

HUNTER VALLEY  
FOOTBALLNewcastle  
Football

## REGULATION H 3.7 Code of Behaviour Policy

### **Summary**

This Policy provide information about:

➤ **Regulation H – 3.7 Code of Conduct Policy**

that the Joint Zone Associations Competitions will operate under.

The Regulations, Procedures and Policies in conjunction with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Zone Association shall, with the approval of NNSW Football and duly Registered with FA, apply from the date of approval and shall take precedence over any previous Regulations of the Zone Association.

Issued by the Joint Board of Directors of Macquarie Football, Newcastle Football, and Hunter Valley Football.

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## CODES OF CONDUCT POLICY

### 1. **APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

Codes of Conduct are important to all sporting organisations.

They set out a standard and expectation of behaviour for everyone involved – administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents, and spectators.

This Code of Conduct Policy aims to promote and strengthen the reputation of football in the Joint Zones Associations and its Member Clubs, by establishing a standard of safety, performance, and behaviour for our members (Employees, Players, Club Officials, Match Officials, Volunteers, Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Spectators).

Football Australia in conjunction with the Australian Sport Commission and Active Australia have developed Codes of Behaviour for the promotion of Fair Play in Football.

These codes are fully endorsed by the Joint Zones Associations and have been produced to promote fair play and appropriate behaviour by players, coaches, parents, spectators, officials, administrators, teachers, and the media.

The Joint Zones Associations are committed to fair play for all involved with the sport of football.

The majority of people attending matches participate in a respectful manner, creating an enjoyable and safe environment.

Unfortunately, sometimes a minority don't demonstrate responsible and acceptable behaviour.

The sport must be enjoyable for all, and this can only happen when every person at the event – players, coaches, administrators, officials, spectators, supporters, media, parents - conducts himself/herself in an acceptable manner and follows certain key principles that constitute a code of behaviour for that specific person sanctioned

In addition, it seeks to deter conduct that could impair public confidence in the honest and nonviolent conduct of Matches or in the integrity and good character of our members and participants.

The elimination of negative aspects of football sporting events, including behaviours that can be collectively ascribed to 'sports rage', can only be of benefit to all participants.

The Joint Zones Associations and our Member Clubs promotes the positive behaviours which only improve the levels of enjoyment and fulfilment of on-field and off-field persons.

Issues covered in Codes of conduct can be many and varied - from on-field incidents, sideline abuse and mismanagement, to inappropriate social media posts, unfair treatment, poor sportsmanship and more.

A Joint Zones Associations Member Club is responsible, and liable, for the conduct and behaviour of its Team Officials, players, parents, and supporters, whether at home or away Matches.

Each patron at a Match must comply with the Spectator Code of Conduct and Behaviour.

It is the host Member Club's responsibility to ensure this Spectator Code of Conduct and Behaviour is implemented and enforced.

A visiting Joint Zones Associations Member Club is liable for improper conduct among its own group of Team Officials, players, parents, and supporters.

Codes of conduct are only useful if you communicate on them often – don't let them gather dust on the shelf.

## 2. **CODE OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR**

It is important to note, that while the Joint Zones Associations may set standards for behaviour, member clubs always have a legal responsibility to address conduct or 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.

### ***This Code:***

- a. applies to the conduct and behaviour of Joint Zones Associations and our Member Clubs and Club Associates,
- b. applies to ***ALL*** forms of organised football under Joint Zones Association's jurisdiction, including but not limited to eleven-a-side football competition and trial games, mini-roos football, training, coaching clinics, Gala Days, etc.,
- c. continues to apply to a Member Club and its members even after that Club member's association, registration, employment, or engagement has ended, if that member of the Club Member breached this Code while a current member of the Member Club; and
- d. does not limit or restrict the application of FA Statutes and, in particular, the Disciplinary & Grievance By-Law, Member Protection Policies as determined by the Competition Administrator – Disciplinary.
- e. This Code of Conduct may be supplemented by additional codes of behaviour or ethics, provided that they are not inconsistent with the terms of this Code.
- f. The Joint Zones Associations endorses the following codes of behaviour and requires that Member Clubs shall disseminate the relevant code to persons involved in football sporting events at Home and Away fixtures.

## 3. **PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- a. Play by the Laws of the game and listen to your Team Official (Coach or Manager).
- b. Never argue with a Match Official or any other Official there to help you. If you disagree, ***ask your*** captain, coach, or manager to courteously approach the Match Official or any other Official during a break or after the completion of the competitive event.
- c. A good player is a self-disciplined person; stay in control of your temper always. Verbal or Physical abuse of Match Officials, any other Official or other players, sledging other players, deliberately distracting, or provoking an opponent are behaviours that are neither acceptable nor permissible and will not be tolerated at any Joint Zones Associations Fixture or member club's facilities.

- d. Work hard on your own game and work equally hard to play your part in the team effort as there will be benefit to both the team's performance and your own performance.
- e. Be a good sport – respect and applaud all good plays whether they are made by your team or by the opposition and shake hands at the end of the game.
- f. Treat all participants in football events as you would like to be treated. Never bully, take 'cheap shots' or take unfair advantage of another player.
- g. Cooperate with your team coach, team-mates, and opponents – without them there would be no competition fixture.
- h. Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit, not just to please other people such as coaches, parents etc.
- i. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability level, cultural background, or religion.

