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Plus

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THE EDITOR

Welcome to the winter issue of the Play by the Rules magazine. Following the launch of the new platform in February we continue to make improvements and add resources and information to help keep your sport safe, fair and inclusive.

One of the improvements we have made are the interactive scenarios. These have always been very popular, and there's a quick insight and link to the scenarios in this magazine. Also in this issue Margot Foster gives 7 tips for good governance, we look at the 'mercy rule' in sport and ask if it's a help or a hindrance, and Clyde Rathbone considers how players and spectators react when under the microscope.

There's also news from our friends at Gymnastics Victoria, ANZSLA and Good Sports. Enjoy!



Peter Downs
Manager - Play by the Rules

Talk 'n Tumble

Unity in sport stems from inclusivity.

Gymnastics Victoria's initiative 'Therapists in Gymnastics', gives occupational therapists the opportunity to provide therapy in gymnastics clubs, enabling people with disability to break through the barriers of preconceived limitations and participate in a world-class sport.

Naomi Tesdorpf has integrated Gymnastics Victoria's initiative into her own program, Talk 'n Tumble, at Eastern Gymnastics Club.

A gymnastics coach from the age of 16, and now a qualified occupational therapist, she is fusing her passion with her work.



Naomi was inspired by Spectra Gymnastics in Oregon, which exclusively runs gymnastics programs for children and teens with autism and related disorders, understanding that 'kids get more out of it than just gymnastics'.

It was while coaching gymnastics classes for children with a disability at Balwyn and Eastern gymnastics clubs, that Naomi identified an opportunity to further expand occupational therapy into the gymnastics community.



'Gymnastics and occupational therapy just make sense,' says Naomi.

Talk 'n Tumble will run at Eastern Gymnastics Club and will incorporate a five-week gymnastics-based social skills group program for kinder-aged children.

It specifically combines occupational therapy and gymnastics, designed for children to develop emotional self-awareness, executive functioning skills and social thinking in a fun and safe environment.

For coaches and occupational therapists such as Naomi, it's a rewarding experience.

'Occupational therapy is about enabling participation, developing independence, and motivating people to do what they need or want to be able to do in a creative and personal way,' Naomi says.

By integrating therapy into the positive sensory environment of a gymnastics club, Talk 'n Tumble will enable children with disabilities to feel a sense of mastery as social thinkers and gymnasts.

Visit www.gymnasticsvictoria.org.au for more about Therapists in Gymnastics or www.talkntumble.com.au for more about Talk 'n Tumble.

Celebrating the safe way

Everybody loves a club function. They're a great chance to celebrate the club, get together with team-mates and build camaraderie and team morale.

We celebrate for lots of different reasons — special events, special people and special days. These events are an important part of our lifestyle and vital to the ongoing success of clubs. They're also a great opportunity to acknowledge the incredible efforts of players, volunteers and supporters — those people that make our club community so special.

The best celebrations are events where everyone feels safe and involved. Ensuring all club members understand expected behaviour is important. Whether at a club event, or representing the club in the broader community, all club members should be proud to celebrate their team in a respectful way, representing the club in a manner which reflects the club's values and policies.

Setting clear expectations benefits everyone. It helps to support players and officials to stay safe and to celebrate without putting themselves or others at increased risk of injury or illness. It also helps to protect clubs from liability



by ensuring there are key procedures for everyone to refer to in the case of an incident.

At Good Sports, we are all about acknowledging achievements and we encourage clubs to get together and celebrate. After all, the best part about playing sport is the chance to be part of a team, sharing the joy of sport with the entire club community.

One of the keys to promoting safe celebrations is communication — it is important that everyone is playing from the same game plan.

Having a Code of Conduct or Alcohol Management Policy is a great way to set clear expectations for club members and guests. But a policy is no good if nobody knows about it. Clearly communicating policy expectations to club members is as important as the policy itself.

Good Sports has put together some resources to use and share around the club to encourage members and guests to follow club policy and celebrate the safe way. Together we can create positive change and inspire a healthier sporting nation!

