

MACQUARIE FOOTBALL LIMITED      A.C.N. 050 293 153

NEWCASTLE FOOTBALL LIMITED      A.C.N. 052 054 163

HUNTER VALLEY FOOTBALL INCORPORATED

## **CODES OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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

Issued                      **February 2012**  
Review                      February 2013

# CODES OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

## 1.0 FAIR PLAY POLICY

The Zone Association is committed to fair play for all involved with the sport of football. The sport must be enjoyable by all and this only happen when every person at the event – players, coaches, administrators, officials, spectators, supporters, media, parents - conducts himself/herself in a sportsmanlike manner and follows certain key principles that constitute a code of behaviour for that specific person.

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 Zone Association promotes the positive behaviours which only improve the levels of enjoyment and fulfilment of on-field and off-field persons.

The Zone Association endorses the following codes of behaviour and requires that Member Clubs shall disseminate the relevant code to persons involved in football sporting events.

## 2.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – PLAYER

- 2.01 Play by the rules of the game.
- 2.02 Never argue with the referee or any other official there to help you. If you disagree, ask your captain, coach or manager to courteously approach the official during a break or after the competitive event.
- 2.03 A good player is a self-disciplined person; stay in control of your temper always. Verbal abuse of officials, sledging other players, deliberately distracting or provoking an opponent are behaviours that are neither acceptable nor permissible.
- 2.04 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.
- 2.05 Be a good sport – respect and applaud all good plays whether they are made by your team or by the opposition.
- 2.06 Treat all participants in football events as you would like to be treated. Never bully, take 'cheap shots' or take unfair advantage of another competitor.
- 2.07 Cooperate with your team coach, team-mates and opponents – without them there would be no competition event.
- 2.08 Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit, not just to please other persons such as coaches, parents etc.
- 2.09 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability level, cultural background or religion.

### **3.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - COACH**

- 3.01 Remember that 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.
- 3.02 Operate within the rules and spirit of soccer football and teach your players respect for rules and authority by word and example.
- 3.03 Be reasonable in your demands on players' time, energy and enthusiasm; remember that unreasonable demands rarely bear fruit.
- 3.04 Ensure that the time players spend with you is a positive experience; all players are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.
- 3.05 Avoid overplaying the talented players; the just-average need and deserve equal time.
- 3.06 Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all players.
- 3.07 Display control, respect and professionalism to all involved with football – this includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators – and encourage players to do the same.
- 3.08 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.
- 3.09 Be positive in your approach to players – avoid harsh criticism or ridicule. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player regardless of the player's gender, ability, religion or cultural background.
- 3.10 Obtain appropriate qualifications and keep up to date with the latest coaching practices and the principles of growth and development of young persons.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 Restrict any physical contact with players to that appropriate to the situation and necessary for the player's skill development.
- 3.13 Support every effort to rid the sport of football of verbal and physical abuse.

#### **4.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - ADMINISTRATOR**

- 4.01 Involve players and young persons in planning, leadership, evaluation and decision making related to the sporting activity of football.
- 4.02 Provide equal opportunities for all who wish to do so to participate in football activities.
- 4.03 Create pathways for young persons to participate in football not just as players but as a coach, referee, administrator etc.
- 4.04 Ensure that rules, equipment, duration of matches and training schedules are modified to suit the age, ability and maturity level of young players.
- 4.05 Ensure the provision of quality supervision and instruction for all players but particularly for young players.
- 4.06 Remember that people, particularly young people, participate for their enjoyment and benefit – do not overemphasise awards.
- 4.07 Help coaches and officials highlight appropriate behaviour and skill development and assist in improving the standards of coaching and officiating.
- 4.08 Ensure that everyone involved in the sport of football emphasises fair play and not winning at all costs.
- 4.09 Provide a code of behaviour sheet for spectators, officials, parents, coaches, supporters and players and encourage all participants to follow this code.
- 4.10 Remember to set an example - your behaviour and comments should at all times be positive and supportive.
- 4.11 Make it clear that abuse, including verbal abuse, of any persons involved in football is unacceptable and shall result in disciplinary action.
- 4.12 Support the implementation of national junior sport policy and the specific national policy of the sport of football.
- 4.13 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person involved with the sport of football, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.