#### **4. PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- a. Remember that young people participate in football for their pleasure and enjoyment, not yours.
- b. Encourage young people to participate, do not force them.
- c. Focus of the young person's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing.
- d. Encourage young persons to always play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility, verbal abuse, or violence.
- e. Never ridicule or yell at a young player for making a mistake of losing a competitive event.
- f. Remember that young people learn best by being a positive example.  
Appreciate good performances and skilful plays by all participants.
- g. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from football sporting activities.
- h. Respect officials' decisions and teach young players to do likewise.
- i. Show control, respect, and appreciation to all involved in the football environment – this includes players, opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, other parents, and spectators – and encourage players to do the same.
  - Remember that without many of these volunteers, your child would not be able to participate in a football sporting activity.
- j. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person participating in the sport of football, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.
- k. Play your important role in the prevention of sport rage; although sport rage is often the result of many factors, parents can reduce its incidence by being good role models through helping to create a positive sporting environment for all.

Consider and deal with each of the following ten important actions by parents:

- i. Understand what young people want from the sport of football – discuss this with your child – focus on what he/she likes most about the game,
- ii. Encourage fair play – young people learn the principles of fair play of respect, integrity, and fairness through their involvement with football – be a good role model,
- iii. Keep your emotions in check – unruly adult emotion at young persons’ sport is “**sport rage**” at its worst – never use bad language, harass others, or get involved with verbal or physical abuse of anyone,
- iv. Respect all players, regardless of gender, ability, race, cultural background, or religion.
- v. Verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.
- vi. Respect the coach – interact with courtesy through the Team Manager and leave the coaching to the coach, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with their decisions,
- vii. Respect the Match Officials, Team, and Club Officials – these people are there to make the game fair and more enjoyable for everyone – they are human and may occasionally make mistakes – you must understand this and explain it to your child – your behaviour towards these persons will affect the player’s attitude,
- viii. Attend your child’s matches on game days and support them and their team.
- ix. Uphold the parental code of conduct – you must understand, accept, support, and uphold the parental code of conduct, including the requirement not to drink alcohol at junior matches or arrive at the field intoxicated or under the influence of illicit drugs, which can be enforced at football sporting events.
- x. Help your team out when it comes to bringing half-time consumables (drinks, fruit, etc.), canteen duty, washing uniforms or assisting to set up the field setup.

## 5. COACHES’ CODE OF CONDUCT:

- a. Remember that **ALL** junior players participate for pleasure and enjoyment and that winning is only one part of the fun of the football experience.
  - It may not be as necessary to emphasise winning as to ‘decriminalise’ losing.
  - Learning to lose gracefully is one of the learning experiences of football.
- b. Operate within the rules and spirit of football and teach your players respect for rules and authority by word and example.
- c. Be reasonable in your demands on players’ time, energy, and enthusiasm; remember that unreasonable demands rarely bear fruit.
- d. Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all players.

- e. Ensure that the time (match day and training) players spend with you is a positive experience; all players are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.
- f. Avoid overplaying the talented players; the just-average need and deserve equal time.
- g. Display and demonstrate control, respect, and sportsmanship to all involved with football – this includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents, and spectators – and encourage players to do the same.
- h. Assist injured players and assist the Duty Officer complete an Accident Report in the Home or Away Member Club's Accident Record Book as per **Regulation A22**.
  - The Duty Officer at the Ground where the Fixture was played shall record in the Accident Report Book the date, time, Club, Team, Player's Name, and the nature of the injury sustained.
- i. Ensure you are able to locate a first aid kit at each game and training session, should you require it.
- j. Show concern and caution toward sick and injured players.
  - Follow the advice of a physician when determining whether an injured player is ready to recommence training or competition – do not let injured players compete, for the sake of their own well-being.
- k. Be positive in your approach to players – avoid harsh criticism or ridicule.
  - Do not humiliate your team or individual players.
  - Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player regardless of the player's gender, ability, religion, or cultural background.
- l. Obtain appropriate qualifications and keep up to date with the latest coaching practices and the principles of growth and development of young players.
- m. Instil in players the importance of making an honest effort and developing skills as much as possible; encourage the development of basic football skills if involved in coaching young players.
- n. Restrict any physical contact with players to that appropriate to the situation and necessary for the player's skill development.
- o. Support every effort to rid the sport of football of verbal and physical abuse. Verbal and physical abuse will not be tolerated.
- p. Arriving intoxicated (from either alcohol or drugs) to team training, Game Days or any other Club event will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT - ADMINISTRATORS

- a. Involve players and young people in planning, leadership, evaluation, and decision making related to the sporting activity of football.
- b. Provide equal opportunities for all who wish to do so to participate in football activities.
- c. Create pathways for young people to participate in football not just as players but as a Coach, Match Official, Administrator, etc.
- d. Ensure that rules, equipment, duration of matches and training schedules are modified to suit the age, ability, and maturity level of young players.

