PLAY BY THE RULES MAGAZINE

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Issue 6

Supplements: The real story

When good parents turn ugly

Play by the rules — a year in pictures

Plus – Cricket Australia’s new Community Engagement Framework, ANZSLA uncovers burning issues, All Kids Can Play and outcomes of the You Can Play national forum, and much more …

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# The Editor

The season of goodwill is upon us once more. Time to reflect and celebrate the achievements of the year. I hope your year in sport has been a great and happy one. On that note, a huge thanks to all Play by the Rules supporters for their commitment to safe, fair and inclusive sport. It’s been a big and highly satisfying year for us as you will see as we reflect on our year in this Issue.

To close out the year we’ve got some terrific features and articles in this issue. There are updates on the new Cricket Australia Community Engagement strategy, the You Can Play forum, and a terrific initiative — All Kids Can Play. Then our feature articles revisit the perennial issue of parental behaviour and the emerging issues around supplement use at the grassroots and sub-elite areas of sport.

Please keep spreading the message around safe, fair and inclusive sport and I look forward to working with you again in 2015.

****

Peter Downs

Manager – Play by the Rules

# Cricket Australia launches Community Engagement Framework

Cricket Australia recently launched a major initiative to answer one of the key questions facing all community sport — does your sport reflect the community you are in?

Principles of inclusion and diversity underpin the National Community Engagement Framework. The framework sets very specific participation targets for females, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians and people with disability. Each target group has its own strategy, with clearly laid out actions and performance measures through to 2017–18.

The framework, launched by Adam Gilchrist and Lisa Sthalaker at the MCG, also includes a range of new resources such as the ‘A sport for all’ resource, designed to make cricket more welcoming and inclusive at all levels.

For more information go to: <http://www.cricket.com.au/news/social-inclusion-strategy-launched-by-ca/2014-11-23>

# ANZSLA uncovers challenges for clubs in dealing with legal issues

The Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association (ANZSLA), a key partner of Play by the Rules, is the premier not-for-profit sports law organisation in the Australasian region. ANZSLA is dedicated to providing education, advocacy and networking opportunities about legal issues in sport.

To help inform their work they recently undertook a survey with Play by the Rules subscribers. The results make interesting reading.

Fifty-five per cent of respondents said they had recently dealt with a legal issue (for example, abusive parents, bullying, discrimination or selection disputes).

When asked if their constitution, policies and procedures were adequate to deal with the issue, the comments were mixed. The general feeling was that the constitution, policies and codes were strong enough and were a good starting point in dealing with issues. However, there were some interesting comments on how these were actually applied, such as:

‘The written rules of the association caused the most trouble as they are too complicated and too specific.’

‘No, the constitution cannot cover emotions, feelings and people’s expectations.’

‘No, we were really unprepared as a club and basically followed the association’s policy on the issue.’

A takeout from this could be that constitutions, policies and procedures need to be strong and contextually relevant to the circumstances of individual clubs and associations. They also need to be understood by key club officials and members, with regular reviews and education. Importantly, 27 per cent of respondents said it was more than 18 months since their club had reviewed its constitution. Regular reviews are important to help keep constitutions and policies relevant.

For more information contact ANZSLA at [www.anzsla.com](http://www.anzsla.com)

# You Can Play forum — raising the discussion on homophobia in sport

The You Can Play forum was held on the 5th November at the MC50 Studios in Canberra The forum was hosted by award winning SBS journalist Anton Enus and featured an expert panel, a live studio and online audience via a webcast.

The purpose of the forum was to raise awareness and discussion on issues of homophobia in sport. The full recording of the forum and around 40 short interviews with panelists and audience members can be seen on <http://youcanplay.com.au/forum/index.html>

# All Kids Can Play — including kids with disabilities

On Sunday 7 December, the community came together to celebrate the inaugural All Kids Can Play day held at Livvi’s Place, Timbrell Park, Five Dock, NSW. The atmosphere was buzzing with children, families and clubs embracing the vision of All Kids Can Play, the inclusion of ALL children in mainstream sports. All Kids Can Play is a partnership between Break Thru and Touched By Olivia and brings together families, clubs, schools and the sporting community to achieve this vision.

