



# **NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Schedule One to the NRL Rules**



# NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

## CODE OF CONDUCT

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# NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

## *CODE OF CONDUCT*

### *Part 1 – Preliminary*

#### **Commencement**

1. Each of the provisions of this Code shall commence in operation on 1 January 2003.

#### **Objects**

2. The objects of this Code are to:
  - (1) Protect and enhance the best interests, image and welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Other Competitions, the Clubs and the Game by regulating the conduct of Clubs, Club Officials and Players;
  - (2) Collect in one place the provisions governing the conduct of Clubs, Club Officials and Players;
  - (3) Specify standards of conduct for Clubs, Club Officials and Players;
  - (4) Provide the means by which standards of conduct for Clubs, Club Officials and Players may be maintained;
  - (5) Provide for the enforcement of standards of conduct for Clubs, Club Officials and Players.



**Amendments**

3. The provisions of this Code may be amended by the Board from time to time in such manner as the Board thinks fit, provided that any such amendments are made and notified in accordance with Rule 2 of the *NRL Rules*.

**Definitions**

4. In this Code, unless the context otherwise indicates or requires, the following terms and expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them, that is to say:

‘**Agent**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**ARL**’ – has the meaning given to that acronym by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Board**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**breach proceedings**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Chief Executive Officer**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Club**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Club Official**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Competition Points**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Finals Series**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Game**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**International Laws of the Game**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Match**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules* and, for the purposes of this Code, the extended meaning given to that term by Rule 9;

‘**Match Officials**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Media**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**National Youth Competition**’ – has the meaning given to that expression in the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Anti-Doping Rules**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Anti-Vilification Code**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Appeals Committee**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Appeals Committee Procedural Rules**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Competition**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Drugs Tribunal**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Judiciary**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Judiciary Code of Procedure**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Operations Manual**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Playing Contract and Remuneration Rules**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**NRL Rules**’ – means the Rules adopted from time to time by the NRL governing the NRL Competition and the National Youth Competition;

‘**Player**’ – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Playing Agreement**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Related Competitions**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Representative Competitions**’ – has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

‘**Representative Match**’ - has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

**‘Salary Cap Auditor’**– has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*; and

**‘Salary Cap Review Committee’**– has the meaning given to that expression by the *NRL Rules*;

**‘Team’** – has the meaning given to that term by the *NRL Rules*.

### **Interpretation**

5. (1) Unless otherwise specified, with respect to the words and expressions defined in Rule 4:
  - (a) Where words are defined, words denoting the singular include the plural and vice a versa;
  - (b) Where an expression is defined, and other part of speech or grammatical form of that expression has their corresponding meaning;
  - (c) A reference to any gender includes all genders.
- (2) Where in this Code reference is made to time, that reference shall be taken to mean the reference to the time in Sydney, Australia.

### **Construction**

6. (1) In the interpretation of a provision of this Code, the interpretation that will best achieve the objects set forth in Rule 2 is to be preferred to any other interpretation.
- (2) Without limiting sub-Rule (1), regard may be had to the contents of the *NRL Rules* (including the other Schedules and Guidelines to the *NRL Rules*) when construing the provisions of this Code.

### **Jurisdiction**

7. (1) This Code applies to all Clubs, Club Officials and Players.
- (2) To remove any doubt, where in this Code reference is made to a “person bound by this Code”, that reference shall be taken to include all Club Officials and Players.

### **Relationship with the *NRL Judiciary Code of Procedure***

8. (1) Notwithstanding anything herein or elsewhere contained, the provisions of this Code are not intended to affect in any way the provisions of the *NRL*

*Judiciary Code of Procedure* or the operation of the *NRL Judiciary*.

- (2) To remove any doubt, the *NRL Judiciary Code of Procedure* is intended to exclusively govern proceedings against Players for misconduct of the nature set forth and described in the First Schedule to the *NRL Judiciary Code of Procedure*.