- e. Ensure the provision of quality supervision and instruction for all players, but in particular for young players.
- f. Remember that people, particularly young people, participate for their enjoyment and benefit – do not overemphasise winning and awards.
- g. Help coaches and officials highlight appropriate behaviour and skill development in assisting improving the standards of coaching and officiating.
- h. Ensure that everyone involved in the sport of football emphasises fair play and not winning at all costs.
- i. Provide a code of behaviour policy, documentation and relevant information for spectators, **all** officials (club, match, team, etc.), parents, coaches, supporters, and players and encourage all participants to follow a code of behaviour.
- j. Remember to set an example, be a role model - your behaviour and comments should at all times be positive, respectful, and supportive.
- k. Make it clear that **any** abuse, including verbal and physical abuse, of any persons involved in football is unacceptable and shall result in disciplinary action.
- l. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person involved with the sport of football, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

## 7. CODE OF CONDUCT - OFFICIAL

- a. Apply the rules and regulations that have been determined are applicable to the skill levels and needs of players of certain age and experience levels.
- b. Apply the Laws of the Game in a fair and consistent manner.
- c. Compliment and encourage all participants.
- d. Be consistent, objective, respectful, and courteous in making and handing down your decisions.
- e. Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- f. Emphasise the spirit of the game rather than the errors.
- g. Encourage and promote rule changes which will make participation more enjoyable.
- h. Be a good sport yourself – actions speak louder than words.
- i. Keep up to date with the latest trends in officiating and the principles of growth and development of players, particularly younger players.
- j. Place the safety and welfare of all participants above any other considerations.
- k. Do not tolerate any acts of violence, aggression, and unsporting behaviour. If it occurs take appropriate steps to deal with such behaviour.
- l. Do not tolerate offensive, insulting, or abusive language or bad behaviour from players, team officials or spectators. If it occurs take appropriate steps to deal with such behaviour.
- m. Complete and submit all required match day information, including post-match reports, to the governing body in the required time frames.
- n. Remember that you set an example, you are a role model – your behaviour and comments should be positive and supportive – avoid negative acts.

- **Think before you speak.**
- o. **Remember:** Don't say anything publicly (internet, social media, print, radio) that could disadvantage anyone within your club or association or zone.
- p. Give all players a 'fair go' regardless of their gender, ability, age, cultural background, or religion.

## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT – CLUB MATCH OFFICIAL

Club Members, Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, and supporters may occasionally be asked to fill the role of a Match Official as a Club Referee or Club Assistant Referee to control a Joint Zones Association's competition fixture.

- a. The powers of a Club Match Official must be used with wise judgement, care, authority and a firm approach must be combined with respect.
- b. Have completed a Club Referee's or Assistant Referee's course through the Joint Zones Associations or have a good practical understanding of current IFAB's Laws of the Game.
- c. Please observe the Match Officials code of fair play.
- d. Be consistent, objective, and courteous when making decisions.
- e. A whistle which is used too frequently unnecessarily will have less impact when it is needed.
- f. Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- g. Emphasise the spirit of the game rather than errors.
- h. Should have regard to protecting the players.
- i. Show due respect when speaking with the players, even in the event of infringements.
- j. Take disciplinary action against players, Team Officials, Spectators and Supports guilty of cautionable (Yellow Card) and send-off (Red Card) offences where required.
- k. Ensure all cautionable (Yellow Card) and send-off (Red Card) offences are recorded on Team Sheet.
- l. Ensure all send-off (Red Card) offences are accompanied with a Send-off Report and are sent to the Joint Zones Associations Competition Administrator – Disciplinary.
  - In reports, should set out the true facts and not attempt to justify any decisions.
- m. Be a good sport yourself.
  - **Actions speak louder than words.**

## 9. CODE OF CONDUCT – SPECTATORS

- a. Remember that players participate in sport for their enjoyment and benefit, not yours!
- b. Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Be prepared to congratulate all participants on their performance regardless of the match outcome.
- c. Respect the decisions of Match Officials, Team Officials and encourage all players, particularly young people, to do the same.
- d. Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake; positive comments are motivational whereas negative comments are destructive.

- e. Condemn the use of abuse in any form, physical or verbal, whether by players, parents, guardians, caregivers, spectators, coaches, officials, or administrators.
- f. Show respect for your team's opponents; without them there would be no game.
- g. Encourage players to follow the rules and accept the Match and Team Official's decisions; teach players that questioning of or dissenting from decisions of officials is unacceptable at any time.
- h. Do not use foul language, sledge or in any way harass players, coaches, Match Officials, or administrators over any perceived disagreement over interpretation of rules.
- i. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player in the sport of football, regardless of the player's gender, ability, age, cultural background, or religion.

## 10. CODE OF CONDUCT – SUPPORTERS

- a. Encourage players, particularly young people, to develop basic skills in a variety of sports and discourage over-specialisation in one event, sport or playing position.
- b. Help to create opportunities to teach appropriate sports behaviour as well as basic skills.
- c. Support the concept of players, particularly young people, being made aware of the positive benefits of participation in football sporting activities.
- d. Help players understand that playing by the rules is the player's responsibility but assist by studying and understanding the rules of football to dispel ignorance.
- e. Help young players in particular understand the differences between the junior competition in which they participate and professional sport.
- f. Provide support and understanding for all young persons and players in general to participate in administration, coaching and refereeing as well as playing.
- g. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability level, age, cultural background, or religion.
- h. Keep up to date with developments in coaching practices and the principles of physical growth and development and be aware of the latest coaching and teaching resources for football generally but specifically for junior levels.

