



Child sexual abuse in sport: Insights from a survivor/ally research team

Plus:

- How safe are outdoor adventure activities to participate in?
- Paralympians set to educate Australian schools
- Start to Talk campaign to address child abuse in sport in 2020
- Clean Sport 101
- 27 Women making sport more inclusive and diverse

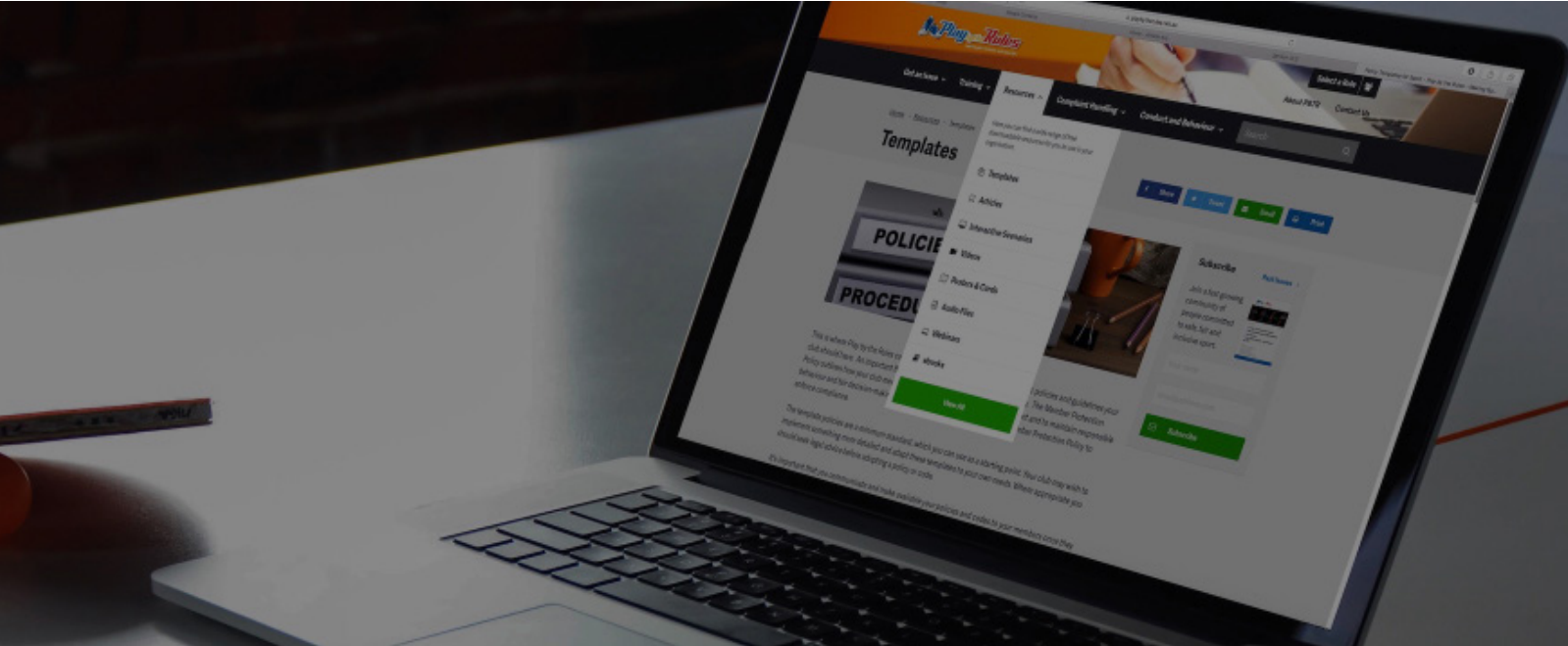


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THE EDITOR

Welcome to the 32nd Issue of the Play by the Rules Magazine, the first of 2020. It's been a difficult start to the year for so many people. Bushfires, extreme weather conditions and now COVID-19. Let's hope the rest of the year improves.