Sports clubs throughout Sydney attended on the day, showcasing their sport through interactive activities and coaching clinics for family fun. Families were able to look at how clubs include all children in their teams and some even registered with a club on the day. Including children with disability in mainstream sport can prove challenging for many parents. Signing up for a club is simple for most families, but is not something parents of children with disability can take for granted.

“ALL kids have the same goals and aspirations, that’s just to be included in everything, from sport, to community, to education” said Brendon Coombes, father of a child with disabilities at the event. The benefits they receive from sports are no different for children with disability including a sense of achievement, self esteem and self confidence, learning new skills and providing opportunities to make new friends.

These benefits can also have a longer term impact. Craig Laundy, Federal Liberal MP explains “Early involvement of children with their peers with disabilities is a great way to overcome any misconceptions further down the track”, opening the door for true community inclusion.

SBS covered the event at: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/12/07/extending-benefits-team-sports-children-disabilities>

To learn more about All Kids Can Play, check out our website: http://allkidscanplay.com.au/

# Supplements: the real story

Performance enhancing supplements have come a long way since ancient Greek athletes’ reliance on dried figs and wine potions, and the ancient Romans’ focus on plants to aid recovery.

According to market research company BCC Research, the global market for sports nutrition products is now around US$91.18 billion.

Much of this is credited to a changing product market focus and more aggressive and emotive marketing.

Where supplements were once heavily geared towards body building and professional athletes, sports nutrition products are now also targeted at recreational and grassroots sports participants and are far more accessible.

Professional athletes are frequently peppered with messages about the need for caution around the use of supplements, but a 2013 report commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission [http://www.ausport.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0006/436749/Bluestone\_Edge\_Access\_All\_Levels\_Report\_Oct13\_FINAL.pdf] found that many grassroots participants wanted information and education on supplements but didn’t know where to access it.

The report, *Access All Levels*, found that supplements were a major ‘grey area’ due to the lack of knowledge and confusion around their legal status and where to find accurate information about what they contain and their effects.

Dr Gary Slater, Senior Lecturer at the University of the Sunshine Coast’s School of Health and Sport Sciences, and sports nutrition consultant to the Australian Rugby Union and sports science advisor to Surfing Australia, says that the marketing claims of supplements are very emotive and it is important to take a step back and reflect on the claims.

He says if they sound too good to be true, they probably are.

‘While there are several supplements commercially available that can assist an athlete in a specific situation to achieve a desired outcome, this typically equates to only a small boost, perhaps within the range of two to five per cent. One of the big challenges is identifying those beneficial supplements amongst the hype of other products, many of which make bold claims but few of which are backed by science.’

Dr Slater says these are products that are generally best avoided, along with products making claims to influence body hormone levels. He cites testosterone boosters as an example, saying that if they did actually influence blood testosterone levels, they would be immediately banned.

In fact, international drug surveillance laboratory LGC says some supplement products have been found to be contaminated with low levels of substances that are prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency and other sporting bodies.

Recently launched in Australia, the Informed Sport certification program for sports supplements, ingredients and manufacturing facilities assures athletes that products carrying the INFORMED SPORT certification have been tested for substances considered prohibited in sport. It is important to recognise, however, that the Informed Sport certification isn’t an assurance the product actually works, merely that it is free of doping agents.

While acknowledging the health and potential doping risks around supplements, Dr Slater points out that there are other risks to consider.

‘The greatest risk from supplement use in general is wasted attention of resources — time and finances and such — to a supplement which just doesn’t live up to its claims.

‘When exploring the potential benefits of a dietary supplement, an individual’s current dietary intake from food also needs to be explored, as it’s the achievement of a specific nutrient need or physiological response which will determine if the supplement may be of value,’ he says.

‘This food-first philosophy to nutrition and supplementation is an approach which will not only help athletes to optimise their diet but also lower any risk associated with supplement use. The expert guidance of an accredited sports dietitian may be a very wise investment,’ Dr Slater says.