## 11. CODE OF CONDUCT – MEDIA

- a. Provide coverage of young people's and adult competitive football sport events.
- b. Be aware of the differences between adult, professional and modified young people's football sporting events.
- c. Do not highlight isolated incidents of inappropriate sporting behaviour.
- d. Focus on fair play and honest efforts by all players.
- e. Do not place unfair expectations on young players – they are not miniature professionals.
- f. Describe and report of the problems of young people participating in organized sport.
- g. Focus on the abilities, not the disabilities, of players, particularly young players.
- h. Avoid reinforcing stereotypical views on the involvement of males and females in the sport of football.

- i. Give equal time and space to the reporting of male and female football events.
- j. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

## 12. BRINGING THE GAME INTO DISREPUTE

- a. A Club member must not bring the Joint Zones Associations and Member Clubs or the game of football into Disrepute.
- b. Without limiting the generality of paragraph 1, a Joint Zones Associations Member, Member Club or Club member will be taken as having brought football into Disrepute if any of the following occurs:
  - i. discriminatory behaviour, including public disparagement of, discrimination against, or vilification of a person on account of an Attribute,
  - ii. harassment, including sexual harassment or any unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances,
  - iii. offensive behaviour, including offensive, obscene, provocative, or insulting gestures, language, or chanting,
  - iv. provocation or incitement of hatred or violence,
  - v. spectator or crowd violence,
  - vi. intimidation of Match Officials, Team Officials and Club Officials which may take the form of (but is not restricted to) derogatory or abusive words or actions toward a Match Official, Team Officials and Club Officials or the use of violence or threats to pressure a Match Official, Team Officials and Club Officials to take or omit to take certain action regardless of where such action is taken,
  - vii. forgery and falsification, including creation of a false document, forgery of a document or signature, the making of a false claim or providing inaccurate or false information on a prescribed form,
  - viii. corruption, including offering a Benefit or an advantage to a Player or an Official in an attempt to incite him or her to violate FIFA Statutes, FA, NSW Football Statutes or the Laws, Joint Zones Associations Rules, and Regulations,
  - ix. abuse of position to obtain personal benefit,
  - x. commission or charge of a criminal offence; or
  - xi. any other conduct, behaviour or statement that materially injures the reputation and goodwill of the Joint Zones Associations or football generally.
- c. A Club is deemed to have committed an offence under this article in circumstances in which its spectators have engaged in any of the conduct outlined in **12.b**. Club members and associates are entitled to have their privacy respected, and this Code is not intended to apply to private activities engaged in by a Club member or Associate that are not in the public domain

## 13. APPENDICES

The following documents which are taken from

FIFA

NSW Office of Sport

Play by the Rules

Match Official Abuse -Zero Tolerance Initiative

are attached as Appendices 1 – 5 as possible guides to reduce abuse at all levels of the game we call football.

APPENDIX 1	The FIFA Handshake
APPENDIX 2	Ground Official (Duty Officer) – Role and Responsibilities Helpful tips for Acting as a Ground Official – Duty Officer
APPENDIX 3	Parent’s Pledge – Parent Code of Conduct
APPENDIX 4	About Sport Rage - A Prevention Guide for Parents
APPENDIX 5	Dealing with Sport Rage
APPENDIX 6	Spectator Behaviour Management Strategy

## APPENDIX 1: THE FIFA HANDSHAKE

FIFA, the international body that oversees world football, has pledged to encourage greater efforts to boost fair play within the game.

A crucial part of this pledge is a decision to introduce handshakes at the start and end of each match.

This will provide an opening and closing procedure but, more importantly, the players will learn that despite the contest, whether we win or lose, we are still friends and we thank our opponents and the match officials for a good game – a gesture that shows mutual respect.

### ***PRE-MATCH PROCEDURE***

1. Prior to the match, coaches are asked to have their players line up across the centre line behind the team captain, one team on each side of the centre of the pitch.
2. The two captains begin the handshake procedure, with the teams following.
3. After the handshakes are completed, players are to take their starting positions for the match.

### ***POST-MATCH PROCEDURE***

1. After the final whistle, match officials meet in the centre circle.
2. Coaches are to line their teams up in a similar fashion to the pre-match handshake. The captains of the two teams are responsible for ensuring that each player including bench players and coaching staff – line up.
3. The two captains begin the handshake procedure. Players do not need to be in position in the line-up. Each player and member of the coaching staff should also shake hands with the match officials.
4. Alternatively, all players may individually shake hands on the field with all opposing players and with the match officials without any formalised structure.
5. This informal structure may replace the formalized FIFA structure, but the handshake **MUST** take place after each match.

## APPENDIX 2:

# CLUB GROUND OFFICIAL - DUTY OFFICER

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a parent or a club volunteer attending Joint Football Zone Associations Member Club football matches you may be required to fulfil the role of Ground Official - Duty Officer, during the season.

It is important that you understand what is expected of you as a Ground Official - Duty Officer.

As a Ground Official - Duty Officer's your first responsibility is to ensure the safety and well-being of the Match Officials, Team Officials, then to the players and to the spectators and supporters of the match.

