



True Sport sideline behaviour initiative

Acknowledgement of Country

It is SportWest's vision for us to come together through our love of sport to create safe, inclusive and fair places for everyone to enjoy sport in all its shapes and sizes across all Western Australian communities. Across the vast state of Western Australia, the Traditional Custodians of our Country have strong connections to the lands, the seas and waters, and the sky in and on which we proudly play, support and volunteer in sport, and these opportunities exist today thanks to the care and culture of our many First Nations Peoples. SportWest understands and acknowledges this. SportWest's legacy as the peak body of sport in this state commits to:

Leading - the industry to a more united future for all cultures and communities;

Respecting - all people as individuals and what they bring to their local community;

Advancing - our collective knowledge, and shared journey to a mutual understanding, and;

Engaging - each voice so that they are heard, listened to and valued.

We understand that like sport, every voice has a different story to tell, and SportWest aspires to support its members in creating the space for these voices and stories to be heard and learned from. This is our commitment to reconciliation and our acknowledgement of all the people who have left their footprints on this land before us, along with all those who we walk alongside us now, and into the future.

Who we are

SportWest

- Peak industry body for sport in Western Australia.
- We represent more than 130 Members and 5,500 sporting clubs involved in the conduct, administration, promotion and development of sport and related activities.
 - Member Organisations include:
 - State Sporting Associations
 - Local Governments
 - Sport & Recreation organisations

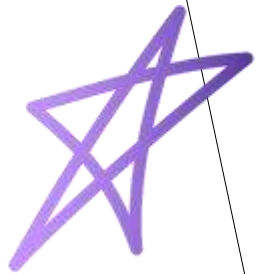


What is True Sport?

- Launched in September 2023 in partnership and with support from the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS).
- A cohesive, all-sport approach to align values, culture and practices of sport delivery across WA and enrich the sport experience for all participants.
- True Sport is the overarching, umbrella program with multiple initiatives which include resources, toolkits and workshops to support the WA sporting sector.
- True Sport aims to streamline communication, and deliver initiatives run through sport in WA, in a consistent and considered way ensuring the sport experience remains the priority.



What is True Sport?



True Sport
Child Safeguarding Initiative



True Sport
Mental Health & Wellbeing Initiative



True Sport
Respectful Relationships Initiative



True Sport
Sideline Behaviour Initiative

Sideline

Behaviour

Parents play an invaluable role in club and community sports. Occasionally, however, some become over emotional, verbally abusive and sometimes even physically aggressive. It's important that the inappropriate actions of a few parents don't ruin the sporting experience for everyone else.

- Play By The Rules -

Clubs have a legal responsibility to address behaviours that offend community standards or are against the law (e.g., racial vilification, sexual harassment, criminal or common assault).

- Play by the Rules -

SportWest was approached by a number of Member organisations who had reported an increase of negative sideline behaviour incidents.



**THERE IS NO PLACE
FOR POOR SIDELINE
BEHAVIOUR**

‘Monkey See Monkey Do’: University of South Australia Study

- 32% of participants reported never seeing any negative behaviours from their parents.
- 69% reported some form of negative behaviour from their parents (even if rarely).
- 18% said their parents sometimes or often said bad things about the way they played.
- 17% said their parents sometimes to very often yelled at the referee during the game after a bad call was made.
- **Positive sideline parent behaviours** were linked with more **prosocial youth behaviours** towards both their teammates and opponents.
- **Negative sideline parent behaviours** were linked with more **antisocial youth behaviours** towards both their teammates and opponents.

“...parents as spectators on the sport sidelines play an important role in shaping their child's behaviour.”

Dr. Alyson Crozier University of South Australia

“Children get far more enjoyment from playing sport when a parent is present, encouraging, and supportive. Such behaviours also help build a child’s self-esteem, and improve their life skills and wellbeing,” Dr Crozier says.

“In our research, we found that when a player perceives positive support from a parent, the player also reported having positive sports attitudes and behaviours.

Yet, when a parent engages in antisocial behaviours, their child will more likely behave similarly, potentially as frustration and aggression to their teammates and opponents.”

CAMPAIGN VIDEO



TRUE SPORT SIDELINE BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVE

Audience:

- All participants (players, volunteers, coaches, referees, parents, spectators, club administrators).

Key Messages:

- *“There’s no place for poor sideline behaviour. Let Us Play.”*
- *“Together, let’s build and maintain a culture of respect in our sport.”*
- *“True is being your best. Everyone. Every Sport.”*



CAMPAIGN CALL TO ACTION

Our aim:

To unite and spread the message that there's no place for poor side-line behaviour in sport.

Campaign eToolkit:

- Campaign Timeline
- Sideline Behaviour Video
- eSignature
- True Sport Club Respect Resources
- A4 & A3 Posters
- Social Media Tiles





True Sport X Club Respect resources

- AWESOME Game Plan
- SMART Steps
- Club Roles
- Respectful Behaviours - Case Study

Full suite of resources can be found on the True Sport website - [Truesport.com.au](https://truesport.com.au)



 True Sport
Sideline Behaviour Initiative

 CLUB RESPECT

CLUB RESPECT OVERVIEW OF THE
A.W.E.S.O.M.E GAME PLAN

Club Respect helps sports clubs build and maintain a deep culture of respect.

To develop a culture of respect clubs must build on each element of the A.W.E.S.O.M.E. Game Plan.

Respect is the best defence against abuse, violent attitudes and behaviours. Get this right at club level and people thrive, feel safe, and enjoy the pleasures and opportunities that sport provides.

Transforming a club's culture is rewarding, well worth the effort. But first we need to understand that nothing magical occurs here. Tinkering at the edges is no answer. Changing words here and there in some club documents just won't cut it. Strong foundations are the key.