#### **Extended Meaning of “Match”**

9. Where in this Code reference is made to a “Match”, that reference shall be taken to include a Match in the:
  - (1) NRL Competition;
  - (2) National Youth Competition;
  - (3) Related Competitions; and
  - (4) Representative Competitions.

#### **Extended Responsibility for Conduct**

10. (1) Where in this Code, a Club or a person bound by this Code is prohibited from doing something, that Club or person shall be taken to have failed to comply with that provision if that person or Club:
  - (a) Does the thing that is prohibited;
  - (b) Attempts to do the thing that is prohibited; or
  - (c) Aids, abets, counsels or procures another person or entity to do, or attempt to do, the thing that is prohibited.
- (2) Where in this Code, a Club or a person bound by this Code is required to do something, that Club or person shall be taken to have failed to comply with that provision if that person or Club:
  - (a) Fails to do the thing required; or
  - (b) Aids, abets, counsels or procures another person or entity not to do the thing that is required.
- (3) Any breach of a provision of this Code by a Club Official or a Player shall be deemed to also be a breach of that provision by the Club with which that Club Official or Player is associated.

**NRL Rules Prevail**

11. In the event of any inconsistency between a provision of this Code and a provision of the *NRL Rules* (save for any other Schedules or Guidelines to those Rules), the *NRL Rules* shall prevail.

***Part 2 – General Obligations*****General Prohibition**

12. No Club or person bound by this Code shall:

- (1) Engage in any conduct that is detrimental to;
- (2) Bring into disrepute;
- (3) Act in a manner inconsistent with;
- (4) Act in a manner contrary to; or
- (5) Act in a manner prejudicial to;

the best interests, image or welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs or the Game.

**General Duty – A Positive Obligation**

13. Every Club and every person bound by this Code shall, so far as practicable, do all things reasonably necessary to promote the best interests, image and welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game.

**Public Confidence Not to be Impaired**

14. (1) No Club or person bound by this Code shall engage in any conduct that might impair public confidence in the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs or the Game.
- (2) No Club or person bound by this Code shall engage in any conduct that might impair public confidence in the honesty or integrity of an officer or employee of the NRL (including the Chief Executive Officer and the Salary Cap Auditor), Club Officials, Match Officials or Players.

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### Proper Working of the NRL Rules, Schedules and Guidelines

15. Every Club and every person bound by this Code shall:

- (1) So far as is practicable, do all things reasonably necessary to ensure; and
- (2) Not do anything to subvert or detract from;

the proper working of the **NRL Rules**, and all Schedules and Guidelines to those Rules, including:

- (a) This Code;
- (b) Schedule Two – *NRL Anti-Doping Rules*;
- (c) Schedule Three – *NRL Anti-Vilification Code*;
- (d) Schedule Four – *NRL Judiciary Code of Procedure*;
- (e) Schedule Five – *NRL Appeals Committee Procedural Rules*;
- (f) Schedule Six – *NRL Playing Contract and Remuneration Rules*;
- (g) Schedule Seven – *NRL Player Welfare Rules*; and
- (h) Schedule Eight – *NRL Operations Manual*.

### Part 3 – Particular Obligations

#### Abuse

16. (1) No person bound by this Code shall at any time abuse an officer or employee of the NRL (including the Chief Executive Officer and the Salary Cap Auditor), a Club Official, a Match Official, a Player, a member of the Media or a member of the public.
- (2) For the purposes of sub-rule (1), a person shall be taken to have abused another person if the former, in relation to the latter, uses crude or abusive language or gestures, insults, threatens, intimidates, assaults, provokes or otherwise acts in an abusive manner.

#### Conduct Related to Matches

17. (1) Every Club and every person bound by this Code must ensure that every Match is played at all times in a sportsmanlike, disciplined and professional manner.
- (2) Every Club and every person bound by this Code shall accept and observe the authority and decisions of Match Officials made during, or in connection with, a Match.

- (3) Every Club and every person bound by this Code shall co-operate in ensuring that the spirit of the *International Laws of the Game* is upheld.