Specifically, each match day a Ground Official - Duty Officer should:

1. **INTRODUCTION:** at least 30 minutes prior to the commencement of each match Make themselves and/or any other jacketed officials known to the Match Officials and Team Officials, having the responsibility for ensuring code of behaviour compliance.
2. **ACCOMPANY:** Match Officials to and from the field of play prior to the start of the match, at half-time (if necessary) and full time. You are allowed to enter the field of play for the purposes of escorting Match Officials from the field of play.
3. **VISIBLE:** be visible at all times during the game by wearing the Football Zone Association's supplied fluorescent vest,
4. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** You are responsible for monitoring match day matters which are outside of the field of play and technical areas of the grounds which pertain to spectator behaviour. Especially those behaviours relating to abusive, insulting, offensive, or threatening behaviour towards Match Officials, Team Officials, players and other spectators,
5. **DEAL WITH:** unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour promptly
6. **GIVE WARNINGS:** enforce compliance of codes of conduct with players, spectators, supports, Club/Team officials,
7. **MONITOR:** any situation to ensure the behaviour has been modified so as not to breach the code of conduct,
8. **ASK:** persons displaying inappropriate behaviour to leave from the venue if appropriate,
9. **ENSURE AMBULANCE OR POLICE** are called if required for serious injury or assault to players or officials and direct ambulance/police car to location on arrival.
10. **NOTIFY:** the police in the event of criminal conduct or safety concerns,
11. **COMPLETE:** complete incident and accident reports where necessary,
12. **FINISH:** your duty 30 minutes after the completion of the match.

## ***HELPFUL TIPS FOR ACTING AS A GROUND OFFICIAL - DUTY OFFICER***

1. Assess the situation as you approach.
2. Decide whether you will need assistance. If in doubt send for or get assistance.
3. Stay open-minded, intend to diffuse the situation.
4. Be polite and tactful in carrying out your duties.
5. Remain calm.
6. Be assertive, not aggressive when communicating with specific individuals.
7. Don't argue, just listen.
8. Answer any questions asked by Match Officials, Team Officials, players or spectators where possible or direct their enquiries to your Club Secretary or President.
9. Do not corner a person in an emotional state – leave them with an option where they can still choose to do the right thing.
10. If a situation is out of control – you may ask the Match Official or the Assistant Match Official to stop the game until the situation is defused.
11. If a spectator is in an emotional state, politely ask them to wait until they have 'cooled down' or set a time in the future when the issue can be discussed with the appropriate people.
12. If you have a conflict situation, ask the complainant to take up their issue with the Club President or Club Secretary as soon as possible by phone, email or in writing – not in front of the players.
13. Enlist the support, if possible, of other Ground Official - Duty Officer, Team Official or Club Officials if your first attempt fails.
14. Do not put yourself in danger – if the situation is serious, call the police.

### APPENDIX 3: PARENT’S PLEDGE – THE PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT -

The Zone Association has implemented codes of conduct for all participants including parents, guardians, and caregivers.

You should familiarize yourself with this code and pledge as they apply to you as a parent, guardians, or caregivers.– you need to read, accept the code, and sign the parent pledge.

- \* I will not pressure my child in any way – I know that this is his/her game, not mine!
- \* I will not use bad language, nor will I harass players, coaches, match officials, team officials, club officials, or other spectators.
- \* I will encourage my child to play within the rules and respect officials’ and coaches’ decisions – no matter what!
- \* I will teach my child not to hate their competitors but to admire and respect their skill.
- \* I will remember that children learn best by example so I will applaud good plays and performances by both my child’s team and their opponents.
- \* I will give positive comments that motivate and encourage continued effort.
- \* I will teach my child that doing one’s best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game/event.
- \* I will focus on my child’s effort and performance – not the score.
- \* I will thank the coaches, team officials and other volunteers who give their time to conduct the event for my child.
- \* I will help when asked by a coach, team official or other officials.
- \* I will not criticize or ridicule my child’s performance after the game – I realize that fun is more important than a good win!
- \* I will not consume alcohol or illicit drugs at junior matches or arrive at the field intoxicated due to alcohol or illicit drugs.
- \* I agree to abide by this code of conduct and to be subject to the rules and policies of the Zone Association and my Member Club.

***THIS IS MY PARENT’S PLEDGE.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent’s Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent’s Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: ABOUT SPORT RAGE – A PREVENTION GUIDE FOR PARENTS -

Sport is a great pastime and an important part of Australian life. For young persons in particular sport is a great outlet to learn lessons about teamwork, rules, winning and losing – while keeping them fit and healthy.

Because of this, it is a shame that for many young people, sport is not what it should be – due to the growing incidence of ‘sport rage’.

Sport rage is violence, bad language, abuse and general bad behaviour by players, coaches, officials, and spectators.

Like road rage, sport rage is a growing concern as we live in a faster and more stressful society.

While friendly rivalry on the sporting field is a healthy part of growing up, when the line between competition and aggression is crossed there are no winners.

Sport rage is bad for children and bad for sport as a whole.

At its worst, sport rage reduces a child’s enjoyment of sport, undermines the benefits, and can lead to drop out.

Dealing with sport rage is a major challenge for the Zone Association and its Member Clubs.

Not only does it reflect badly on the sport of soccer football, but it can also deter participation at all levels.

The effect on volunteer coaches, referees and officials is especially serious, with many ‘hanging up the whistle’ because they are fed up with abuse and harassment.

It is important that everyone involved with junior sport unite to combat sport rage.

