of you, it is too late to read the writing — Wrong way, go back; Next turn just ahead; Watch

your speed; Listen but don't talk; Look in the mirror. The warnings are everywhere but the veil of mist is too opaque. The journey is made even more hazardous if the road is scattered with broken bridges, collapsed edges that fall away into a bottomless void, and ruts that have turned into deep pot-holes of passive darkness.

Why would any parent subject their child to such an arduous journey?

I consider myself to be a supportive parent who only wants the best for Ginger and Gingette, but I have also been listening to myself lately when talking to them about their sport. It is sometimes not a recording I wish to replay. I sound like a bully and a know-all. Growing up, I can only remember my father chiding me on one occasion for my behaviour in sport, a tongue-lashing I thoroughly deserved. Otherwise, he and my mother patiently tolerated my petulance and impertinence or listened attentively when I was ready to talk.

They knew how to Drive Home. They understood the importance of patience.

So, I have decided to finally channel my mother and father and take the driving lesson I have self-righteously and arrogantly ignored since the day my son first haplessly waved a cricket bat at the age of six and my daughter could not comprehend the biomechanics of riding a bike. To engage my children about their sport on the Ride Home without causing them to reach for the door at 100kmh, I have now formulated single, guiding principle, so ordinary I am astounded that a person of my acute intelligence did not think of it sooner.

LISTEN!

If the Ride Home is a metaphor for our relationship with our children, then the road we are building is permanently 'Under construction'. As parents we invest so much of ourselves in their sport and in every aspect of their lives. We drive them, feed them, clothe them, talk with them, practise with them, read with them and share their experiences, painful and euphoric. So it is natural for us to want a return on our investment.

We are desperate for them to listen to our advice, to affirm our role as parents. Yet we are only shareholders in their company, to use a business metaphor. Our investment is conditional. We can value-add and hope they will find wisdom in what we say, but they are the board and the CEO. It's their enterprise, their sport and their life; their journey. It is we who need to listen, because by listening we learn what they need to hear, not merely what we want to say. We need to know why they play sport, what they love about it, what they detest, what they find most challenging. We need to learn about our children.

Maybe then Ginger will listen.

To use another travelling metaphor, our role as parents is to just put the company car in gear until our children are ready to drive themselves. **We need to make the Ride Home a fun, constructive learning experience, so they want to do it again, next week, when a little more of the road will hopefully have been built and reinforced.**

Mark Slater

(Copyright: OzKidssport2017)

Poor sideline behaviour - what steps can you take?

Poor sideline behaviour is increasingly becoming a major challenge for sporting clubs and organisations. Whilst spectators, parents and coaches are invaluable to the functioning and spirit of club sport, at times when emotions are high, they can become verbally and even physically aggressive. This article provides an overview into the issues sports face when trying to take disciplinary action and the most effective methods to manage these complaints.

Do you have a legal basis to take action?

Implementing a code of conduct, club rules or a set of standards of behaviour has become common practice in most sports. Sporting clubs and organisations also have a legal responsibility to provide a safe environment and address inappropriate behaviour that offends community standards or breaks the law. However in order to impose these rules and sanctions for breaches of these rules, clubs must have a legal basis for taking action.

Whilst many club members, including players, coaches and referees can be required to agree to and be bound by these rules as a condition of their membership, it is more difficult for sports to ensure these rules are binding on non-members such as parents and spectators. Clubs thus face the tricky situation of trying to take disciplinary action without a right to enforce its rules over such people.

So what steps can be taken?

It is important that clubs have in place

simple yet effective methods to manage complaints, deter against and discipline poor sideline behaviour. This can be set out in your:

Code of Conduct

Whilst parent sporting associations may have their own code of conduct which applies to all clubs, each club should have its own set of rules on appropriate behaviour. This should include circumstances for the issuance of warnings, types of inappropriate conduct and sanctions.

Club constitution or by-law provisions

Clubs should also ensure that their constitution or by-laws require all members to adhere to any rules of participation or codes of conduct, and should set out a process for the discipline of members who breach the clubs rules or code of conduct through both poor sideline and on field behaviour.

Although at first instance, it would be difficult to apply these methods to non-



members, there are a number of other steps that sporting clubs and organisations can take to secure the right to impose their rules. These include the following:

Conditions of Entry

If the club or event organiser is able to control who enters the ground, they could apply 'conditions of entry' which sets out that any entrants to the grounds will be bound by the same codes of conduct of the club as members.

Code of Conduct Form

Whilst this could prove difficult and could only be implemented in controlled situations, clubs or event organisers could require parents, spectators and officials to sign a code of conduct document.