For more information on the use of supplements:

* Find a sports dietitian in your region by using the ‘find an accredited sports dietitian’ tool on the Sports Dietitians Australia (SDA) website at [http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/). The site also has a number of factsheets.
* The Australian Institute of Sport offers a range of nutrition fact sheets at <http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition/factsheets>.
* The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) offers anti-doping education programs for individuals, clubs, schools, and state and national sporting organisations. Most programs and resources are available free of charge and include online education tools, videos, posters and flyers. The organisation also offers face-to-face anti-doping presentations. See <http://www.asada.gov.au/education/>.

# When good parents turn ugly

Where would junior club sport be without mums and dads? Who would ferry children back and forth between sporting fixtures, hand out half-time oranges, wash uniforms and make sure players arrive **on**time wearing **both** boots?

We all know that, if not for mums and dads, we would struggle to find enough club administrators, referees, coaches, scorers and line markers, and the spectator stands would be bare. Without a doubt, they are an invaluable resource and an essential part of any sport.

But what about those parents who turn ugly? You know the type. They scream instructions from the sidelines, admonish the referee (who is often barely a teenager), challenge the coach, sometimes storm onto the playing field or even get into a punch-up with an equally passionate opposing team parent. It happens.

So what can we do about it? What role do coaches play? How about club administrators? How can parents successfully tread that line between supportive and aggressive?

**Tips for mums and dads**

**Be a good role model.** Children watch and learn from you, so make sure you set a good example.

**Avoid a ‘win at all costs’ attitude.** Although you may think winning is important, the focus for junior sport should be on fun.

**Be aware that your abusive behaviour may be against the law.** Ask yourself, ‘Would my mother be upset or offended by what I am saying or doing?’ If the answer is yes then it’s best to sit down and be quiet.

**Try not to be critical of coaches, referees or umpires.** Many are volunteers who give their time to make sport possible for all our children, and some are just learning. If you have some constructive advice for them, leave it until after the game or have a chat with the head coach or referee.

**Tips for coaches**

**If the abuse is directed at you** try to stay calm, maintain your professionalism and explain that you will discuss the issue with them during a break or after the match. Do not accept or ignore abusive, offensive or foul language.

**If an official is the focus of the parent’s abuse**, you should try to defuse the situation. Talk calmly to the parent, acknowledge their frustration and emphasise that the call has been made and that the decision must be respected. You can refer to your club’s code of behaviour and explain the penalties if the behaviour continues. Make sure you report the incident to the relevant club administrator, preferably in writing.

**If the abuse is directed at children or a child playing in your team or on the opposing team:**

* don't ignore a parent who verbally abuses their child on the grounds that ‘it’s none of my business’
* speak to the over-enthusiastic parent privately before their behaviour gets out of hand — this will often prevent the situation escalating
* highlight the positives and emphasise the need to identify children’s strengths, not their weaknesses. Emphasise that children are there to have fun, develop skills and build their confidence
* remind the parent about the club’s code of behaviour
* explain what may happen if the behaviour continues, based on your club’s membership rules and policies
* report the incident to the club’s administrator if the behaviour continues and you foresee a future problem.

Clubs have a legal responsibility to address behaviour that offends community standards or is against the law (for example, racial vilification, sexual harassment, common assault). If you witness behaviour that you think may be illegal, you should report it to the police. Similarly, if a bad situation escalates and becomes dangerous, play should be suspended and the police may be required to intervene.

You should be familiar with club policy as it relates to abusive or aggressive parents. Know what you can and can’t do. Are you permitted to issue a warning, withdraw the parent’s child from the team, call a ‘time out’ or ask the parent to leave?

If your club doesn’t have a code of behaviour, *Play by the Rules* can help. Just go to our [Club Toolkit](http://www.playbytherules.net.au/toolkits/club-toolkit) and download the template. Add your club’s logo or use it as a starting point to develop your own policy.

Also check out our video scenario *‘Ugly parents and abuse of umpires’* on our YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mULyZDiRD-A&;list=UUOxdW3VHSoE1TC3HOL_sIsA&index=2&feature=plcp>

# The year in pictures — that was the year that was

It might be a bit of ‘blowing our own trumpet’ but, hey, it is the end of the year and given that we have a lot of partners and supporters it’s time we reflect a bit on 2014 and celebrate our achievements.

