PLAY BY THE RULES MAGAZINE

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Issue 12

Communities build sport: three things we can learn from the Fiji Volleyball Association

The power of sport: building social bridges and breaking down cultural barriers

Just how powerful is sport?

Plus — Best practice disciplinary procedures | Inclusive Swimming Framework | Cover the athlete | and much more …

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# The Editor

It’s the final Play by the Rules magazine of the year would you believe, and what a big and eventful year it has been. We’ve had 176,363 visits to our websites and, impressively, during this year 18,526 online courses have been completed. Our subscribers have grown from 5,000 just 12 months ago to over 15,500 at the time of writing. There have been over 14,000 magazine reads over the past five issues with more than 25,000 now in total. Our Facebook page now has 4,679 likes. Facebook has proven to be a particularly useful and effective way to get our messages and resources across. So very happy with all that!

And there are big plans for 2016, but I won’t let too much out of the bag for now. Please enjoy and share this final issue of the year. All that remains is to say a sincere thanks to all our partners, supporters, followers, readers and subscribers. You are the people that are doing most to help keep sport safe, fair and inclusive. Keep up the great work!

See you in 2016.

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Peter Downs

Manager — Play by the Rules

# The Inclusive Swimming Framework and 7 Pillars of Inclusion

In November Swimming Australia launched their Inclusive Swimming Framework. The framework will guide Swimming Australia, its stakeholders and aquatic partners towards achieving full inclusion of people from the diverse array of circumstances and backgrounds in swimming and aquatic activities by knocking down the barriers that may prevent them from accessing the sport.

‘The introduction of the Inclusive Swimming Framework is intended to provide the swimming and aquatics industry with a consistent approach to enabling access and participation. It is an approach that highlights the common factors that contribute to achieving diversity, rather than focusing on difference,’ CEO Mark Anderson said.

A central part of the Inclusive Swimming Framework is the self-assessment tool, the 7 Pillars of Inclusion, developed by Play by the Rules.

‘The 7 Pillars of Inclusion is about giving you a “helicopter” view of inclusion. It looks at the common elements of inclusive practice across different population groups, such as people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians and so on. It’s a framework to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses and it will give you a great starting point in designing strategies for inclusive practice,’ said Michael Woods, Swimming Australia’s Paralympic Pathways Senior Coordinator.

To find out more about the 7 Pillars of Inclusion visit <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/news-centre/hot-topics/1373-7-pillars-explained>

You can see the Inclusive Swimming Framework at <http://www.swimming.org.au/article.php?group_id=13047%20>

# Cover the athlete

A very interesting campaign was launched recently, ‘Cover the athlete’. It features a series of athlete interviews — the kind of interviews that are, unfortunately, quite common. Sexist commentary, inappropriate interview questions, and articles focused on physical appearance not only trivialises a woman’s accomplishments, but also sends a message that her value is based on her looks, not her ability. And it’s much too commonplace.

In the campaign, the sexist questions that are posed to female athletes are instead posed to male athletes. Their reaction is priceless and shows very clearly that sexism is still very much a part of the way we consume sport.

You can see the Cover the athlete video and support the campaign at <http://covertheathlete.com>

# Sports Medicine Australia — Drugs in sport module

Did you know that Sports Medicine Australia offers a number of online courses? One of these courses addresses the issue of drugs in sport. In this module you will develop an awareness of the consequences of drugs in sport and their effects on sporting performance. You will gain a greater awareness of the impact of recreational drugs on sport performance and doping control in sport.

Topics include:

* Recognise the negative effects of alcohol, tobacco smoking and cannabis on health
* Recognise the limitations of non-medical personnel when dealing with medications
* Identify the role of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA)
* Identify what is involved in doping control
* Recognise the roles and responsibilities of athletes involved in doping control.

For more information on Sports Medicine Australia online courses go to <http://sma.org.au/training-courses/online/>

# Communities build sport: three things we can learn from the Fiji Volleyball Federation

In October 2015, Fiji Volleyball won the Beyond Sport award for their efforts in using sport as a platform for social change. In doing so, they came up against a formidable shortlist of Goliaths — the International Tennis Federation, USA’s National Hockey League, and National Rugby League Australia. A few weeks later in Monaco, Fiji Volleyball was also awarded the Peace and Sport prize.