### **A. PREVENTING SPORT RAGE**

Parents can play an important role in preventing sport rage. While sport rage is often the result of many factors, parents can reduce incidents by being good role models and helping to create a positive sporting environment for football.

There are six important considerations for all parents, guardians, and caregivers:-

#### **1. Understand what children want from sport.**

Sport provides many valuable learning experiences, but for most young people enjoyment is the most important outcome – if they don’t have fun, they will not want to play.

Ask your child and you’ll discover the scoreboard is not that important. They may not remember the score from a game played just two weeks ago – but they will recall a funny incident or who they played with after the match.

In fact, one of the most satisfying things about sport for children comes from being with their friends and being part of a team.

As a parent, help your child to get maximum enjoyment from football by focussing on what they like most about the game.

Emphasise the importance of effort and having fun, rather than the score. Tell your child you love them and enjoyed watching them, regardless of the game’s outcome.

Remember to keep it all in perspective.

Less than three per cent of young people who play competitive football sport will ever reach an elite level; but 100 per cent can have a chance to enjoy their sport if we let them!

**Tips:**

- \* Emphasise trying hard and having fun, not winning
- \* Don't pressure your child – it's their game, not yours
- \* Never criticise or ridicule your child's performance
- \* Discuss what your child enjoyed about the game

**2. *Encourage fair play.***

Sport provides young persons the opportunity to learn the principles of fair play – respect, integrity, and fairness.

By adopting these values, young persons will get the best out of sport and, importantly, demonstrate good sporting behaviour both on and off the field.

Parents should discuss fair play with their children and be good role models.

Your child will learn to respect their opponents by seeing you do the same.

They will accept the referee's decision if you do.

They will be the first in line to shake the hands of the other team if you have shown how important it is to do so.

**Tips:**

- \* Be a good role model
- \* Show respect for opponents, spectators, and **all** officials
- \* Cheer and acknowledge good plays by both teams
- \* Thank the referee, coach, and other team after the game

**3. *Keep your emotions in check.***

Unruly adult emotion at young persons' sport is sport rage at its worst.

As a parent you should leave the stress and tension of daily life behind when you go to your child's football match.

Concentrate on how to make the day enjoyable for your child. It is important to get off to a good start by being organized on game day, so everyone leaves the house calm and prepared.

While some sideline emotion can be well intentioned, such as repeatedly shouting your child's name, always consider the impact it is having.

In this instance you might be embarrassing your child and irritating others.

Outright bad behaviour, such as abusing a referee or ridiculing the opposition, is unacceptable.

Keep in mind what children want from sport – a Match Official’s decision that annoys you will probably go unnoticed by your child – but your loud and abusive sideline outburst certainly will not!

**Tips:**

- \* Leave the stress of daily life behind
- \* Be enthusiastic, but don’t yell instructions from the sideline
- \* Don’t get into shouting matches with anyone
- \* Address coaching or Match Official (refereeing) concerns after the game, out of view of players
- \* Don’t verbally, physically abuse or harass others

**4. *Respect the coach.***

Coaches and team managers play an essential role in providing a sporting experience for your child.

Without them there would be no team, and no game so show respect for the persons in these roles and always treat them with courtesy.

In general, parents should interact with the team manager and leave the coaching to the coach.

If you want to speak to the coach, ask the team manager to set up a meeting.

**Tips:**

- \* Always set a positive example
- \* Deal with issues professionally after the game

**5. *Respect Match Officials and Club Officials***

Referees and other officials are there to make the game fair and more enjoyable for everyone.

They are human and may occasionally make mistakes.

It is important that you as a parent understand this – and that you explain it to your child.

Your behaviour towards referees and officials will affect their attitude.

Parents should never approach the referee directly.

If you have an issue with refereeing, coaching or administration, raise it in a controlled and professional way with the appropriate people using the appropriate channels after the game and out of public view.

**Tips:**

- \* You and your child should thank the referee after the game
- \* Accept decisions by referees and other officials
- \* Deal with issues professionally after the game

## 6. ***Uphold the Parent Code of Conduct***

The Joint Zones Associations has implemented codes of conduct for personnel involved in football sporting events.

It is important that you understand, support, and uphold the ***Parent's Code of Conduct***.

The Joint Zones Associations and its Member Clubs are entitled to enforce this code.

For example, while it may not be a criminal offence for a parent or spectator to verbally taunt an opposition team, such behaviour may well breach the code of conduct.

As such, the Joint Zones Associations or its Member Club is entitled to discipline persons who breach the codes, in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

### **Tips:**

- \* Support and uphold the Joint Zones Associations Code of Conduct for Parents (the '***anti-sledge pledge***')
- \* Do not consume alcohol or illicit drugs at junior matches or arrive at the field under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs - intoxicated

## APPENDIX 5: DEALING WITH SPORT RAGE

Despite your best intentions, sport rage incidents will occur.

While it is the responsibility of the Joint Zones Associations/Member Club to deal with incidents, parents need to understand the process and support.

### 1. Codes of conduct can be enforced.

Familiarise yourself with the Joint Zone Association's codes of conduct for players, coaches, match and club officials, administrators, supporters, spectators, and parents.

You should be aware of the people who have agreed to abide by each code and against whom it can be enforced.

