

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS SPORT CASE STUDY

The following case study has been provided as an example of an initiative that can be implemented to encourage and promote positive behaviours at games, competitions and on the sidelines, at all levels of your sport.

1. OVERVIEW

A sport introduced respectful behaviours initiative focused on rewarding teams displaying positive game day behaviours. The initiative places the same emphasis on game/competition behaviour as performance and game results. The system implemented deters participants, coaches, and parents from engaging in negative behaviours at games and competitions.

These points are included and equal to all points on the competition ladder. Outcomes for ongoing negative game day behaviours is a team's position on the competition ladder.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

A phased implementation process was undertaken to ensure communication, expectations and consequences were clear. Processes were implemented relating to reporting and recording to club officials in the days following the games.

GAME DAY

- Each team were provided with clear communication on the system. Specifically, an understanding that both teams were awarded game outcome points separate to behaviour points.
- Behaviour points are earned for good behaviour, not deducted. Focusing on rewarding rather than penalising teams.
- Match officials communicate in a proactive manner with team managers during game breaks, allowing a team to remedy any negative behaviours prior to losing points.
- Match officials capture any ongoing concerning behaviour within the match report.
- Red and Yellow Cards are captured in the match report as usual.

TOP TIPS

- Consider starting with a pilot program of a small number of teams.
- Trialling the initiative in the off-season such as exhibition games, friendlies or social seasons can be a good starting point.
- Ensure communication with key personnel such as players, parents, guardians, officials and team managers are clear, concise and timely on the new system.
- Consider developing a 'Frequently Asked Questions' to include in communications.

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3. SPECIFICS

The system provides points to each team individually (equal to a win) based on their behaviours, according to the following rules:

- i. A maximum of four points will be awarded per team per game for each regular season game. The team's behaviour (including that of players, team officials, support staff or spectators) will determine if any of these points will be deducted.
- ii. One point will be deducted for every Yellow Card received by each participating team on game day.
- iii. Two points will be deducted for every Red Card received by each participating team on game day.
- iv. Two points will be deducted from a team who has a player, parent/spectator or official who is issued a prescribed penalty according to the competition rules.
- v. Up to four points may be deducted from a team for any code of conduct, policy or bylaw breach relating to inappropriate game day behaviour.
- vi. If any breach occurs during a break of play or after the game has ended, the number of points deducted will be doubled.

4. DATA SUPPORTED BENEFITS

Within three seasons of implementing the respectful behaviour initiative in a progressive manner, both Yellow and Red Cards had reduced by 50%. Following six seasons of implementation, the number of Yellow and Red Cards had remained stable, with a further decrease in the number of tribunal hearings.

The benefits were seen widely across the competition, notably 'win at all costs' coaches were the first to adapt to the initiative, understanding losing points would be detrimental to the team's position on the competition ladder. Accountability was noted by match officials by all participants; coach to player; player to player; player to parent.

A notable positive impact on the overall game day environment has been experienced.

5. CHALLENGES

To enable a robust reporting and accountability system to implement the initiative, it is the responsibility of match officials to ensure behaviours are noted and reported effectively. Additionally, a small, but necessary, administrative burden on volunteer club officials is required to ensure reporting of match day behaviours occurs in a timely manner.

6. SUMMARY

The respectful behaviours initiative has been extremely effective in creating positive game/competition environments for the sport. Over 6 years, the number of system points not awarded has dropped by 80%. This data combined with the reduction in Yellow and Red Cards indicates the initiative has been a resounding success.