I have fielded some questions around COVID-19 and its impact on sport. The Australian Government has announced new community sport guidelines to combat the spread of COVID-19, as of 18 March 2020. You can see them on [Play by the Rules](#).

In this Issue we have a very personal story of child abuse in sport and how the experience has now led to important national and international work in this field. Andy Gibson from ANZSLA considers Outdoor Adventure activities and asks 'how safe are they'? We have news of an important and revamped Paralympic schools program and our own Start To Talk campaign to tackle child abuse in sport coming later this year. Expect regular updates on this one.

Stay safe.



Peter Downs
Manager - Play by the Rules

News:

Record number of Child Protection course completions and major update planned for 2020

This time of year is traditionally a busy one for many sports—some summer sports winding up their seasons and winter sports gearing up for another big year. For Play by the Rules there is always a spike in completions of the Child Protection online courses. As a reminder, the Child Protection online course is a free interactive online training course that will help ensure that you and your club:

- comply with the law
- provide a safe environment for children at your club or organisation
- contribute towards a hassle-free club
- retain members
- gain confidence to know what to do if something happens.

In February 2018 there were 1,941 completions of the course, in 2019 this went up to 2,035 and in February this year it rose to 2,325. We expect a further increase in March from the 2019 figure of 2,578.

Many sports mandate the course and you'll receive a unique certificate of completion at the end. The course is valid for two years.

We have started a significant review of the course this year. While there have been minor updates annually since its creation in 2014, this will be the first major review. All going to plan, the updated course should be released around July 2020.



To access the Child Protection online course go to <http://playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/child-protection-online-course>

News: Clean Sport 101

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) has a new online course—Clean Sport 101.

This course highlights the greatest risks (including supplement use) to both the health of athletes and to future sporting careers, and the ways in which to minimise those risks.

The important points about the course are that it:

- takes 15 minutes to complete
- is FREE
- is important for ANYONE in sport to get a snapshot of the anti-doping rules that all sports have within their rules, no matter the age or level of competition
- is aimed at junior, state and club/recreational level athletes, coaches and support persons
- is explained in plain English
- should be promoted to athletes, coaches, support personnel, club members and parents of junior athletes.

The course is available at www.elearning.asada.gov.au

For any queries on this course or any of their other free education resources, contact ASADA Education at education@asada.gov.au

A more comprehensive rundown from ASADA Comms for your information can be found at <https://www.asada.gov.au/news/clean-sport-101-introduction-anti-doping>



Feature article:

Child Sexual Abuse in Sport: Insights from a Survivor/Ally Research Team



How lived experience of surviving the consequences of child sexual abuse in sport led us to develop research in the field.

I only started understanding that I had been sexually abused as a child by my basketball coach about 10 years after the abuse, in 2017. At that time, I was in the middle of my PhD in Paralympic Sport Policy at Victoria University in Australia and had to take a break from my studies because of post-traumatic stress. My way of combatting the pain was to share my story and to learn about how the problem of child sexual abuse in sport could be tackled.

I first talked publicly about my personal story in 2018, both on my website and in the news in France, and I decided to put my research skills into action. My friend and colleague Dr Mary Woessner and I spent our evenings and weekends studying the complexities of this issue. As we read more on violence in sport, we realised there is so much we do not know. We sought out discussions with leaders in the field, worked with media initiatives, and developed

a research team with experts in sociology and criminology on the topic of violence (emotional, physical and sexual) against children in sport. Below we share some insights from our journey so far.

Despite my story being picked up by newspapers and the radio in France, it did not gain much traction. Maybe my story didn't spread because I was not a high-performance athlete. Maybe it was because it had been 10 years, or maybe it was because society was just not ready yet. The furore there had once been around the USA Gymnastics doctor, Nassar, who was convicted for decades of abuse against athletes, did not create the lasting wider public debate on child abuse in the sporting institution I was hoping for; at least we noticed it did not reach France or Australia. Mary and I wondered what it would take to shine the spotlight on this issue. This all changed when the silence was broken again, three weeks ago, in France.