### 2. Inappropriate behaviour should be reported.

If you witness behaviour that contravenes the Joint Zones Association's code, you should approach your Club's appointed Ground Official - Duty Officer for the day and notify him/her of the behaviour.

It is not your role to approach the offender(s) as this can further escalate the situation.

### 3. Warning is issued.

The first time a person engages in inappropriate conduct, they may be issued with a warning that their conduct is inappropriate and breaches the code of conduct.

If the action is serious, immediate disciplinary charges can be laid.

### 4. Disciplinary action can be taken.

The Joint Zones Associations and its Member Clubs are responsible for taking disciplinary action against persons who breach the codes of conduct.

While this may involve a warning, it can also include suspension, expulsion or requiring the person to participate at a counselling session.

You may need to assist the Zones Association Competition Administrator – Disciplinary or Member Club if it is hearing a charge laid against a person for inappropriate behaviour directed towards you or another person at a game which you attended.

This enforcement and invoking of penalties/sanctions will only be given to the party alleged of having infringed this Code:

- a. reasonable details of the alleged infringement,
- b. notice of possible sanctions; and
- c. the opportunity to be heard in relation to the issues of infringement and sanction.

The scope and implementation of disciplinary sanctions is specified in the FA National Disciplinary Regulations and Statutes, Joint Zones Associations Regulation G

The imposition of a sanction is immediate or as otherwise notified by Joint Zones Association Competition Administrator – Disciplinary.

If a Club Associate disputes the sanction or purported action taken under this Code, that party may challenge the decision in accordance with the Regulation G - Disciplinary Rules and Procedures Part E – Right of Appeal.

#### 5. People can be removed from the field of play.

People can only enter the field of play with the permission of the Match Official (Referee).

Match Officials should communicate directly and immediately with the Ground Official - Duty Officer to remove unauthorized persons from the field.

#### 6. People can be removed from the venue.

If the Member Club is in a position to control ground entry, then it will be able to evict persons who contravene the code of conduct from the ground.

Where attendance is not controlled, Member Clubs can request offenders to leave the venue, or otherwise discipline the person for breach of the code.

#### 7. The referee may suspend the game.

The Match Official (Referee) may suspend play and refuse to re-start the match until appropriate action has been taken if there has been a breach of the code of conduct.

The Match Official (Referee) may request that a person is removed from the sideline area to a place where they can no longer interfere in the game. In the case of a serious breach, the Match Official (Referee) may abandon the game altogether.

#### 8. The police should be involved if appropriate.

If you feel that the behaviour of an individual (including players, coaches, Club or Team officials, supporters, administrators, spectators, parents, etc.) constitutes a criminal act, ***the police should be immediately notified.***

You should notify the Ground Official - Duty Officer and request that the police be called.

While it is lawful for a Member Club to detain a person who has committed a criminal offence until the police arrive, it is recommended that this action be taken only if absolutely necessary, as your Duty of Care is first to the overall safety of all present.

Club officials are able to exercise reasonable force in carrying out such action, but not disproportionate to the conduct of the offender.

## APPENDIX 6:



# SPECTATOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## *FOR UTILISATION ACROSS ALL JOINT FOOTBALL ZONES ASSOCIATIONS COMPETITIONS*

We've all come across them.

- They can be your club members or spectators.
- They can come from the visiting club.
- These people, both men and women, are outwardly offensive.
- No one's off-limits – other adults around them, coaches, referees, their own team members or the opposition, even kids playing.
- They sledge, scream and hurl abuse.
- Their bad behaviour worsens with alcohol.
- They're irritating, annoying, they can get under your skin.
- They can be distressing and menacing.
- People become uncomfortable and move away, unsure as to the best way of dealing with this behaviour
- Their bad behaviour goes unchecked, so does their negative role-modelling.

We who are heavily invested at all levels of community football are aware of the challenges being experienced due to Match Official (Referee) shortages. A key reason for this dilemma is because Match Officials leave the game because of abuse. There have been a significant number of instances where Match Officials have been exposed to abuse by spectators last season, as in many seasons' past and this has continued to develop and worsened in recent years. This is reflected in the 45% annual loss rate of younger Match Officials.

The major objective of this strategy as part of the Joint Football Zones Match Official Abuse - Zero Tolerance Initiative and Code of Behaviour – Spectators, is to identify significant areas of concern, that member clubs need to focus on in their supervision of match days and to reduce where possible all abusive and unacceptable behaviour when it arises. These areas will influence match day operations with the objective of ensuring that there is a significant reduction in abuse on match days and a more respectful overall match day environment for all participants in football, across all the Joint Football Zones competition levels of football.

This strategy as part of the Joint Football Zones Match Official Abuse - Zero Tolerance Initiative aims to address the following:

1. Responsibilities of the member club in relation to spectator management.
2. The actions Duty Officers must undertake should any spectators behave in an offensive, insulting or abusive manner towards Match Officials on a match day.

3. Training in conflict management that can be provided upon request by Joint Football Zones or appropriately qualified Club Officials with respect of Duty Officer or Ground Officials responsibilities.
4. The potential consequences to non-compliance in relation to match day responsibilities by a member club.

#### **A. Club Obligations**

The following procedures are the minimum requirements that each member club needs to follow to ensure spectator management aligns with Joint Football Zones' Code of Behaviour – Spectators (Regulation H 3.7 (9)) and strategies to reduce spectator abuse.