### **Crowd Control**

18. (1) Every Club and every person bound by this Code must do all things necessary to ensure that members of the public in attendance at a Match are properly behaved at all times.
- (2) Without limiting sub-Rule (1), each Club must take positive steps to control the behaviour of members of the public in attendance at a Match including:
- (a) The engagement of adequate security personnel, including police;
  - (b) The expulsion of any member of the public who fails to behave in an appropriate manner from membership of the Club and/or the revocation of his or her entitlement to attend Matches participated in by the Club;
  - (c) The separation of supporters of one Club from supporters of the opposing Club;
  - (d) Liaising and co-operating with the opposing Club to ensure that the overall supervisory and security measures in place for a Match are in all respects adequate for all reasonably foreseeable risks of crowd misbehaviour;
  - (e) Such other supervisory and security measures as are necessary in order to properly control the behaviour of members of the public in attendance at a Match.
- (3) Every Club is bound to comply with the obligations imposed by sub-Rules (1) and (2) irrespective of whether the relevant Match is to be played at home or away.
- (4) In any case where in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, in his absolute discretion, sub-Rules (1) and/or (2) have been contravened by a Club then, in addition to any other penalty that may be imposed for that contravention pursuant to Part 2 of the **NRL Rules**, two Competition Points in the NRL Competition or the National Youth Competition, as the case may be, may be deducted from that Club's tally for the Season in which the contravention occurred or, if that Season has been completed at the time when the penalty is imposed, or completed save for the playing of the Finals Series, two Competition Points may be deducted from that Club's tally for the following Season.
- (5) An opinion of the Chief Executive Officer formed pursuant to sub-Rule

(2) shall not be capable of review and, in any event, shall not be justiciable.

### **Discrimination**

19. Every Club and every person bound by this Code must comply in all respects with the provisions of the *NRL Anti-Vilification Code*.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

20. (1) Every Player must comply with the *NRL Anti-Doping Rules*.
- (2) Every person bound by this Code shall, whether or not he is attending an official function organized by, or arranged for, the NRL, the ARL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions or a Club conduct himself at all times in public in a sober, courteous and professional manner.

### **Gambling**

21. (1) No Club or person bound by this Code shall participate, or be involved in any way, in gambling in relation to a Match or the progress of a Team in the NRL Competition or the National Youth Competition (whether, in each case, as to its outcome, its course or otherwise) in which that Club or person is involved.
- (2) No Club or person bound by this Code shall provide, either directly or indirectly, information that is not in the public domain in relation to a Match or the progress of a Team in the NRL Competition or the National Youth Competition which might assist another person to gamble in relation to that Match or that progress.
- (3) For the purposes of sub-Rules (2) and (3), a Club or person shall be taken to have been involved in gambling in relation to a Match if that gambling either directly or indirectly relates to a Match in which:
- (a) In the case of a Club, the Club;
  - (b) In the case of a person, the Club with which that person is associated, whether as a Player or Official;
- fields a Team.
- (4) For the purposes of sub-Rules (2) and (3), a Club or person shall be taken to have been involved in gambling in relation to the progress of a Team if that gambling either directly or indirectly relates to a Team with which that Club or person is associated.

**Game Fixing and Bribes**

22. (1) No Club or person bound by this Code shall offer or accept a bribe or be involved in any way in the fixing of a Match regardless of whether or not that Club or person is directly involved in that Match.
- (2) In any case where a Club or person bound by this Code is offered a bribe or an opportunity to fix a match, that Club or person shall immediately report the making of that offer to the Chief Executive Officer.
- (3) For the purposes of sub-Rules (1) and (2), a Club or person shall be taken to have been involved in the fixing of a Match if the natural course of that Match has been interfered with in any respect.

**Harassment of Match Officials**

23. Under no circumstances is any Match Official to be approached, questioned or harassed in any way by any person bound by this Code, whether before, during or after a Match.