I was relieved when the French mass media covered the story of Sarah Abitbol, a professional ice skater who endured years of sexual abuse perpetuated against her by her coach. Similar to the story of Nassar, who highlighted the administration's failure to protect children in USA Gymnastics, Sarah's story highlighted dysfunctions in the French Federation of Ice Sports.

This is one of the first things Mary and I have noted. Child abuse in sport is not only an individual issue, it is also a systemic one. This means that sporting organisations and government sport policies have a great role to play in protecting children.

As terrible as it is to read the many stories of child abuse in sport, seeing the stories in the media is a positive in and of itself. In order to conquer such a complex social problem, we must remove the taboo of the topic by openly discussing it, to enable healing, greater understanding and work on prevention.

Mary and I have been living in Australia for five years. In contrast to the stories breaking in France and Europe, Australia—one of the most sporting nations in the world—is plagued by relative silence on the issue. However, this will soon change. Play by the Rules is a national and state government collaboration that will later this year launch a national media campaign called Start to Talk to address child abuse in sport. This initiative is inspired by the campaign of the Council of Europe. The campaign has many goals but, as the name suggests, the key one is to encourage people to Start to Talk about violence against children in sport. Mary and I both sit on the advisory committee for this campaign as researchers. We are hopeful that the campaign will initiate discussions at the individual,

familial, community and government level in Australia. We need champions at all levels in order to effect change.

Finally, on an international level, one of the biggest challenges in tackling the wicked problem of violence against children is the siloed work many researchers are conducting. Abuse in sport requires and deserves a collective and multi-disciplinary approach. In an effort to address this, Mary and I joined a group of international research experts in this field called IRNOVIS (International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sport). The group will first convene at the 2020 Safe Sport International Conference in Quebec this April to discuss an innovative and collaborative way forward for research and policy making in this field.

Child abuse prevention and safeguarding strategies are increasingly on the agenda of a number of sport organisations and governments across the world. Ensuring that all children are safe will be a whole of society effort. We are hopeful that with the increased attention given to violence against children in sport by the media, the advocacy and support of policymakers, the attention of dedicated researchers and the support from, and awareness of, the local communities, we are heading in the right direction.

If you or your organisation are interested in collaboration in this field contact Aurelie or Mary directly or Play by the Rules.

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Aurelie and Mary would like to acknowledge Professor Ramon Spaaij and Dr Tine Vertommen for their mentorship in this field.

Feature article

Paralympians set to educate Australian schools

School students and teachers across the country will now be able to experience the best of Paralympic sport in their classrooms, with the recent re-launch of Paralympics Australia's Paralympic Education Project (PEP).

The revamped PEP is a free online education initiative which aims to inspire and excite young people, by teaching them about the Paralympic Games and core Paralympic values.

Its primary objective is to promote inclusion of people with a disability and challenge perceptions of students via a range of engaging lesson plans and online resources, and a school visit program featuring Paralympians in the lead up and during Tokyo 2020.

With six months until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic

Games, Paralympics Australia Chief Executive Lynne Anderson said it was an ideal time for students of all ages to embrace Australia's Paralympians.

"Paralympians have a reputation for resilience. They personify courage and determination through their performances and importantly, they have an ever-growing role to promote equality and positive social change," Anderson said.

"We believe our Paralympic Education Program is the perfect opportunity for students to learn about these valuable characteristics in a fun and meaningful way."

Research undertaken in the UK found 85 percent of respondents agree that the Paralympic Games have had a positive effect on the lives of people with a disability, and 54 per cent agree



that exposure to the Games challenged their attitudes towards disability.