Our [Safe Celebrations Toolkit](#) includes:

- **Safe celebrations guide:** This guide outlines the importance of hosting safe celebrations in more detail. This includes info on the risks associated with club celebrations and what your club can do to help protect itself from liability.
- **Safe celebrations team talk guide & speaking notes:** Use these resources to help start the conversation about safe celebrations at your club
- **Safe celebrations tips:** Practical tips for you to share with club members and guests.
- **Newsletter copy:** Use this template to build awareness about safe celebrations at your club in the lead-up to any club events.
- **Social media messages:** Spread the safe celebrations message on your club's social media pages using these digital resources.
- **Good sports function guidelines:** These guidelines have heaps of information to support clubs to host safe celebrations, including updated information regarding standard drink restrictions and practical strategies to help reduce risky drinking in clubs.

Putting in place these strategies will not only help to keep your club members and guests safe, it will also help to prepare and protect your club in the case of any incidents. Be proud of your club and your policies and make sure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to celebrating your awesome club and community.

ABOUT GOOD SPORTS

Good Sports is Australia's largest and longest running health initiative in community sports. A program of the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Good Sports aims to build stronger communities by championing positive change and helping to create family-friendly thriving clubs. Today, we're proud to have more than 7,500 clubs a part of the Good Sports team. Sporting clubs have a unique ability to positively influence club members and the wider community. Good Sports is all about providing clubs with the resources and support they need to make their club environments even stronger and safer places for locals to play and enjoy sport; improving responsible alcohol consumption, safe transport and in some states nutrition and mental health.

Find out more and join [Good Sports](#) today.



Governance is just a word for doing business better

Governance is just a fancy word for doing the business of your sport's board or committee better.

Many people run a mile or glaze over when the word 'governance' is mentioned. It is too hard, too scary, and can only be understood by lawyers and not by the ordinary dummy. It involves constitutions and legalese and incomprehensible jargon which should be avoided at all costs.

The following tips have been written to help you and your board/committee do your elected job as well as you possibly can.

1. At the board table – it's all about the conversation

The chairman or president manages the meeting with the assistance of the CEO or EO if there is one. The chairman does not make decisions and does not direct members to do certain tasks. The chairman is not the boss, but guides and leads the conversations through the agenda, balancing the amount of time spent on each item with the time allotted for the meeting.

The chairman should ensure there is no 'sunflower bias' where they dominate, have the first word and maybe the last, and cause everyone else to shrink into silence

under the canopy of the biggest flower at the table. After all, when the leader of any organisation makes a statement, it is a hardy underling who might challenge or disagree with what the leader has said.

Ideally decisions should be made by consensus without the need for a vote, based on full and free input from members. The atmosphere should be one which encourages contribution and does not scare off any member who may not be as confident as others (including new members) about what to say on a topic or how to say it. Enough time should be allowed for discussion of agenda items, though time should not be frittered away. Equally, guillotining conversation when it hasn't come to a concluding point should be avoided, as it leaves a bad feeling if everyone has not had a chance to comment.

2. Conflicts of interest – who has them and what are they?

Conflict of interest is one of those governance things, and if not managed properly can bring an organisation undone. A simple example would be Sue, a business person on a board who provides sponsorship for the club.

This is an obvious and actual conflict in that any discussion about sponsorship



would include Sue's business. Sue should formally declare that conflict and have it recorded in the conflicts register.

When discussing sponsorship, it is up to the other members of the board to decide whether Sue should receive any board papers about sponsorship and/or whether she should step out of the room when the topic is being discussed. It is important to remember that the decision about what information she receives and whether she stays or goes is the board's entirely, and Sue has no say in it.

Another situation would be Jack not declaring that he was a member of the state sporting association discipline tribunal for the club's sport, when he knows full well that he might be sitting on cases involving club members.

In each case, declaring interests is essential. A board member cannot over-declare, and it is up to the other board members to decide if a conflict exists and how to deal with it.

What is a 'conflicts register'? It is a sheet of paper which lists each board member's name and the 'interests' each has in a business or other sporting organisation which might affect discussion about

decisions to be made. It is part of the board papers for each meeting, and an agenda item called Declaration of Interests should be inserted after the welcome/ present/ apologies item.

3. Creative and forward thinking – not retrospective report reading

Many boards tend to focus on the operational side of the business because it is easy. People on the board often come from a functional role within the organisation such as coach, official or even parent, and can bring that background to the table. That experience might be useful, but it is not the reason they are on the board.