In just two years, Fiji Volleyball has moved from being a small sport federation with a focus on performance-based programs to a world-class community change agent that is growing rapidly. The Australian Government’s Pacific Sports Partnership program has provided much needed funding and technical support for this change, however it is unique development strategies that has set Fiji Volleyball apart.

‘We got people to ask more of our sport, not less,’ said the program manager Ms Semaima Lagilagi.

Here are three strategies that changed the game for Fiji Volleyball.

**1 Design the program for the people who are usually included last**

In Fiji, older women in peri-urban areas are in the highest risk category for developing non-communicable diseases. Fiji Volleyball designed an entry-level program to meet the specific needs of this group. The rationale was that providing a service to a hard to reach group not only makes Fijians healthier and more active, it also opens Fiji Volleyball up to new and diverse funders and partners who will all contribute to a greater investment and interest in the sport.

As the target group of older women began to experience the health and social benefits of playing volleyball, they encouraged their daughters and nieces to play. As more women started to play, more children started to appear at the courts and Fiji Volleyball responded by creating activities for them. Before long, the men in the village requested their own program and Fiji Volleyball was pleased to help out as long as the older women’s program was not compromised. Within just a few months, the entire community was figuring out how to manage the program independently through the newly established Tebara Volleyball Association.

**2 Ask first**

Fiji Volleyball invested in formative behaviour change research. This research gave the organisation information about the concerns, hopes, interests and schedules of the target group as well as the people who influenced their behaviour. It also provided a broader understanding of the cultural and physical environment within which the change would be taking place. The research process had the additional benefit of building a trusting relationship between Fiji Volleyball volunteers and the provincial council, village headmen, men’s and women’s groups and individuals in the village. Fiji Volleyball and members of the village were able to design a program together. The first training session took place just a week later.

**3 Partner with other organisations to address barriers and opportunities**

Fiji Volleyball knew it was best equipped to focus on the sport component of the program, so enlisted the support from partners to address other barriers and opportunities.

One of the most critical partners was the [Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre](http://http//fijiwomen.com/) (FWCC) which addressed gender-based violence issues by facilitating a gender and sport workshop attended by 54 village headmen from the Rewa province. Fiji Volleyball also enlisted the support of the FWCC-trained male advocates to be the face and voice of the program to the men’s groups. By partnering with volleyball, the FWCC was able to reach people who might not ordinarily participate in its campaigns.

Fiji Volleyball also offered the community opportunities to access new or more convenient services. At regular festivals, players could access health checks and electoral and financial management services. Fiji Volleyball volunteers had opportunities to get new skills and qualifications through a training partnership with the Oceania Sport Education Program. In some cases, this led to paid employment and formal training.

The upshot of these activities was that the value of sport was increased in the community due, in part, to the gateway it provided to other services.

The next step for Fiji Volleyball is to offer the opportunity to reap the benefits of physical activity to neighbouring villages in Rewa province.

Kylie Bates, Director, GameChangers

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Beyond Sport Awards:

<http://www.beyondsport.org/awards>

Peace and Sport Awards:

<http://www.peace-sport.org/en/>

Communities build sport. Sport builds communities:

[www.gamechangers.agency](http://www.gamechangers.agency)

# The power of sport: building social bridges and breaking down cultural barriers

Since I was a young boy running around the soccer fields in the Sutherland Shire I always believed without question that sport had the power to change individuals and society in a positive way. My belief continued into adulthood where sport was my conduit for making friendships in Nepal and Vietnam where I taught, and then later in my working life in sport and human rights, where I discovered the value of sport as a ‘conversation starter’ on social issues such as racism, homophobia or gender equity.

We regularly hear politicians and sports leaders sprout the ‘magical’ powers of sport to solve a range of social and development issues, and we all know the famous Nelson Mandela quote which has been rolled out more times than my old Christmas tree:

‘Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.’

While many of us are awed by the pervasive and nearly unshakeable belief in the inherent purity and goodness of sport[[1]](#footnote-1), like all good Christmas tales, it is also a bit of a myth. I began to discover this myself from my work at the Australian Human Rights Commission and with the Australian Sports Commission/Play by the Rules*,* where I witnessed sport’s ‘dark side’ — where inequality, exclusion and structural barriers exist (as they have for a long time) for many disadvantaged groups in our society.