“Our Para-athletes remind the world that diversity is a strength to be celebrated. We know that here at home, the community response following the last few Games has been incredible,” Anderson said.

“We believe this program can enable our Paralympians and Paralympic sport to capture the hearts and minds of more Australian school kids, and continue to break down stigmas around disability and really instigate change.”

Paralympics Australia previously had an education program prior to the London 2012 Games, which had an extensive reach with almost 3,000 primary schools joining the program, and by 2010, had reached over 370,000 students. The goal of the re-launched program is to reach a minimum of 300 schools and 10,000 students via online resources, and over 500 students through the schools visit program before the Tokyo 2020 Games begin this August.

Paralympics Australia has been supported with the program, with resources from the International Paralympic Committee’s I’mPOSSIBLE program, as well as Australian Beef, which will help connect more Australian schools to the program. Australian Beef will also be launching a new module of resources focusing on Australian beef as part of a healthy meal and active lifestyle, which will feature Paralympians instructing cooking classes focussing on beef’s role in living a healthy lifestyle.

“Australian Beef is proudly supporting the Paralympics Education Program to continue to connect, educate, aspire and excite more Australian schools and communities by bringing the Paralympic Games and Para-sports into classrooms with the healthy meal and active lifestyle messages,” Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Chief Marketing & Communications Officer Lisa Sharp said.

“MLA currently has a range of Australian curriculum-aligned materials and programs to support teachers in educating students about sustainable farming practices, red meat production and red meat nutrition. The Paralympic Education Program is the perfect fit with Australian Beef to inspire and educate kids to be the greatest through healthy meals and active lives.”

The John and Myriam Wylie Foundation has also provided funding support for the Paralympic Education Program’s School Visits Program. This funding will enable Paralympics Australia to hold eight additional school visits and extend the reach of the program to many more students and teachers.

Schools can register for the PEP, presented by Australian Beef at <http://www.education.paralympic.org.au>

For more information, high resolution images or interview requests, please contact Sascha Ryner, Media and PR Manager
E: sascha.ryner@paralympic.org.au

Feature article

How safe are the Adventure Activities you participate in?

Since September 2019 there has been a new national standard and new national guidelines for adventure activities that providers (and participants) of supervised outdoor adventure activities, whether they be commercial or non-commercial, need to be aware of and, preferably, be compliant with.

At the end of the day, outdoor adventure activities involve an element of risk, and that brings with it the possibility of injury and possibly subsequent litigation.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS) and Good Practice Guidelines (GPGs) are intended to provide dependent participants who enjoy supervised adventure activities with a safe and enjoyable experience. The Standard and Guidelines apply all over Australia and are intended to avoid situations like *R v. Clark* [2007] QCA 168.

In this case, a Queensland adventure ride operator was jailed over an accident that left the complainant brain damaged after failing to properly secure her to her harness in a flying fox ride, causing her to fall 20 metres to the ground after leaving the platform. In this case, the complainant was exposed to the obvious danger of very serious harm if a simple precaution was not taken, and this was the responsibility of the accused.

While this was a case involving negligently caused grievous bodily harm (or criminal negligence) which is a criminal law offence, it

would not prevent a civil action in negligence following for breach of the operator's duty of care owed to the victim.

All the state and territory ministers of sport and recreation have adopted the Standard and Guidelines. However, currently they are only voluntary; that is, a provider of a supervised outdoor adventure activity can choose whether to adopt the Standard and Guidelines or not.

This would change if governments decide to adopt them as part of their legislative framework and this may be something to watch out for.

The Standard and Guidelines provide a best-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of supervised outdoor adventure activities. The AAAS establishes a standard for best practice in risk and safety management of 'led' activities.

The Guidelines provide additional information to support a best-practice framework by providing detailed information on risk management and best practice for specific outdoor adventure activities undertaken by dependent participants.

An 'activity provider' is broadly defined to include a business, community group, government agency, school or even an individual (but generally does not extend to 'specific roles' within the provider's organisation) who provide the activity.