- i. 30 minutes prior to the commencement of each match, the Club are to determine who the Match Official Support Duty Officer (i.e. Ground Duty Official) is, together with others who will also be jacketed officials with responsibilities for ensuring code of behaviour compliance.
- ii. A Duty Officer is to accompany Match Officials to and from the field of play, prior to the start of the match, at half-time and full time. A Duty Officer can also enter the field of play at the conclusion of the half/match for the purposes of escorting the match officials off.
- iii. The Duty Officers must be clearly visible and known to the Match Officials prior to the commencement of a Match.
- iv. Ensure that all Duty Officers appointed by the club undertake the responsibilities below. Member clubs are required to have the appropriate number of Duty Officers in place as set out in the Competition Regulations for the competition being played. Should there not be the required Duty Officers present, the Referee may choose to not officiate the game and the club breaching the policy will incur the referee fees, a warning or fine, and the Home Team forfeits the match, and the Visiting Team awarded the match.

#### **B. The Responsibilities of the Duty Officers**

The role of the Duty Officer is to ensure that, at all times, Spectators comply with the Joint Football Zones' Code of Behaviour – Spectators (Regulation H 3.7 (9)) and FA Spectator Code of Behaviour (Appendix 1). The role of a Duty Officer is defined in the Joint Football Zones competition rules and regulations. Duty Officers are responsible for monitoring match day matters which are outside of the field of play and technical areas of the ground. If any spectators are behaving in a manner that is offensive, insulting or abusive towards the referee, or there are other breaches of the Codes of Behaviour, Duty Officers are responsible for ensuring:

- i. the abusive behaviour is addressed promptly, and
- ii. the person or people involved cease their abusive and rule breaking behaviour. This will involve:
- iii. communication with the person or people who are breaching the code of behaviour notifying them of the unacceptable conduct and
- iv. continuing to monitor to ensure the behaviour is modified to no longer breach the code of conduct.

All persons at the ground must abide by requests of the Duty Officer and in the event of continuing improper conduct, or offensive, insulting & abusive language by any persons at the ground, then any appropriate requests made by the Duty Officer shall be final and complied with immediately. This could include a direction to leave the venue if the spectator fails to modify their behaviour. If required, the Home Club official representative is to contact the police or relevant emergency services for support.

In extreme cases of abuse, it may be necessary to stop the match until the spectator is spoken to or dealt with by the Duty Officer. The Referee has the specific right to stop a match from continuing and requiring a Duty Officer to address an issue in relation to code of behaviour breach by a Spectator, before the match continues further.

### **C. Training Opportunities**

If a member club wishes to participate in training for Duty Officers, this training will be conducted free of cost on up to two occasions per season, with experienced Joint Football Zone or Officials from within and Member Clubs conducting sessions that are designed to assist Duty Officers to understand how to approach and manage spectators who are in breach of the code of behaviour.

### **D. Non-Compliance by a Club**

If a club fails to comply with their responsibilities in this area, this can potentially lead to serious concerns about the safety and welfare of Match Officials and assist in perpetuating the decline in the number of available Match Officials.

Poor behaviour of spectators also has a negative impact on the ability for families and behaviour abiding spectators to enjoy football in a family friendly, respectful and supportive environment. If a member club is not acting responsibly in respect of application of the strategy above and are failing to comply with their Roles and Responsibilities, the Member Club may be sanctioned by the Joint Football Zones Administration or dealt with in accordance with the Joint Football Zones Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations.

Due to the specific issue being addressed relating to the safety of the Match Day Environment, the Joint Football Zones Administration also reserves the right in circumstances where there are two or more policy breaches that have been reported in respect of a club during a season to:

- a.** Not send Match Officials to the Member Club for their Match Days, with Officials re-deployed to member clubs who are more effective in their implementation of this strategy, Or
- b.** Reversing the fixtures of the member club for a nominated period, with the club losing the opportunity to host a match or matches, on account of their failure to meet the requirements of this strategy.

The parties who are authorised to raise concerns about a Club's Compliance for consideration of a potential breach include any Joint Football Zone Referees, Referees Assessor or Joint Football Zones Directors.

Any allegation of breach becomes a disciplinary matter for consideration under the Joint Football Zones Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations. The consequences are not the aim of the strategy, nor is there a desire for them to ever be required. However, they are being notified at this stage so Member Clubs can be aware of the seriousness with respect to how this issue will be approached and the commitment to enforcing the strategy.

The individual Zone aims to work together with Member Clubs to ensure a safer environment for all in the coming seasons. In the event the following occurs the Referee, Assessor or Football Zone Director is to submit an incident report:

- a.** There was no identifiable Duty Officers at the ground that presented themselves to the Match Officials.
- b.** The Duty Officer did not adequately deal with or address inappropriate spectator behaviour.
- c.** Misconduct has occurred during the match by that Club's Spectator(s)

## RESOURCES:

[Sport Integrity Australia](#)

[Play by the Rules](#)

[NSW Office of Sport](#)

***This Code of Conduct Policy comes into force February 2025 and any amendments made to the Code of Conduct come into effect immediately upon promulgation of such amendments by the Joint Zones Associations.***

Approved and Issued: February 2025

Assessment/Review: **January 2026**