To investigate this further, in 2007 I researched and authored a report for the Commission on cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport titled [*What’s the score?*](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/whats-score). The report compared and contrasted multiple sporting codes to determine what policies, strategies and programs had been implemented to address structural issues and contemporary challenges for Indigenous people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds.

Six years later, I returned to this field for my doctoral thesis to critically analyse what, if anything, had changed. Utilising critical ethnography as the central approach for the research, I investigated the nature, effects and consequences of policies and programs that have been implemented to encourage inclusive and non-discriminatory environments across a number of different sports in Australia. The data was analysed to determine whether sport was effective at breaking down barriers to participation for Indigenous people and those from CaLD backgrounds, and if it could ‘build bridges’ by contributing to wider social, physical and health issues and, in the process, contribute to increased social capital in communities.

Drawing upon the insights and experiences of over 100 survey respondents and 39 interviewees who are directly involved in various capacities in all levels of sport in Australia, the research found that sport is not the magic bullet to cure all social ills that many assume. In fact in many cases sport reaffirms many existing power structures which cause discrimination and inequality.

However, the good news is participation in and through sport can help processes of belonging, trust, reciprocity and inclusion, and if cultivated carefully, sport can be an excellent medium for valuable public discussions and has the potential to assist in positive awareness and debate on wider social, physical and health issues.

I make the conclusion that sport is currently navigating challenging tides. Social demographics are rapidly changing. Organisational and individual behaviours and responses on social and human rights issues are evolving. Traditional organisational cultures are dying and being replaced, and people’s decisions on whether to participate in sport are being challenged by lifestyle demands and increasing competition from online alternatives.

How governments, sporting organisations and the people who manage and engage with participants on a daily basis deal with these waves of change will determine how strongly their sports and clubs emerge in the future, and whether sport continues to retain its hallowed position in this nation’s identity and culture.

For those who are interested in reading more, the full PhD thesis is available free online from Curtin University at <http://espace.library.curtin.edu.au/R?func=dbin-jump-full&local_base=gen01-era02&object_id=229641>

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# How powerful is sport?

It’s easy to romanticise sport. Perhaps this is especially so in Australia where sport seems to be deeply embedded in our national psyche. From as early as many young Australians are able to comprehend full sentences, they are told that sport is the panacea to a long list of problems.

Do you need to learn about self discipline? If so, get into sport. Do you need to learn about teamwork? Sport is the best answer. Do you need to exercise more and have a healthy diet? Sport will teach you the way. Mateship, camaraderie and inclusion — sport is the best pathway to these ideals. Or so we’ve been repeatedly told.

Upon this rhetoric we’ve gorged until the narrative of sport as a kind of cultural elixir is so well established that it may seem strange to question it at all, but question it we must.

Add stirring images of our national sporting heroes and it isn’t difficult to understand how the lucky country appears to habitually and unquestioningly support sport.

Millions of tax dollars flood into sport every year in this country. And when public money is being spent it is imperative that the grandiose claims about the virtues of sport are accompanied by hard evidence.

This is where things get interesting. For all the assumptions we seem to hold about the power of sport to positively affect our society, there does not appear to be conclusive scientific research to support these claims with confidence.

And so I’m forced to ask if hitting a ball or making a tackle really is that useful? Is running fast or jumping high actually worthy of the privilege these attributes afford those best able to execute these feats? I remain sceptical.

Being a professional athlete for 12 years did much to scrub away any illusions I had about sport. At the peak of my career while playing for the Wallabies I was often treated with the kind of reverence that I can now only describe as cringeworthy. You might ask why I didn’t simply sit back and appreciate the special treatment I was afforded by well-meaning admirers and fans, so let me state for the record that I often did exactly that. Yet as I got older instances of public veneration in my favour made me increasingly uncomfortable.

Perhaps I began to recognise the opportunity cost I was inadvertently responsible for. Which is to say that every sports fan *could* rather be a fan of great scientists, artists, philosophers or freedom fighters.

As American theoretical physicist and string theorist Brian Greene says, ‘When kids look up to great scientists the way they do to great musicians and actors, civilisation will jump to the next level’.

I could not agree more. Perhaps I’m simply frustrated by the misallocation of our moral resources, and how the hero worshipping of athletes appears to capture this confusion.