A 'led' activity is one where the adventure



activity is led by an activity leader who has appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to ensure the safety of dependent participants.

A 'dependent participant' is the person who undertakes the adventure activity and who is owed a duty of care by the activity provider which arises out of the relationship of reliance between the parties. The degree of reliance (or dependence) will vary according to the activity or environment and factors such as the age, experience and competence/skill of the participant.

For example, a higher duty of care may arise where a person is under the age of 18, as they might lack the ability to undertake an activity safely on their own and their reliance on the activity provider for their safety might be greater than if the person was an adult experienced in that activity.

The type of activities that are currently included under the Standard and Guidelines include abseiling and climbing; angling; bushwalking; camping; canoeing and kayaking; canyoning; caving; challenge courses; rope and adventure initiative games; climbing; cycling; diving and snorkelling; enclosed and coastal waters and inland water paddle-craft and stand-up paddleboarding; horse trail riding; kayaking;

mountain bike riding; rafting; river sledding; and ropes courses.

Many of the activities listed above in italics have online Good Practice Guides available (<https://australianaas.org.au/>), produced by the Outdoor Council of Australia to try and minimise the risk of injury to participants involved in any of these activities (and to minimise the risk of litigation to activity providers.

So, what can we learn from the Standard and Guidelines? For activity providers who apply the Standard and Guidelines, they are a form of insurance against claims made against them by dependent participants who are injured while participating in an outdoor activity.

For dependent participants it is also good insurance, because you know that the person on whom you are relying is following best practice and that while injuries are often unforeseeable when undertaking adventure activities, the risk has at least been minimised.

Andy Gibson
ANZSLA Life Member and academic,
Southern Cross University

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THE SPORTS LAW ASSOCIATION

Celebrating International Women's Day - 27 Women making sport more inclusive and diverse

The 8th of March was International Women's Day—the day the Australian Women's T20 Cricket team won the World Cup. There's been plenty to celebrate recently in women's sport. Women are driving much of the work to make sport more inclusive and diverse. Out of the 51 presentations at the annual Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Forum there have been 27 female presenters, highlighting the lead role women are playing not only in driving gender equality, but across the spectrum.

To celebrate the day, Play by the Rules put together a short montage of presentations by women over the past four years of the forum. You can see this and access all the presentations from 2016 onwards at <http://playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/inclusion-and-diversity/inclusion-and-diversity-videos>

TWENTY SEVEN

Start to Talk campaign to tackle child abuse in sport

Planning is underway for a major media campaign in 2020 to address child safety and child abuse in sport.

In late 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse handed down its final report. Recommendation 14.2 specifically concerned Play by the Rules:

'The education and information website known as Play by the Rules should be expanded and funded to develop resources—in partnership with the National Office for Child Safety—that are relevant to the broader sport and recreation sector.'

Clearly, the Royal Commission was looking for Play by the Rules to offer greater support to the sector around child safety. Child safety has been at the core of Play by the Rules since its inception. The online child protection course has been mandated by many sports and in 2019 was completed by over 17,000 people.

The Australian Government has expressed support for the international initiative **Start to Talk**, a Council of Europe call for action to public authorities and the sport movement to stop child sexual abuse. By joining this call governments, sports clubs, associations and federations, as well as athletes and coaches, pledge to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to abuse. **Start to Talk** is about adults breaking the silence and lending children a voice.

Agencies such as Sport Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National Office of Child Safety, Vicsport, Office of the Children's Guardian and a number of NSOs have developed programs that support child safety and the implementation of child safe principles for organisations.

Based on this activity, it is an opportune time for Play by the Rules to develop an Australian version of **Start to Talk** to address broad issues of child safety and provide community sport with education and practical resources to help keep children and young people safe.

Start to Talk is scheduled for release in September 2020. There will be regular updates on this important initiative in the months ahead.

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