**Media**

24. All Clubs and persons bound by this Code shall, in any dealings with the Media, conduct themselves in a courteous, responsible and co-operative manner.

**Officials**

25. (1) Every Club Official shall at all times:
- (a) Act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game;
  - (b) Use due care and diligence in discharging his obligations as a Club Official; and
  - (c) Exercise the powers conferred upon him as a Club Official for proper purposes and in the best interests of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game.
- (2) No Club Official shall:
- (a) Take improper advantage of his position as a Club Official; or

- (b) Allow a personal interest, or the interest of any associated entity or person, to conflict with his duties, responsibilities and obligations as a Club Official.

**Player Dress**

- 26. Every Player shall ensure that he is properly attired and, where appropriate, dressed in the apparel required by his Club in all public appearances as a Player.

**Playing on Merits**

- 27. (1) Every Player shall play in every Match on his merits and to the best of his skill and ability.
- (2) No Club or person bound by this Code shall offer or accept to cause, permit or allow a Player to play in a Match other than on his merits and to the best of his skill and ability.
- (3) In any case where a Club or person bound by this Code receives an offer to cause, permit or allow a Player to play other than on his merits and to the best of his skill and ability, that Club or person shall immediately report the making of that offer to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Promotional Activities**

- 28. (1) Every Club and every person bound by this Code shall genuinely participate in all activities reasonably required by the NRL for the promotion of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game.
- (2) Without limiting sub-Rule (1), every Player shall:
  - (a) Punctually attend public functions arranged or supported by the NRL;
  - (b) Punctually attend appointments arranged by the NRL to make appearances in public or for the purposes of the Media;
  - (c) Wear such apparel as the NRL requires during such attendances;
  - (d) Otherwise, comply in all respects with the promotional obligations set forth in his NRL Playing Contract or Playing Agreement.

**Public Comment**

- 29. (1) No Club or person bound by this Code shall comment adversely on, or

with respect to:

- (a) The NRL;
- (b) An officer or employee of the NRL (including the Chief Executive Officer and the Salary Cap Auditor);
- (c) The NRL Competition;
- (d) The National Youth Competition;
- (e) The Related Competitions;
- (f) The Representative Competitions;
- (g) The Other Competitions;
- (h) A Club;
- (i) The performance of a Match Official; or
- (j) Any matter which has been, is, or is likely to be, the subject of a proceeding before the NRL Judiciary, the NRL Drugs Tribunal, the Salary Cap Review Committee, the NRL Appeals Committee or any other tribunal established by the NRL;

on a public occasion.

- (2) For the purposes of sub-Rule (1), “comment adversely” means to make any comment, whether orally or in writing, or to perform any action that is or might:
  - (a) Be detrimental to;
  - (b) Bring into disrepute;
  - (c) Be inconsistent with;
  - (d) Be contrary to; and/or
  - (e) Be prejudicial to;

the best interests, image or welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs or the Game.

- (3) For the purposes of sub-Rule (1), the expression “on a public occasion” means that the comment was made or the action took place:

- (a) In a public setting;
  - (b) To, or in the presence of any person that is known or ought to be known as a member of the Media; or
  - (c) When it is known or ought to be known that the comment or action may be reported in the Media.
- (4) Every Club must ensure that its Club Officials and Players comply with sub-Rule (1).

**Sanctity of Contracts**

30. Every Club and person bound by this Code must not do anything that might induce the breach of an NRL Playing Contract, an NRL Short Form Contract or a Playing Agreement.

**Scalping**

31. No Club or person bound by this Code shall in any way be involved in the sale of a ticket to a Match at a price higher than the face value of that ticket.

**Unlawful Conduct**

32. No Club or person bound by this Code shall engage in any conduct that is against the law of the place where the conduct occurs.