Now, there are ‘lies, damn lies, and statistics’ we know and this is only a snapshop of where we’ve come from - but it will give you an idea of the reach and breadth of how Play by the Rules gets the word out about safe, fair and inclusive sport.

Thanks once again for your fantastic support.

* 8,553 online magazine views since the start of the year;
* Development of the mobile responsive website;
* Launch of the Member Protection Information Officer support site;
* Launch of the You Can Play campaign – an anti-homophobia in sport initiative with over $700,000 worth of media coverage;
* The PLEASE REMEMBER poster Facebook campaign reached over 100,000 people;
* Over 3,245 Facebook page ‘Likes’;
* 12,939 online course completions;
* Launch of the iOS and Android App versions of the magazine;
* Conduct of the You Can Play live forum;
* Over 5,000 Play by the Rules subscribers;
* More than 174,417 online visits to web properties throughout the year.

# Legal stuff — child protection: the international transfer of minors in football

Every year, a myriad of young Australian footballers make the move overseas in order to further their burgeoning professional careers. For the majority of those young footballers, their final club in Australia before embarking overseas is not a professional club participating in the A-League, but a grassroots club where the seniors play in a semi-professional, state-based competition, and the administration staff and executive committee are passionate volunteers. In an already saturated sporting market, for many of these clubs the transfer of their best young footballers overseas provides an alternative revenue stream to the traditional means by which sporting clubs source income. Where those footballers are minors, they are subject to the regulatory framework instituted by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Thus, it is important for both players and clubs to understand their obligations and the relevant international rules to ensure that any such transfer is legitimate and binding.

The international transfer of minors is governed by Article 19 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (**RSTP**). As a general rule, the international transfer of players is only permitted if the player is 18 or older.[[1]](#footnote-1)

International football therefore considers any player aged 17 or younger to be a minor. In accordance with the jurisprudence of FIFA, the RSTP, which considers minors in a number of contexts (and not just simply international transfers), are applicable to individual players from the age of 12.

There are three written exceptions to the general rule, two of which are relevant to minors resident in Australia seeking to transfer internationally[[2]](#footnote-2):

1. the player’s parents move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football
2. the transfer takes place within the European Economic Area (EEA) and the player is aged between 16 and 18. In such a case, the new club must fulfil minimum requirements relating to the education and living arrangements of the player.

In a recent decision, the Court of Arbitration for Sport held that minors aged between 16 and 18 and residing outside the EEA were permitted to rely on the second exception to transfer to a club within the EEA, as long as they held European citizenship.[[3]](#footnote-3) Accordingly, any Australian player aged between 16 and 18 who is also a European citizen may transfer to a club within the EEA presuming their new club meets the minimum requirements stipulated in the RSTP.

The exceptions apply to: (i) minors previously registered with a club; and (ii) minors never previously registered with a club and not a national of the country in which they wish to be registered for the first time.[[4]](#footnote-4) The jurisprudence of the relevant FIFA judicial bodies provides an unwritten further exception for ‘first registration’ minors; they must demonstrate that they have lived continuously for five years in the country where the club that they wish to register for is based.

In order to facilitate the international transfer of players, FIFA has introduced the Transfer Matching System (TMS), an online-based registration program**.** For all international transfers, the relevant national association must submit a request within TMS for the transfer to be undertaken on behalf of its affiliated club. For the international transfer of minors, such requests must be accompanied by compulsory supporting documents (set out in Annexe 2 of the RSTP) in order to justify the relevant exception that is requested.