Their roles are to look to the future of the organisation and how it intends to meet its objectives, mission and purpose. Reviewing lengthy reports and detailed results may not assist in forward thinking unless there are outcomes which lead to the organisation doing things better. Ideally on every agenda there should be an item which is headed Strategy or Planning.

Think of strategy as clear thinking and being creative, and dedicate meeting time to giving rein to your enthusiasm for what your

organisation could be and could be doing better.

4. The newbie – getting the hang of your board

Much is written about board induction, the process by which a new board member, whether elected or appointed, is informed about the who's who and the what's what of the organisation. Often the newbie will be given a USB stick or a couple of folders full of information: the constitution, the bylaws, the policies, the organisation structure, job descriptions and bios for the office bearers.

Nothing, however, can prepare a new member for being on the board as they work out the personalities, the peccadillos, the peculiarities and the painful behaviours of their fellow members. Equally the actual business of the organisation will never be quite as it is written in the induction materials or on the organisation's website. If you are new to a board, don't panic — give yourself a year or so to get the hang of it and take the time you need to start making your contributions and asking your questions.

5. Your day job is not your board job.

People are on boards for many reasons: they stood for election; just happened to be in the wrong place at the right time when a board vacancy came up; are parents of kids who play the sport; have been an athlete or participant and want to change tack, give back or have been identified as having skills that the board needs. Many state sporting association boards focus on people such as lawyers and accountants — butchers, bakers and candlestick makers not so much.

Regardless of why you are on a board, you are not there to do what you do in your day job. Thus, a lawyer is not on the board to give legal advice or to do the legal work of the organisation, subject to any agreement that the lawyer may be engaged with the consent of the board to do some basic work such as conveyancing.

The lawyer would not usually draw up the contract of employment for the EO though they might assist a legal firm to do so because of their knowledge of the organisation. Equally an accountant is not on the board to give specific financial advice, but rather to give overall direction and commentary as to the state of the finances; the way accounts might be presented; to liaise with an external accountant and auditor; or be a member of the board's audit and finance committee.

For example, if you are a coach or umpire who has a position on the board, then you need to ensure that board discussion does not spend valuable time on small issues which you as coach or umpire should be able to resolve among your respective cohorts.

The board should be aware of the line between the strategic and operational when dealing with matters to do with the conduct of the sport itself. Neither the coach nor umpire is there to represent coaches or umpires as a general rule, and if the organisation's constitution gives them a seat to do that, to represent their constituency, then consideration should be given to altering the constitution.

6. The board "expert"

From time to time someone on a board will claim to be an expert on a certain topic — a marketing magician, a governance guru. It may be true or it may be hyperbole. It is preferable for people with extensive knowledge and expertise to better describe themselves as experienced rather than expert, especially given that no one is on a board in their professional capacity. They are there to bring their skills and knowledge to the table but not to give, or be relied on or expected to give, advice.

Indeed, the notion of a self-proclaimed expert can be disadvantageous or dangerous to the organisation. That person may be deferred to or their utterances given greater weight than is due. This can lead to a division in the board when not everyone agrees with the expert's view or opinion. And in those circumstances wise heads on the board should recommend external advice be sought.

This is a difficult matter to address as no one wants to offend the self-described expert at the meeting because they may indeed have the expertise. It is up to the chairman to counsel the board member so that opportunity for misunderstanding as to the role is limited.

7. An apology or a leave of absence

If you are unable to attend a meeting then you should inform the chairman or CEO, in the first instance, of your unavailability as soon as you know. It may be appropriate to email all board members at the same time depending on the reason for your non-attendance.

Board members generally like to know

what the reason is (for example, illness, a business meeting clash, family duties at short notice, on holiday). The explanation need only be short.

An apology is on a meeting by meeting basis. Many constitutions say that if you miss three meetings and don't apologise then the board can relieve you of your position, thereby creating a casual vacancy. Common courtesy, good manners and conscientiousness as a board member would suggest that an apology should always be given, as no-shows are a bad look particularly when it may mean something isn't done or someone else has to take on an extra task.

A leave of absence can be granted to a member who needs to take time off for a period of months, again for a variety of reasons. The member does not need to apologise for each meeting missed, but is expected to return at the end of the leave period and resume duties on the board.

