



# NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT



# Introduction



Rugby League is the greatest game for all for many reasons.

But the true strength of the game is in our people and the values by which they abide.

We are determined to ensure the environment we create is a positive and enjoyable one for all participants, regardless of age, gender and ability.

The Rugby League Code of Conduct sets the standard for all players, parents, coaches, match officials, spectators and volunteers.

I trust all those connected to our sport share in our vision of being inclusive, positive, united and disciplined.

These foundations are at the core of the continued growth and prosperity of the game for everyone involved.

**Peter V'landys AM**  
Chairman  
Australian Rugby League  
Commission





# General Principles



## Participants in the game of Rugby League include:

**All Players, Coaches, Sports Trainers (including League Safe Officers), Match Officials, Club Officials, Volunteers, Parents/Carers and Spectators.**

## Participants are encouraged and expected to:

- Show positive acts of sportsmanship, discouraging all instances of foul or illegal play, or acts of violence, both on and off the field.
- Demonstrate the greatest levels of respect, protecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability / disability, sexual orientation, cultural background or religion.
- Lead by positive example, and condemn the use of recreational and performance enhancing drugs and doping practices; their use endangers the health of players and is contrary to the concept of fair play.
- Celebrate the “good news” stories, and understand that cyber-bullying, which includes negative or demeaning comments, status posts, personal messages or emails, is deemed as a serious form of harassment.
- Accept that the integrity of the sport is of paramount importance, therefore, no coach, player, Club official or match official is allowed to participate, or be directly or indirectly involved in any way, in gambling.

By adhering to the National Code of Conduct at every Rugby League activity, you embrace the game's beliefs



We are:

**Inclusive**  
**Positive**  
**United**  
**Disciplined**



# Code of Conduct

## › Player

- › Be a good sport. Respect all good play whether from your team or the opposition and shake hands with, and thank, the opposition players and officials after the game – win, lose or draw
- › Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit.
- › Always respect the Referee's decision.
- › Never become involved in acts of foul play.
- › Honour both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and live up to the highest ideals of ethics and sportsmanship; avoid gamesmanship, and respect the traditions of the game.
- › Never engage in disrespectful conduct of any sort including profanity, sledging, obscene gestures, offensive remarks, trash-talking, taunting or other actions that are demeaning to other players, officials or supporters.
- › Care for and respect the facilities and equipment made available to you during training and competition.
- › Safeguard your health; don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances.
- › Recognise that many Officials, Coaches and Referees are Volunteers who give up their time to provide their services. Treat them with the utmost respect.
- › Do not bet or otherwise financially speculate, directly or indirectly, on the outcome or any other aspect of a Rugby League match or competition in which you are involved.

# Endorsement



Players at every level of Rugby League have a responsibility to always play within the Laws, and to compete with respect, integrity and sportsmanship.

Rugby League is a fantastic game, made even better when players, officials and fans all working together to make a safe and respectful playing environment, ensuring a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants

I fully endorse the players' section of the National Code of Conduct.

All the best,

## James Tedesco

Sydney Roosters, New South Wales Blues and Australian Kangaroos Captain



Rugby League is a great game and should always be played in the right spirit, so that all participants get the opportunity to have fun and make friends.

We are all in a very fortunate position to be able to participate in the sport and have a duty to care for each other as well as the equipment and facilities that are made available to us.

I am proud to endorse the National Code of Conduct as it provides the guiding principles for the best possible Rugby League environment.

Enjoy the season,

## Kezie Apps

Wests Tigers NRLW Player, New South Wales and Australian Jillaroos Captain





# Code of Conduct

## › Coach

- › Actively discourage foul play and / or unsportsmanlike behaviour by players.
- › Seek to maximise the participation and enjoyment of all players regardless of ability; avoid the tendency to over-use a talented player; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- › Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a physician and/or sports trainer to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- › Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- › Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- › Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- › Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- › Teach young players to realise that there is a big gap between their play and the professional game; do not coach them as if they are professionals.
- › Ensure that your coaching reflects the level of the competition being played; do not be a “win-at-all-cost” coach.
- › As coach, conduct yourself at all times in a manner, and in all situations, that shows leadership, respect for the game of Rugby League and respect for all those that are involved in the game – the players, officials, the fans, the parents, the referees and the media.

Remember that junior players participate for pleasure and mateship.

Your coaching should create a positive environment that is **fun, safe, and inclusive.**

# Endorsement



Coaching at any level of the game is a huge responsibility, but also an immensely rewarding one!

It can be challenging and time-consuming, but the pleasure that comes from contributing to players' skill and social development far outweigh any barriers.

It is important that, as coaches, we actively demonstrate the key beliefs of our game – Disciplined, Positive, Inclusive and United.

By being a positive leader, you have the capacity to shape lives, to mould young minds, and to provide opportunity for success and enjoyment – both on and off the footy field. Win or lose, our jobs as coaches is to always promote sportsmanship, respect, fun, and to lead by example.

Enjoy your coaching experience!

Best wishes!

**Mal Meninga**

Australian Kangaroos Coach



Coaches play such an instrumental role in the Rugby League landscape, and it should never be underestimated the impact we have on all participants that we encounter.

Creating an environment that challenges all players to improve as a person, just as much as an athlete, is vital to the success of a coach.

We should always ensure the experience of the player is the number one priority, as well as recognising that Community Rugby League is played differently to the elite game. This will allow us as coaches to develop our own unique coaching style whilst ensuring it is suited to the needs and developmental stage of players in our care.

Thank you for your contribution!