Requests are judged individually by a sub-committee of the FIFA Players’ Status Committee.Should a minor be registered by a club and national association without the approval of the sub-committee, the club and national association may be sanctioned by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee.[[5]](#footnote-5)

FIFA takes its obligations to protect minors very seriously. In April 2014, the FIFA Disciplinary Committee heavily sanctioned FC Barcelona and the Spanish Football Federation relating to the registration of ten minor players who had participated for FC Barcelona during the years 2009–13. In a written statement, FIFA set out that:

‘the protection of minors in the context of international transfers is an important social and legal issue that concerns all stakeholders in football … while international transfers might, in specific cases, be favourable to a young player’s sporting career, they are very likely to be contrary to the best interests of the player as a minor … the interest in protecting the appropriate and healthy development of a minor as a whole must prevail over purely sporting interests.’[[6]](#footnote-6)

Thus, as well as social, economic and emotional considerations, the parents or guardians of Australian footballers aged 17 and below who seek to transfer internationally, as well as their current Australian club who may be leading negotiations with an overseas club, must ensure that their particular circumstances fall within one of the regulatory exceptions provided for in Article 19 of the RSTP.

**James Kitching**

**Legal Counsel, Asian Football Confederation**

# Around the grounds

**Free child-safe training in New South Wales**

The Office of the Children’s Guardian is running free seminars across NSW to help you and your sports club to understand:

* your Working with Children Check obligations, and the application and verification process
* who needs and who does NOT need a new check (including parent volunteers)
* how to help make your organisation child safe.

For seminar information go to: <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/News--training-and-events/Child-Safe-sports/child-safe-sports-events>

**Buy your rainbow socks**

Wearing the Fair go, sport! rainbow socks shows your commitment to creating sporting clubs, schools and workplaces that are safe, supportive and inclusive.

You could be a player, a coach, an umpire or administrator. You could be a student, a teacher or a principal, the CEO or a staff member. But if the sock fits, wear it.

To find out sizes and prices go to:

http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/component/k2/item/516-buy-your-rainbow-socks

# Online course update

**Child protection course**

The Play by the Rules online child protection course has been our most popular course for a few years, with many sports clubs and associations integrating it into existing requirements for officials and volunteers.

It’s a free course and typically takes around 2.5–3 hours to complete. It’s interactive and easy to follow with videos, case studies and quizzes.

For example, one section looks at the impact of child abuse and your role and responsibilities in dealing with issues. Video scenarios are used and you are asked what could have been done, with interactive slides providing a range of responses.

The child protection course is not a ‘sit down and read’ course. It’s a fully interactive self-paced program that will test your understanding and awareness of child-safe sport.

If you haven’t checked it out, go and register now at <https://learning.ausport.gov.au>

# Resource profile

The Complaint Handling Tool aims to assist you in making informed decisions when responding to and handling complaints about off field behaviour and decisions that arise in your club or organisation. The information is general in nature and focuses on processes and principles that underpin good practices in complaint handling. It aims to complement, not replace, your sports policies or provide guidance in the absence of policies.

You will be provided with options, tips, information, practical skills and resources relevant to your type of complaint and stage in the complaint handling process. This information will appear in the tabs across the screen. You start off with an assumption that someone has already contacted you with a complaint and you are now seeking some guidance on how to handle that complaint.

Go to the toolkit: http://www.playbytherules.net.au/about-complaints/complaint-handling-tool

**Infographic of the month**

A new feature for the magazine. Infographics are visual representations of information, data or knowledge. While data visualisation has been around for a long time, infographics are still relatively new. The infographics here we have either sourced online or created ourselves. Either way, they are here for your information. You can download and take a closer look from the link below and use them on your own website.

Download: The most common sports injuries http://pbtrinfographics.s3.amazonaws.com/SportsInjuries\_page.png

Subscribe to Play by the Rules

Keep up to date with happenings in safe, fair and inclusive sport by subscribing to the Play by the Rules bi-monthly magazine. By subscribing you will be joining a like-minded community of people dedicated to making sport in Australia safe, fair and inclusive. You will also get notifications of special Play by the Rules events and announcements.

Simply go to this page to subscribe: <http://pbtr.com.au>

1. Article 19.1, RSTP. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article 19.2, RSTP. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. TAS 2012/A/2862 *FC Girondins de Bordeaux c. FIFA*. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Article 19.4, RSTP. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Article 19.3, RSTP. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. FIFA, ‘*Spanish FA, FC Barcelona sanctioned for transfer of minors’ <*http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/organisation/news/newsid=2313003/index.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)