Which is not to say that sport isn’t valuable, but simply that we should proportion our admiration of it in step with the outcomes it can and does achieve, mostly at grassroots level.

Coaches, parents and teachers who understand that every participant in sport deserves support, understanding and empathy are able to utilise sport as a tool to enhance young lives. Conversely, adults involved in sport who fail to see its primary function is to produce fun experiences, are doing themselves and the children they interact with a great disservice.

How powerful is sport? It is as powerful as we make it, and that is a responsibility and privilege that none of us involved in our favourite pastime should squander.

Article by

Clyde Rathbone

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# Best practice disciplinary procedures

The need to take disciplinary action against players, officials and other participants is an issue that any sporting organisation can face. This article gives an overview of what ‘best-practice’ disciplinary procedures look like, and highlights why it is important to ensure disciplinary proceedings are conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

**Ensuring the organisation has a legal basis for taking disciplinary action**

It is important to note that if a sporting organisation wishes to be able to impose club or competition rules, and sanctions for breaches of those rules (together 'disciplinary procedures'), it will need to ensure it has

a legal basis for doing so. The most effective way of achieving this is to ensure that anyone who is involved with the organisation, or participates in a competition run by it, is required to comply with the disciplinary procedures as a condition of their engagement or participation. For example, when a coach or player joins the organisation, they should be asked to agree, in writing, to comply with all rules, and acknowledge that any disciplinary procedures adopted by the organisation are binding on them.

**Conducting disciplinary proceedings**

When developing and implementing disciplinary procedures, sporting organisations should ensure that principles of natural justice are observed. This means disciplinary proceedings should provide participants with a fair hearing, within a reasonable timeframe, conducted by an independent and impartial decision-maker.

What each of these things might look like in practice can vary, but at a minimum, the following elements should be incorporated.

**1 Notifying the person**

A person should always be told that they are facing disciplinary action, and should be provided with as much information as possible, including:

* the relevant rule that is said to have been breached, including a full description of the relevant conduct, and the date, time and place it occurred
* the evidence that will be used to determine whether the rule has been breached (for example, a match official’s report) and copies of that evidence where possible
* the steps in the disciplinary process (including hearing dates and times, and possible sanctions)
* the options the person has to respond (for example, accept a sanction or attend a hearing).

This ensures the person has the information they need to assess their options and prepare for any hearing.

**2 Conducting the disciplinary process**

Disciplinary hearings should be conducted at a time and place that is suitable for all parties, to ensure the person has the opportunity to attend, provide their version of events and be heard on any other relevant

matters.

The organisation should consider whether the person is allowed to have legal or other representation, but it is best practice to allow the person to be assisted or represented, particularly where there are compelling reasons (for example, the person is a minor, or there are language barriers).

It is best practice for disciplinary matters to be heard and determined by a tribunal comprising at least three members, particularly where the alleged conduct or the potential sanctions are serious, as this reduces the risk of bias and assists in achieving a fair and transparent process. One member should be appointed as chair to ensure there is structure to the process, and to guide the tribunal in weighing up the facts, considering the relevant rule and making a well-reasoned determination.

It is important that all information to be considered by the tribunal is provided to the person, and they are advised of the possible sanctions that could be imposed if a breach of the rules is found to have occurred. The person should be given the opportunity to respond, including in writing.

Where the organisation’s rules provide a range of sanctions, the organisation should ensure the tribunal members understand, and only apply, available sanctions. Tribunal members should also be required to

create a written record of their decision, including reasons.

**3 Advising the person of the decision**

Once the tribunal has made a decision, the person should be advised of this decision, including the tribunal's reasons, and any sanction that has been imposed. Providing the person with this information assists them to understand how the tribunal has arrived at its decision, and consider whether there might be any grounds for appeal.

**4 Appeal rights**

Providing an avenue for appeal is also an important part of any best-practice disciplinary procedure. The procedures should outline what appeal rights exist (including review of a tribunal’s decision, or the sanction imposed), and should require a new tribunal be convened to hear the appeal proceedings. The same principles of natural justice should be observed in any appeal.

**Concluding remarks**

Conducting fair and transparent disciplinary proceedings is important, because where proceedings or appeals are not conducted in a way that is consistent with principles of natural justice, the individual concerned may have grounds to ask a court to review the decision.