Parental provisions

For sports for those under 18, parents are required to give their permission for the child to register. In these registration forms clubs could include a provision which states that parents also agree to be bound the club's rules and policies.

Removal from venue

Some clubs or event organisers may be in a position to either control ground entry or have rights under their lease or licence to evict persons from the ground if they contravene the code of conduct. Even where they do not have this control, they can still request those who have breached the code (including non-members) to leave the venue.

Involvement of the police

If the behaviour by non-members goes beyond the breach of community standards such as

discrimination and vilification of persons, physical damage of property or verbal and physical assault, it may be sufficiently serious enough to offend the criminal law and clubs should involve the police.

In addition, preventative measures can also be taken to thwart poor sideline behaviour. These include:

Ground Officials

The appointment of ground officials can be a key initiative in deterring and preventing poor sideline behaviour. It keeps coaches, officials, parents and spectators accountable and is useful in keeping tabs on the general environment at the grounds.

Suspension of the game

Another option can be the suspension of the game by the referee when they deem the behaviour on the sideline to be inappropriate. They may issue a warning or request the person be removed to a place away from the sideline where they are unable to interfere with the game.

Education

Raising awareness and encouraging fair play through campaigns such as 'Let Kids Be Kids' is vital and is a great way for clubs to acknowledge and promote the importance of appropriate sideline behaviour to players, coaches, parents, officials and spectators and keep them accountable.

Addressing poor sideline behaviour is key to creating a positive environment where sport can be celebrated and enjoyed.

Gabrielle Chiu

Paralegal, Minter Ellison

Resource Profile:

Play by the Rules postcards

As part of the upgrade to the website we have produced a new series of postcards you can download in print ready format. The postcards carry important messages around safe, fair and inclusive sport.

'At your club kids rely on you to **KEEP THEM SAFE**'

'Sometimes people forget to **ENJOY THE GAME**'

'**SOME JOKES AREN'T FUNNY** and if they are about someone's race they can be **AGAINST THE LAW**'

'Selecting teams can be a balancing act. How do you make the **RIGHT DECISION?**'

The postcards are useful to have as free resources for club members and an easy way to get important messages out.

You can download all the postcards at <http://playbytherules.net.au/resources/posters-and-postcards>



Website Update:

New Play by the Rules Mini-Courses

For many years now Play by the Rules has offered online courses in child protection, harassment & discrimination, complaint handling and for Member Protection Information Officers. These online courses typically take 3-4 hours to complete in full.

Over the past year we have been working on the concept of developing mini-courses that use the same features as the long form courses but are much shorter in duration and focus on either introducing a topic or on providing more detailed information on a particular issue.

They are not like the regular Play by the Rules courses that go into more depth over broader issues. These mini-courses are short, sharp topic specific courses, with all the same kind of interactive features and quizzes as the longer courses. The first Play by the Rules Mini-Course are now available on the new platform. The new Mini-Courses are:

Introduction to the Integrity of Sport

This mini-course will provide an overview of the issues around the integrity of sport, how they occur, why they occur and some of the things that have been done to address them. This is the recommended start point for the Integrity in Sport series of mini-courses.

Ethics and Ethical Decision Making in Sport

How do we better prepare people to make well-informed, ethical decisions in regard to their involvement with sport in a world where performance and image enhancing drugs, illegal gambling, match fixing, sexism, homophobia, racism and corruption are commonplace? This mini-course is part of the Integrity in Sport mini-series.

Walking the Talk - Putting Integrity into Action

The Walking the Talk mini-course, is part of the Integrity in Sport series of mini-courses. This mini-course is designed to get you thinking about integrity and how it can be recognised and improved in a community sport setting.

To access the Mini-Courses go to - www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/mini-courses

Subscribe to Play by the Rules

Come and join the 34,000+ subscribers to Play by the Rules - it's a great way to keep up-to-date with safe, fair and inclusive sport.

Back Issues

You can access each back issue for this magazine by visiting [this page](#) on the Play by the Rules website. All the feature articles and significant news items are listed here.

Share and spread the word

One easy way to keep up to date and support safe, fair and inclusive sport is to share Play by the Rules across social media. We post every day on Facebook and Twitter and have audio files on Soundcloud and an extensive collection of videos on YouTube and Vimeo.



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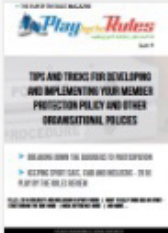
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BACK PAGE

Our partners

Did you know that Play by the Rules is one of the best examples of a Collective Impact approach to addressing sport issues in the country? If not the best. Play by the Rules is a collaboration between multiple partners.



To make Play by the Rules possible, we also work with