We're talking real intent, real purpose, real coverage, real change. Everyone has to be involved in this journey, from canteen volunteer to the president.

When people are empowered to positively influence those around them, they become change makers in their clubs and in the wider community. Whether you're a coach, committee member, team manager, president, volunteer, parent, supporter or player, Club Respect gives you simple and effective strategies to make a positive impact in and around your club.

The following page is an excerpt of practical tips from the Club Respect website.
Find more videos, how-to guides and other resources for you and your club

LEARN MORE | [TRUESPORT.COM.AU](https://truesport.com.au)

hello@clubrespect.org.au | (03) 9642 0422 | www.clubrespect.org.au | @ Club Respect 2023
Club Respect is a national firsts committee initiative by the Disability Trust for Women & Girls, a unit of the Victorian Women's Trust in Training.

SIDELINE BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVE | A.W.E.S.O.M.E. GAME PLAN | 112

a.w.e.s.o.m.e game plan

- A. ALIGNMENT OF VALUES
- W. WORKING WELL WITH OTHERS
- E. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- S. SUCCESS JUDGED THE RIGHT WAY
- O. OWNERSHIP
- M. MODELLING RESPECT
- E. EQUITY AND FAIRNESS



The image shows a document titled "CLUB RESPECT OVERVIEW OF THE A.W.E.S.O.M.E GAME PLAN" held by two clips. The document features the True Sport logo and a "CLUB RESPECT" target icon. The text on the document includes:

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SIDELINE BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVE | A.W.E.S.O.M.E. GAME PLAN | 112

De-Escalation

1. Stay calm and grounded
2. Give space and respect personal boundaries
3. Use supportive language
4. Acknowledge feelings – don't argue
5. Reduce stimulation
6. Know when to step away or call for help
7. After the moment: support and reflect

DE-ESCALATION: KEEPING CALM ON AND OFF THE FIELD

1 Stay calm and grounded

- Keep your voice low, slow, and steady
- Breathe deeply – your calm helps calm others
- Avoid reacting emotionally or matching aggression
- Avoid a battle, don't provoke

2 Give space and respect personal boundaries

- Don't crowd or touch the person
- Stay at least 2 metres away if they seem agitated
- Maintain open, non-threatening body language

3 Use supportive language

- Stay respectful and avoid blaming or lecturing
- For example: "I can see you're angry, tell me what's going on..."

Use phrases like:

- "How can I help you?"
- "What do you need right now?"
- "I hear you."
- "I can see why you are angry."
- "Tell me what's going on."

4 Acknowledge feelings – don't argue

- Validate their emotions, even if you don't agree
"I can see this is really frustrating for you."
- Don't tell someone to "calm down" – show it through your own behaviour; both feet grounded, hands gently open and at your side, deep, slow, controlled breathing, blank expression
- Give them time to express their feelings without judgement or interruptions

5 Reduce stimulation

- Move to a quieter area if safe to do so
- Minimise the number of people involved
- Keep instructions simple and clear

6 Know when to step away or call for help

- If safety is at risk, step back and seek support
- Encourage all club members and family to move away from the crisis and to not engage physically or verbally
- Alert club leaders or call 000 if violence or threats occur
- It's okay to walk away if things escalate beyond your control

7 After the moment: support and reflect

- Check in later when things have cooled down
- Offer support or professional help if needed
- Reflect with the team – what worked, what didn't

De-escalation is a skill – practice helps.

Your calm, respectful approach can change the outcome.

**Need help? Lifeline: 13 11 14
In danger? Call 000**

Train leaders in **Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid** through Richmind WA: rw.org.au

Remember:
An escalated adult cannot de-escalate another escalated adult or child



SCENARIO CONTEXT

- U14 Community Match
- Score is 1-1
- 10 minutes remaining
- Tensions are rising between both teams
- The referee is 16 years old
- There are spectators for both teams on the sideline





STEP 1 FRUSTRATION STARTS

Team A player makes a strong tackle on Team B player.

“Ref! That’s a foul!”

The referee waves play on.

“You’re letting them get away with everything!”

No club official intervenes.

Is this just normal game day frustration?

**SPORT
WEST**

STEP 2 TARGETING A PLAYER

A couple minutes later the same Team A player makes another challenge.

“Number 7, stop playing dirty!”

“Ref, you need to control that kid!”

The player looks toward the sideline.

The referee hesitates before restarting play.

At this point, should someone from the club step in?



STEP 3 COACHES GET INVOLVED

Team A coach shouts towards sideline:

“Leave the kid alone!”

Team B coach responds:

“Maybe tell your players to stop fouling!”

Parents from both sidelines start reacting.

Players begin watching the sideline instead of the game.

What just changed in the environment?

STEP 4 THE BREAKING POINT

A late tackle occurs near the sideline.

“That’s disgusting! Send him off!”

One parent walks closer to the field yelling toward the referee.

The referee stops play.

Players are now standing around watching the sideline argument.

What should happen now?

STEP 5 AFTER THE MATCH

The referee files a report noting:

Spectator abuse

Parents targeting players

Escalating behaviour between coaches

The incident is reviewed by the competition body, and the Three Strike Policy is implemented.

The club is asked:

What steps did you take to manage spectator behaviour?

DEBRIEF

HOW COULD THIS SITUATION BEEN PREVENTED?

Step 1 – Early parent comments

Step 2 – Targeting a player

Step 3 – Coach escalation

Step 4 – Referee stops play

Step 5 – Match report

Clubs that intervene early prevent Steps 2 onwards all together

REFLECTION

If this happened at your club tomorrow, who would step in?

Would they feel confident doing it?



THANK

www.truesport.com.au

YOU

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