If your organisation needs assistance in relation to its disciplinary procedures, ANZSLA maintains a list of legal practitioners in each state and territory who may be able to assist, as well as a list of members who

have indicated their willingness to participate on sports tribunals. Both lists can be accessed on the ANZSLA website at <http://anzsla.com/content/legal-issues>.

# Perspectives

**Social model of disability helps find solutions**

In November we published an article asking the question ‘do coaches need knowledge of impairment to coach athletes with disabilities?’# The article stirred a lot of debate and was shared 175 times on social media. Underlying the debate were assumptions related to a concept or way of thinking that has been championed in the disability community, particularly in the United Kingdom but also in Australia, for years. It has also been used in the sports industry since the mid-1990s.

The concept is fairly straightforward and is called the social model of disability. People do not have a disability. They may have an impairment that may, or may not, impact on their ability to perform a task. Furthermore, the disadvantage associated with any inability to perform a task is not primarily related to impairment. The disadvantage rests within the environment and the societal context where the activity is being performed. As Alva Noe\* recently put it ‘you are *disabled* by an environment that has been engineered with other kinds of people in mind. You don’t need legs or arms to get around or be mobile. But you do need legs or arms to climb stairs or get up onto couches’.

In sport, you don’t necessarily need legs to complete a 100-metre race. You can use wheels or prosthetics. You don’t need sight to play cricket. You don’t need hearing to play rugby. It’s the rules of the game, the accepted norms of participation, the way in which we teach and coach, or the equipment we use, that disadvantages people and restricts their participation.

For coaches, administrators and anyone involved in the organisation of sport, the social model of disability can be a useful tool to help look for solutions. Look what actually disadvantages people. Look beyond the impairment and consider the disadvantages that are imposed on people as a result of the environment they are in.

# <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/news-centre/hot-topics/1453-do-coaches-need-knowledge-of-impairment-to-coach>

\* Alva Noe - <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2015/12/06/458454543/physical-disability-and-engineering-of-environments>

# Online course update

**Child protection**

No matter what your position within a sporting club or organisation — coach, administrator, player, volunteer, parent, official — you have a vital role to play in ensuring that children can enjoy their sport in a protected and safe environment. It is not somebody else’s responsibility. It’s yours.

The Play by the Rules Child Protection online course has an interactive ‘click and show’ section that outlines the various responsibilities of the parent, the coach, the player and the administrator.

Once you’ve read about your responsibilities, you are challenged on how you fit into the bigger picture of your club or sporting organisation. Do you believe that if you follow your responsibilities, what you do can make a difference?

A 360-degree view says that what you do in your role, plus what you expect of others around you, and what they expect of you ALL go into making a successful child-safe environment.

To access the free online child protection course go to <http://learning.ausport.gov.au>

# Resource profile

**Safeguarding the Integrity of Sport ebooks**

Following the series of state and territory forums addressing issues of doping, match-fixing and the use of supplements at a grassroots level of sport conducted earlier this year, we have recently released the Safeguarding Integrity ebooks. The ebooks are edited transcripts of the expert presentations from the NSW forum conducted in May and include the important slides used by each presenter. The full transcript is 73 pages, but you can download the smaller individual ebooks addressing anti-doping, match-fixing, and supplements and image-enhancing substances.

These ebooks cover a lot of ground and are a unique ‘first’ resource in this area focused on grassroots sport.

They are free to download at <http://pbtr.com.au/r/library>

# Infographic of the month

Sport England has produced a series of interesting infographics on disability sport. The infographics depict Sport England’s investment in disability sport, the number of people with disability versus the number of people with disability playing sport, and compared to the general number of people playing sport. It also produces a breakdown of participants by age, gender and impairment group and the top five sports in which people participate. You can find a wealth of information in six infographics at <http://www.sportengland.org/our-work/disability/disability-infographics/>

# Subscribe to Play by the Rules

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

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

# Back issues

You can access each back issue of this magazine by visiting this page on the Play by the Rules website. All the feature articles and significant news items are listed here so you can access the resources that interest you.

**Share and spread the word**

One easy way to keep up to date and support safe, fair and inclusive sport is to share Play by the Rules across social media.

<http://facebook.com/playbytherules/>

<http://twitter.com/playbytherules/>

<http://soundcloud.com/playbytherules/>

1. Sports sociologist Jay Coakley (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)