Margot Foster AM BA LLB

Margot Foster is an experienced lawyer with over 34 years in private practice. She is a highly regarded sports administrator having held numerous board roles in club, state, national and international sports organisations. She is a 1984 Olympic bronze medallist and 1986 Commonwealth Games gold medallist in rowing. Margot advises sports organisations of any size in the areas of practical governance solutions, dispute resolution, including investigations, and mediation through her consultancy



Words that count

Talk the Talk Sport.
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When under the microscope - how we express ourselves is important

'Clive give us a wave, Clive, give us a wave' came the incessant cry from the grandstand.

Clive Rice, the South African cricketer, was fielding on the boundary in a Currie Cup match between Transvaal and Western Province in Cape Town. Like most athletes, Clive resolved never to interact with the crowd during the heat of battle, especially in enemy territory. It was too distracting and only encouraged the masses to bay for more blood. As the day drew on and the sun beat down on Clive, the call got more animated and more frequent.

'Clive, give us a wave, please Clive, I'm your biggest fan, give us a wave'. Hours into the contest Clive relented; after all, how much harm could a single wave really do. So he turned to address his persistent tormentor, at which point the man in the crowd immediately bellowed with all his might. 'Clive, Clive, give us a wave Clive!' Clive raised his arm ever so slightly and gave the man an embarrassed wave of his hand. Not a moment later the fan barked, 'Ya, Clive, wave goodbye to the Currie Cup!'

I remember attending a cricketing luncheon many years ago where Clive Rice retold this story to much laughter from those in attendance. In writing this column it occurred to me that not all interactions with the crowd are as good humoured. Who could forget Eric Cantona's flying karate kick of a Crystal Palace supporter back in 1995. Perhaps more than any other, Cantona personified the proverbial 'snap' of a man gone mad.

The BBC commentary suggested 'Cantona has become involved with a fan in the crowd'. Which is a bit like describing Usain Bolt as 'a touch quicker than the avenger fella'. Cantona, reacting to sideline abuse, threw himself over the dividing rail feet first into the spectator, violently kicking him in the chest before throwing a flurry of punches. It was a



graphic reminder of both Cantona's hair-trigger temper and the kind of pressure sideline abuse can stir up.

In more recent times we've seen examples of sideline abuse which have captured the nation's attention. Adam Goodes stated that he was 'gutted' after a 13-year-old girl called him an ape back in 2013. Goodes halted play to alert security staff to the incident and the matter created heated debate for weeks on end. Racism in Australian sport was suddenly the centre of attention. Goodes carried himself with dignity throughout the media hurricane to stand his ground on a matter of deep personal principle.

I know what it's like to face a barrage of abuse from the crowd. Back in 2004, I travelled with the Wallabies to my home town of Durban to play a test match against South Africa, my country of birth. I remember the entire stadium vibrating under the strain of the South African National Anthem, 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika'. The atmosphere seethed with a unique blend of aggressive patriotism and much of it was directed at me. As public enemy number one I bore the brunt of an endless torrent of sideline abuse.

I'd like to tell you I was unaffected by it all, that I remained focused on the job at hand. But that would not be true. The truth is I was affected by it. Test matches in South Africa are intimidating environments at the best of times, and being singled out for special treatment seemed to dial this intensity up to the point of distraction. I recall making more unforced errors than normal that day, then playing a hand in a Wallaby try before leaving the field after a crushing loss. It was a baptism of fire.

Today athletes and fans find themselves under an increasingly sensitive microscope. A place where, more than ever, we're going to be held accountable for what we say. There are now over 16 million smartphones in Australia, all with ever-improving video and sound recording capabilities. Many of these devices make weekly journeys to their owners' favourite sporting events, where they are never more than a few clicks from capturing and sharing whatever they are pointed at.

Perhaps the lesson for fans and athletes alike is that we should all be more considerate of how we choose to express ourselves. The internet is young and full of imperfections, but it is ushering in a level of transparency that will ultimately improve our societies.

The rate of this improvement is entirely up to us.

Clyde Rathbone
Co-Founder Karma.wiki

The mercy rule in children's sport: help or hindrance?