## **5.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - OFFICIAL**

- 5.01 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.
- 5.02 Compliment and encourage all participants.
- 5.03 Be consistent, objective and courteous in making and handing down your decisions.
- 5.04 Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- 5.05 Emphasise the spirit of the game rather than the errors.
- 5.06 Encourage and promote rule changes which will make participation more enjoyable.
- 5.07 Be a good sport yourself – actions speak louder than words.
- 5.08 Keep up to date with the latest trends in officiating and the principles of growth and development of players, particularly younger players.
- 5.09 Place the safety and welfare of all participants above any other considerations.
- 5.10 Remember that you set an example – your behaviour and comments should be positive and supportive – avoid negative acts.
- 5.11 Give all players a 'fair go' regardless of their gender, ability, age, cultural background or religion.

## **6.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - SPECTATORS**

- 6.01 Remember that players participate in sport for their enjoyment and benefit, not yours!
- 6.02 Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Be prepared to congratulate all participants on their performance regardless of the match outcome.
- 6.03 Respect the decisions of officials and encourage all players, particularly young persons, to do the same.
- 6.04 Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake; positive comments are motivational whereas negative comments are destructive.
- 6.05 Condemn the use of violence in any form, physical or verbal, whether by players, spectators, coaches, officials or administrators.
- 6.06 Show respect for your team's opponents; without them there would be no game.
- 6.07 Encourage players to follow the rules and accept the official's decisions; teach players that questioning of or dissenting from decisions of officials is unacceptable at any time.

- 6.08 Do not use foul language, sledge or in any way harass players, coaches, officials or administrators over any perceived disagreement over interpretation of rules.
- 6.09 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.

## **7.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - SUPPORTERS**

- 7.01 Encourage players, particularly young persons, to develop basic skills in a variety of sports and discourage over-specialisation in one event, sport or playing position.
- 7.02 Help to create opportunities to teach appropriate sports behaviour as well as basic skills.
- 7.03 Support the concept of players, particularly young persons, being made aware of the positive benefits of participation in football sporting activities.
- 7.04 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.
- 7.05 Help young players in particular understand the differences between the junior competition in which they participate and professional sport.
- 7.06 Provide support and understanding for all young persons and players in general to participate in administration, coaching and refereeing as well as playing.
- 7.07 Support the implementation of the national junior sport policy and the specific national policy of the sport of football.
- 7.08 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability level, age, cultural background or religion.
- 7.09 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.

## **8.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - MEDIA**

- 8.01 Provide coverage of young people's and adult competitive football sport events.
- 8.02 Be aware of the differences between adult, professional and modified young people's football sporting events.
- 8.03 Do not highlight isolated incidents of inappropriate sporting behaviour.
- 8.04 Focus on fair play and honest efforts by all players.
- 8.05 Do not place unfair expectations on young players – they are not miniature professionals.
- 8.06 Describe and report of the problems of young persons participating in organized sport.

- 8.07 Focus on the abilities, not the disabilities, of players, particularly young players.
- 8.08 Avoid reinforcing stereotypical views on the involvement of males and females in the sport of football.
- 8.09 Give equal time and space to the reporting of male and female football events.
- 8.10 Familiarise yourself with the National Junior Football sport policy.
- 8.11 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants, regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.

## **9.0 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - PARENTS**

- 9.01 Remember that young people participate in football for their pleasure and enjoyment, not yours.
- 9.02 Encourage young persons to participate, do not force them.
- 9.03 Focus of the young person's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing.
- 9.04 Encourage young persons to always play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility, verbal abuse or violence.
- 9.05 Never ridicule or yell at a young person for making a mistake of losing a competitive event.
- 9.06 Remember that young persons learn best by positive example. Appreciate good performances and skilful plays by all participants.
- 9.07 Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from football sporting activities.
- 9.08 Respect officials' decisions and teach young players to do likewise.
- 9.09 Show control, respect and appreciation to all involved with football – 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 volunteer persons, your child would not be able to participate in football sporting activity.
- 9.10 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.
- 9.11 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 and helping to create a positive sporting environment. Consider and deal with each of the following six important actions by parents:

- 9.11.01 understand what young persons want from football sport – discuss this with your child – focus on what he/she likes most about the game;
- 9.11.02 encourage fair play – young persons learn the principles of fair play of respect, integrity and fairness through their involvement with football – be a good role model;
- 9.11.03 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 abuse of anyone;
- 9.11.04 respect the coach – interact with courtesy through the team manager and leave the coaching to the coach, regardless of whether you agree or disagree;
- 9.11.05 respect the referee and officials – these persons 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;
- 9.11.06 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, which can be enforced at football sporting events.

## **10.1 APPENDICES**

The following documents which are taken from NSW Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, are attached as Appendices 1 - 4:

APPENDIX 1	The FIFA Handshake
APPENDIX 2	Ground Official (Duty Officer) – Role and Responsibilities
APPENDIX 3	Parent's Pledge – Parent Code of Conduct
APPENDIX 4	About Sport Rage - A Prevention Guide for Parents



## 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. This informal structure may replace the formalised FIFA structure but the handshake MUST take place after each match.

## **APPENDIX 2 GROUND OFFICIAL (DUTY OFFICER) – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a parent attending Zone Association/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).

The ground official's (Duty Officer's) first responsibility is to ensure the safety and well-being of the referee, then to the players and to the spectators of the match.

Specifically, each match day ground official (Duty Officer) should:

1. make themselves known to the match referee and coaches prior to the start of play;
2. be visible at all times during the game (wear the fluorescent vest);
3. give warnings and enforce compliance of codes of conduct with players, spectators, officials and coaches;
4. evict persons displaying inappropriate behaviour from the venue if appropriate;
5. notify the police in the event of criminal conduct;
6. complete incident reports where necessary.
7. commence duty 30 minutes prior to the first match and finish duty 30 minutes after the last scheduled match

### **TIPS FOR THE GROUND OFFICIAL (DUTY OFFICER):**

1. Be assertive, not aggressive.
2. Do not corner a person in an emotional state – leave them with an option where they can still choose to do the right thing.
3. If a situation is out of control – you may ask the referee or linesperson to stop the game until the situation is defused.
4. 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.
5. If you have a conflict situation, ask the complainant to take up their issue with an official the following week or in writing – not in front of the players.
6. Enlist the support of the other ground official (Duty Officer) if your first attempt fails.
7. Enlist the support of the team managers and coaches.
8. 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.

You should familiarize yourself with this code and pledge as they apply to you as a parent – 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, 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, officials and other volunteers who give their time to conduct the event for my child.
- \* I will help when asked by a coach or official.
- \* 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 drink alcohol at junior matches or arrive at the field intoxicated.

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

## **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 persons 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, it can 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.

### **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:-

1. Understand what children want from sport.

Sport provides many valuable learning experiences, but for most young persons 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 persons 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 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 refereeing 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 refereeing concerns after the game, out of view
  - \* Don't use bad language 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 referees and 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 Zone Association 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 Zone Association 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 Zone Association or its Member Club is entitled to discipline persons who breach the codes, in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

- Tips:
- \* Support and uphold the Zone Association code of conduct for Parents (the 'anti-sledge pledge')
  - \* Do not drink alcohol at junior matches or arrive at the field intoxicated

## DEALING WITH SPORT RAGE

Despite your best intentions, sport rage incidents will occur. While it is the responsibility of the Zone Association/Member Club to deal with incidents, parents need to understand and support the process.

1. Codes of conduct can be enforced.

Familiarise yourself with the Zone Association's codes of conduct for players, coaches, officials, administrators, supporters 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 Zone 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 Zone Association 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 counseling session. You may need to assist the Zone Association 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.

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

People can only enter the field of play with the permission of the referee. Referees 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 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 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 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, officials, supporters, administrators, spectators, parents) 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. Club officials are able to exercise reasonable force in carrying out such action, but not disproportionate to the conduct of the offender.

Issued  
Review

February 2012  
February 2013