Enjoy the season,

**Brad Donald**

Australian Jillaroos Coach





# Code of Conduct

## › Match Officials

- › Place the safety and welfare of the players above all else; be alert to minimise dangerous physical play, fair or foul, especially in junior matches.
- › Accept responsibility for all actions taken.
- › Avoid any form of verbal contact with coaches, team officials, parents and spectators during play.
- › Be impartial! Also, be consistent, objective and courteous.
- › Avoid any situation which may lead to a conflict of interest, both on and off the field.
- › Maintain an appropriate level of fitness for the standard of game at which you are officiating.
- › Condemn all and every instance of unsportsmanlike, foul or unfair play.
- › Set a good example by the way you dress, speak and act towards players, coaches, officials, parents and spectators.
- › Show concern and caution towards sick and injured players.
- › Officiate to the age and/or experience of the players.

**Referees are the key to the successful application of the Safeplay Code (up to and including 15 years) in Junior Rugby League.**

# Endorsements



As a Referee you play an important role in ensuring the game is played in a safe and positive environment by applying the laws of the game, safe play code and communicating in a fair and measured manner.

It is vital that you have a thorough knowledge of the laws of the game and are always looking to further your knowledge of the game to apply these practically.

Look to always display a positive and confident manner when you are out on the field, as it will only add to the confidence and enjoyment of those playing the game.

All the best,

**Todd Smith**  
NRL and Test Match Referee

Along with players and coaches, Match Officials play an integral role in creating a safe and enjoyable playing environment for everyone.

We have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the rules, the game, and ourselves.

Showing support and respect for our Match Officials is important, just as we show respect in return to players, coaches and other officials.

Remember – no referee, no game!

All the best,

**Belinda Sharpe**  
NRL and Test Match Referee





## Code of Conduct > Team and Club Officials

- > Uphold the integrity of the game of Rugby League at all times.
- > Always act in a sportsmanlike manner, respecting opposition players, team and club officials and spectators.
- > Make decisions in the best interests of the game of Rugby League.
- > Place the safety and welfare of players as the top priority.
- > Accept responsibility for all decisions made.

## Code of Conduct > Parent / Spectator

- > Condemn all violent or illegal acts, whether they are by players, coaches, officials, parents or spectators.
- > Respect the Referee's decisions – don't complain or argue about decisions during or after a game.
- > Behave! Unsportsmanlike language, harassment or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- > Encourage players to play by the rules and to respect opposition players and officials.
- > Never ridicule or scorn a player for making a mistake – respect their efforts.
- > Understand that sport is part of a total life experience, and the benefits of involvement go far beyond the final score of a game.
- > Participate in positive cheering that encourages the players in the team you are supporting; do not engage in any cheering that taunts or intimidates opponents, their fans or officials.
- > Remember that all participants are involved in the game of Rugby League for their own enjoyment, not yours!
- > At all times, follow the directions of the Ground Manager and/or other duty officials.
- > Never arrive at a Junior League game under the influence of alcohol, never bring alcohol to a Junior League game and only drink alcohol, if it is available, in a responsible manner in the designated licensed area.

**Children learn from positive experiences and positive examples of best practice.**



## Code of Conduct > Summary of Offences

**NOTE** – Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents/carers of players, coaches, officials and spectators.

No person(s) attending a match, function, or Club related event or activity shall:

- A** Use offensive or obscene language to any participant.
- B** Enter the field of play or playing area during the course of, or following a match without the prior approval of the Ground Manager or official appointed by the home Club and/or League
- C** Excessively dispute the decision of a Referee or Touch Judge either during or after a match.
- D** Assault, or act with aggression, to any person/s.
- E** Behave in a way contrary to the Code of Conduct and/or the spirit of the game.
- F** Behave in a way which disturbs the enjoyment of a match, function, activity or event by any person/s, or brings discredit to any Club, League or the game.
- G** Act in such a way as to exhibit racial, sexual, religious or gender intolerance by language or other conduct, to any person/s
- H** Refuse to accept the reasonable direction of the Ground Manager, official of the team/ Club which that person is supporting, or official of the home Club and/or League.
- I** No person/s may make comment or take actions that bring discredit to any person, Club or league through any social media outlet.

Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents/carers of players, coaches, officials and Club supporters.

Breaches of the Rugby League Code of Conduct may result in penalties, including but not limited to:

- > Suspension of a match and/or
- > Termination of a match (including potential forfeiture of competition points) and/or
- > Monetary fines and/or
- > Suspension of a participant on a temporary or permanent basis and/or
- > Suspension of a Club, League or Association on a temporary or permanent basis and/or
- > Revocation or suspension of an accreditation issued by the National Rugby League (NRL) or relevant governing body

These penalties are in addition to any penalty which may be imposed by the relevant governing League bodies.



# Our Beliefs



## We are inclusive

- › Engaging and empowering everyone to feel welcome in our game.
- › Reaching out to new participants and supporters.
- › Promoting equality of opportunity in all its forms.
- › Respecting and celebrating diversity in culture, gender, sexuality and social background.
- › The ability to see opportunities in the face of adversity.

## We are positive

- › The willingness to stand up for our beliefs and empowering others to do the same.
- › The commitment to stand up and be recognised as a brand ambassador.
- › The tenacity to do something despite how hard it is or how long it takes to achieve.

## We are united

- › Recognising and respecting our differences in the pursuit of achieving a common goal.
- › Putting the game ahead of individual needs and personal agenda.
- › Be a source of motivation and support to those around me.
- › Commitment to a culture of respect, honesty, and trust.

## We are disciplined

- › Say what we are going to do and do what we say.
- › Have the strength to make the right decisions, placing facts ahead of emotion.
- › Take responsibility for your own actions and the impact they have on others and the wider game
- › Champion processes, procedures, and the governing principles of the game.





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