Kids don't begin playing sport with the sole intention of winning. Multiple studies of children from various sports and different competitive levels all reveal children's main reason for participating is to have fun.

So, what does it say when one sport implements a 'mercy' rule in an endeavour to avoid astronomical losses and 'preserve the fun', while another sport eliminates the mercy rule saying it sucks the fun out of playing because it promotes the idea that losing is shameful?

Perhaps it suggests that although sports are rightly focused on embedding the 'fun' factor, they are not yet in agreement on how best to deliver it, or even understand how children define fun in terms of their sport.

Throw into the mix parents or guardians who lobby sports administrators and say that seeing their child lose week after week is no fun for them, and sports face a growing dilemma.

A 2010 joint study by American researchers¹ at the University of Utah and Clemson University found that a key problem for children's sport administration is satisfying two very different consumers — the parents (who decide if their child participates) and the children (for whom the sport's program is designed).

Various studies have shown that parents choose sport programs for their children based on wanting to give them opportunities to develop or socialise, and become healthier, responsible, goal driven, and self-motivated.

Yet parents are not only the critical 'facilitators' of sport opportunities for their children, they also serve a role in influencing their child's interpretation of the sport. Parents who overemphasise² a return on their own investment (financial, time and emotional) and/or outcome goals for their child's sport create stress, uncertainty and a lack of motivation in their children.

Children, meanwhile, look to participate in activities in which they are reasonably confident, that provide them with opportunities to be physically active, to socialise with

friends, and above all, to have fun.

And what do they consider fun? The top responses from participants in a 2014 George Washington University³ study were:

1. Trying your best
2. When the coach treats a player with respect
3. Getting playing time
4. Playing well as a team
5. Getting along with team-mates
6. Being active.

They ranked winning at 48th in their list.

Underlying many of the most recent studies is the common theme that children judge their experiences by different standards and values, and have different (often less set or concrete) thresholds than their parents.

Parents who believe an accent on winning is an important part of the 'learning' opportunities of sport, frequently view children's sport as they likely would view adult endeavours, concentrating on the final score as the only measure of success and the most important outcome of the game.

For children, skill development and interacting with their friends are the crucial aspects.

Kids do love to compete against one another because that is how they measure their abilities, their development and their progress, but they don't necessarily consider the score line. While they often want to know the score, and may even cry if they lose, most don't obsess over the results⁴, unlike their parents according to sport psychologists.

So, five weeks of losing by more than 30 goals may be inconsequential to children, who feel they are still improving their skills and/or spending time with their mates, provided the win/loss situation is not overemphasised by the



adults around them. This includes coaches.

The challenge is for sports administrators then, is two-fold.

First, they need to redefine and broaden the definitions of winning so that children are focused on self-improvement and individual goal attainment, and to recognise and celebrate as children achieve those goals.

Second, they need to help parents reach an understanding that children define 'fun' very differently.

Suggested ways of doing this include:

- Create 'competitive balance' in competitions so that outcomes are in doubt. When necessary, reorganise teams to balance opportunities.
- Ask the children who may be involved in a 'losing' streak if they are still having fun, and if not, what they feel can be done to re-inject the fun.
- Embed a discussion about program priorities with parents and guardians at the start of every season.
- Emphasise those priorities in all communications.
- Encourage and facilitate training and education opportunities for coaches that focus on greater understanding of child development, the 'fun' factor, and individual goal setting.
- Encourage parents to demonstrate that they are focused on their child's skill development and fun by avoiding questions about score lines and instead acknowledging their child's effort and asking how they feel, whether they learnt something new, or improved their skills.

References

¹ <https://js.sagamorepub.com/jasm/article/download/3050/2697>

² Fredricks J A, Eccles J S. Parental influences on youth involvement in sports. In Singer RN, Hausenblas HA, Janelle CM, eds. Handbook of sport psychology. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001:145.

³ Visek, Amanda J. et al., 'Fun Integration Theory: Towards Sustaining Children and Adolescents Sport Participation', Journal of Physical Activity & Health, 2014.

⁴ <http://youthreport.projectplay.us/the-8-plays/ask-kids-what-they-want/>

Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association Conference 2017



The Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association (ANZSLA) is staging its annual conference in Sydney from 18–20 October 2017.