***Part 4 – Maintenance and Rehabilitation*****Clubs to Ensure Compliance**

33. (1) All Clubs shall ensure that its:
- (a) Club Officials; and
  - (b) Players;
- comply with the provisions of this Code.
- (2) For the purposes of sub-Rule (1), each Club shall adopt procedures to:
- (a) Monitor, on an on-going basis, compliance by its Club Officials and Players with the provisions of this Code; and
  - (b) Adopt procedures designed to ensure, on an on-going basis,

compliance by its Club Officials and Players with the provisions of this Code.

### **Clubs to Promote Awareness**

34. (1) All Clubs shall ensure that its:

- (a) Club Officials; and
- (b) Players;

are aware of the need to preserve and enhance the best interests, image and welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game.

- (2) For the purposes of sub-Rule (1), each Club shall adopt procedures designed to promote and ensure awareness, on an on-going basis, of the need to preserve and enhance the best interests, image and welfare of the NRL, the NRL Competition, the National Youth Competition, the Related Competitions, the Representative Competitions, the Clubs and the Game.

### **Continuing Education**

35. (1) Whenever required by the Chief Executive Officer to do so, the Clubs shall convene such continuing education, seminars or other courses of education that, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, are necessary in the interests of achieving the objects set forth in Rule 2 to be undertaken by Club Officials and Players.

- (2) Whenever a Club convenes continuing education, seminars or other courses of education pursuant to sub-Rule (1), every Club Official and Player associated with that Club shall attend and satisfactorily compete to the standard required by the Club or the Chief Executive Officer such continuing education, seminars or other courses of education.

### **Rehabilitation**

36. (1) In any case where a person bound by this Code has failed to comply with a provision of this Code, then:

- (a) In the case of a Club Official, the Club with which that Club Official is associated;
- (b) In the case of a Player, the Club to which that Player is contracted;

shall, so far as is practicable, do all things necessary to ensure compliance by that person with the provisions of this Code in the future and,

generally, assist in the rehabilitation of that person.

- (2) To remove any doubt, the obligations imposed by sub-Rule (1) shall be owed whether or not a penalty has been imposed upon the person who failed to comply with the provision of this Code pursuant to Part 5.

### ***Part 5 – Enforcement***

#### **Proceedings for Breach**

37. Subject to Rule 39, in any case where a Club or a person bound by this Code has failed to comply with a provision of this Code, proceedings may be taken against that Club or person for that failure, and a penalty imposed, pursuant to Part 2 of the ***NRL Rules***.

#### **Where a Club Also Acts**

38. (1) Where a breach of a provision of this Code involving a Player or Club Official has occurred, the Chief Executive Officer may, subject to Rule 39, proceed against that Player or Club Official pursuant to Part 2 of the ***NRL Rules*** unless he forms the view, in his absolute discretion, that the Player or Club Official has already been sufficiently punished by action taken against that Player or Club Official for the same conduct by his Club.
- (2) To remove any doubt, nothing in this Code prevents the Chief Executive Officer from proceeding against a Player or Club Official for a breach of a provision of this Code where, in relation to the same conduct, the Club with which that Player or Club Official is associated has already taken action or imposed a punishment against that Player or Club Official.

#### **Criminal Proceedings**

39. (1) Where the breach of a provision of this Code involving a Player or a Club Official has occurred, and the conduct constituting that breach is the subject of a police investigation or criminal proceeding, the Chief Executive Officer shall not proceed against that Player or Club Official pursuant to Part 2 of the ***NRL Rules*** until the conclusion of that investigation or proceeding, as the case may be, unless the Chief Executive Officer forms the view, in his absolute discretion, that it is appropriate to do so.
- (2) To remove any doubt:
  - (a) The purpose of sub-Rule (1) is to ensure, so far as possible, that any criminal proceedings against a Player or Club Official are taken and concluded before proceedings for the breach of a provision of this Code are commenced;

- (b) Nothing in sub-Rule (1) is intended to prevent the Chief Executive Officer from proceeding against a Club with respect to the breach of a provision of this Code by one of its Players or Club Officials where the conduct constituting that breach is the subject of a police investigation or criminal proceeding.

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