



UGLY PARENTS ARTICLE

'Play by the Rules'

www.playbytherules.net.au

WHO IS PLAYING THE GAME?

A coach calls one of his seven year old players aside and asks, "Do you understand what cooperation is? What a team is?"

The little boy nods 'yes'.

"Do you understand that what matters is that we play as a team and have fun?" The little boy nods 'yes' again.

The coach then says "So I'm sure you know that when a foul is called you shouldn't argue, curse, attack the referee, or call him names?"

Again the little boy nods.

"And when I take you out of the game it's not good sportsmanship to call the coach bad names?"

Again the little boy nods.

"Good" said the coach, "Now go over there and explain all that to your mother"

That story could be pretty funny except that it represents a growing problem in sport known as 'sport rage'. Sport should be fun, safe, fair and respectful.

ASK YOURSELF A FEW QUESTIONS

Do you applaud when the opposing team scores a goal?

Do you applaud the good play by both teams?

Do you support your child in an encouraging way?

Do you support the decisions of the coach, umpire or the team manager?

OR

Do you let your frustrations show during your child's sport?

Do you question the decisions of the umpire/referee publicly?

Do you belittle your child or any of the other participants during the game?

Do you make derogatory comments to anyone who is listening, about any aspect of the game?

WHICH PARENT ARE YOU ?

If you answered 'yes' to the first set of questions then you are the sort of parent or guardian that provides positive reinforcement to all the players inclusive of your own. However, if you found yourself admitting to answering

'yes' to the second set of questions then you could be labelled one of the growing breed of "ugly parents".

These behaviours and attitudes occur all too frequently in junior sport. Parents often become "ugly" or vocal when they are too focused on the result of the match, or a player's performance. This behaviour can often ruin the enjoyment of the sport for all the children involved and affect their participation in sport.

Sport can teach children positive values such as teamwork, cooperation, confidence and winning and losing gracefully. Parents and care givers can have a great impact on these values and ultimately on the performances of the child, and his or her enjoyment of the activity. Be a parent that is a positive role model and remember that for most children sport is about having fun and being with their friends.

DO YOU & YOUR CLUB/SCHOOL PROMOTE FUN, FAIR & SAFE PLAY?

There are a number of resources that can help your club to achieve this balanced approach to your child's involvement in sport. Go to the:

- Australian Sports Commissions website on Junior Sport <http://www.ausport.gov.au/junior/index.asp>
- NSW Department of Sport and Recreation website on Sport Rage www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/sportrage/
- 'Play By The Rules' web site www.playbytherules.net.au for information on sport rage programs across Australia (Dealing with Sport Rage) and specific information for parents (Parents & Guardians).