As usual, there is an engaging list of topics covering a wide range of issues, including:

- Implications of privacy law in sport
- Ethical obligations of sports lawyers
- Overview of recent legal developments in sports
- The future of broadcasting — sports television, smart phones and social media
- Sports betting issues
- Concussion in sport — society changing legal implications
- Integrity and selection issues — employment issues
- Sports law and human rights
- The evolution of IP usage by brands in the digital age
- Report into review of illegal offshore wagering.

If you have been to an ANZSLA conference you will know the value of the various presentations and interactions on offer. If not, this is a great opportunity to get the latest developments in sport and the law.

Online registration will be available late June from www.anzsla.com

Resource Profile:

Interactive scenarios

When we were developing the new Play by the Rules platform last year we took the opportunity to update the interactive scenarios on the platform. These are short 'case studies' based on topical issues and



challenges occurring in grass roots sport and recreation. These scenarios let you explore your understanding and beliefs about issues as well as provide practical tips about inclusive, safe and fair sports practices and procedures. The scenarios include:

- Girls playing in boys teams
- Homophobia and sexuality discrimination
- Inclusion of people with disability
- Over training
- Pregnancy and participation
- Religious inclusion
- Sex discrimination and harassment
- Junior team selection
- Verbally abusive coach

As you go through a scenario you are given various options to respond and access to resources to help you understand the issue.

To access the interactive scenarios go to - <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/interactive-scenarios>

Website Update:

Diversity and Inclusion Forum videos

Did you know that we have video recordings of all the presentations from the Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Forum held in Melbourne in October 2016?

The forum was a unique event attended by 150 people. The presentations were delivered by experts across a range of fields concerned about diversity and inclusion in sport. Each presentation ran for around 15 minutes and topics included:

- Mapping Indigenous pathways in the AFL
- Our Watch strategy on violence against women
- How social networks affect team performance
- Inclusion of transgender and intersex into sport
- Managing diversity in youth sport
- Inclusion of people from different cultural backgrounds
- Male champions of change
- How parents are excluding kids from sport
- Exploring the possibilities of universal design in sport.



All the presentations from the forum can be viewed on the Play by the Rules website. They can also be downloaded, and full transcripts are available.

Simply go to <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/videos>

Subscribe to Play by the Rules

Come and join the 34,000+ subscribers to Play by the Rules - it's a great way to keep up-to-date with safe, fair and inclusive sport.

Back Issues

You can access each back issue for this magazine by visiting [this page](#) on the Play by the Rules website. All the feature articles and significant news items are listed here.

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. We post every day on Facebook and Twitter and have audio files on Soundcloud and an extensive collection of videos on YouTube and Vimeo.



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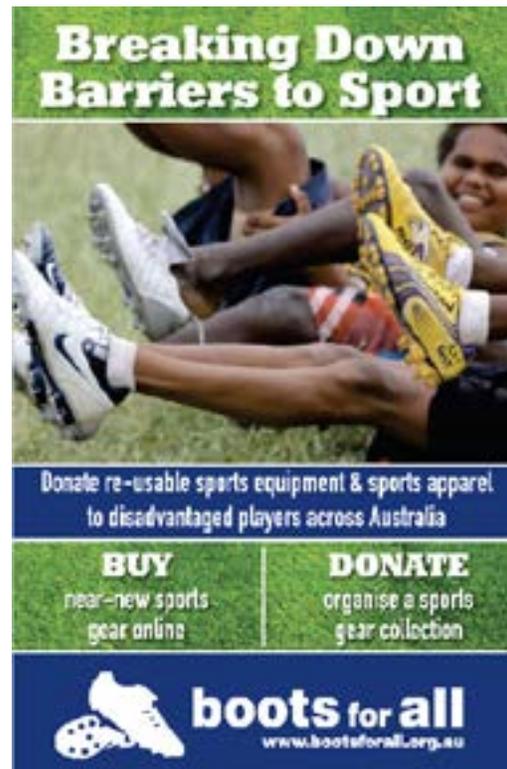
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Did you know that Play by the Rules is one of the best examples of a Collective Impact approach to addressing sport issues in the country? If not the best. Play by the Rules is a collaboration between multiple partners.



To make Play by the Rules possible, we also work with

