

*ALBURY-WODONGA RUGBY UNION
FOOTBALL CLUB INC*

CODE OF CONDUCT, SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & MEMBER SAFETY POLICY



Policy Ratified April 2013

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I. Preamble

The committee of the Albury-Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club has a priority responsibility to protect the interests of its members both on and off the field.

The committee also recognises it has a responsibility to promote the game of rugby in a manner which will bring credit and foster good sportsmanship which sets an example to its Juniors, as being committed but fair.

The committee therefore reinforces that offensive behaviour, blatant disregard for the rules, and foul play will not be tolerated.

In the event that a member(s) is shown to have offended in the area(s) above, appropriate and responsible action will be taken in the interests of player safety and preserving the good name of rugby within both the rugby and wider community.

II Code of Conduct

Overview

The Albury-Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club Inc is committed to promoting and strengthening the positive image of Rugby and its participants. In light of this commitment, the Code of Conduct seeks to establish standards of performance and behaviour to ensure that the game is played and conducted with disciplined sporting behaviour.

The Code of Conduct also seeks to deter all on-field and Rugby-related conduct that could damage AWRUFC Inc and the game of Rugby by impairing public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of the AWRUFC Inc or in the integrity and good character of participants.

Code of Conduct

For players, coaches, administrators, social members & supporters.

To promote the reputation of the game and take all reasonable steps to prevent the game from being brought into disrepute:

- Members shall not engage in any Doping Practice as defined in the Australian Rugby Union's (ARU) Doping By-Laws
- Members shall comply with the ARU's Safety Directives for referees, coaches and players
- Members shall not repeatedly breach the Laws of the game relating to foul play or misconduct
- Members shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other match official, whether on or off the field; or a selector, coach, manager of other team official
- Members shall not show unnecessary obvious dissension, displeasure or disapproval toward a referee, touch judge or other match official, his or her decision or generally following a decision of a match official.
- Members shall not use crude or abusive language or gestures towards referees, touch judges or other match officials or spectators.
- Members shall not do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult or humiliate another participant on the ground of religion, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person.
- Members shall not conduct themselves in any manner, or engage in any activity, whether on or off the field, that would impair public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of matches and competitions; or in the integrity and good character of participants.
- Members shall not do anything which adversely affects or reflects on or discredits the game, the AWRUFC Inc, team, competition, or sponsor; including, but not limited to any illegal act or any act of dishonesty or fraud.

Note regarding Players' conduct towards Match Officials

The positive image of the Club is in particular affected by the conduct of Players towards Match Officials. The Club also expects non-playing members to respect Match Officials and to abide by the Code of Conduct.

In light of this, the Committee endorses Coaches substituting a player immediate should he or she show inappropriate conduct towards a Match Official.

Note regarding alcohol in relation to Code of Conduct

The Board respects the right of the individual towards the consumption of alcohol. However the consumption of alcohol is not considered to be an excuse for breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Players are expected to attend training and games not under the influence of alcohol.

Communication of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct, and the manner in which it is implemented shall be communicated to members by a minimum of:

- Making the Policy freely accessible on the Club Website
- Presenting the Code of Conduct to the Players in a written communication during the Pre-Season
- Oral communication of the Code of Conduct to the Playing Group during the Pre-Season

Role of the Constitution and By-Laws in the Code of Conduct

Article 17 deals with the Disciplining of Members:

Where the board is of the opinion that a member of the AWRUFC Inc. has persistently refused or neglected to comply with a provision of these Rules or the provisions of the ARU By Laws for the code of conduct or has persistently and wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the AWRUFC Inc., then the committee may,

- (a) by resolution either expel the member from the AWRUFC Inc.: suspend the member and membership of the AWRUFC Inc. for a specific period;*
- (b) a resolution of the committee under the provision is of no effect unless the committee at a meeting held not later than 28 days after service on the member of a notice under paragraph 17 (c) confirms the resolution in accordance with the rule.*
- (c) where the committee passes a resolution under Rule 17, the Secretary shall, as soon as practicable, cause a notice in writing to be served on the member:*

- a. *setting out the resolution of the committee and the grounds on which it is based and;*
- b. *submit to the committee at or prior to the date of that meeting written representations relating to the resolution.*

Article 18 of the Constitution deals with the Right of Appeal of a Disciplined Member

- (a) *A member may appeal to the committee against the resolution of the committee within 7 days after the notice of the committee's resolution is served on the member by the member lodging with the Secretary a notice appealing the decision.*
- (b) *Upon receipt of an appeal notice from a member, the Secretary shall notify the President who shall convene a general meeting of the AWRUFC Inc. to be held within 21 days after the date on which the Secretary received the notice.*
- (c) *At such a meeting, no business other than the question of the appeal shall be transacted;*
- (d) *The committee and the member shall be given the opportunity to state their respective cases orally or in writing, or both;*
- (e) *The members present shall vote by secret ballot on the question of whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked, and*
- (f) *If at the general meeting the members by a two-thirds majority confirms the committee's resolution, the appeal is dismissed.*

It is noted here that the Constitution does not deal specifically with minor infringements of the Code of Conduct by Players which may be dealt at a team/Playing Group level.

Code of Conduct Procedure

A breach of the Code of Conduct can be about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that someone thinks a breach of this Code. Situations will always vary. They may be about individual or group behaviour; they may be extremely serious or relatively minor; they may be about a single incident or a series of incidents; and the person about who the allegation is made may admit to the allegations or emphatically deny them.

Minor infringements of the Code of Conduct by members of the Playing Group

Such infringements shall be addressed by a Conduct Committee; comprising the Director of Coaching, the Grade Coaches and the Senior Playing Leadership Group (Club Captain & First Grade Captain).

General principles to be followed when dealing with a minor infringement at the Playing Group:

- Advise the player in a confidential manner of the infringement
- Maintain a calm attitude.

- Seek the player's version of events
- Consultation between Director of Coaching, Coaching Group and Senior Playing Leadership Group to determine if infringement has occurred and sanction if required
- Advise Player & Board (via Club Secretary or President) of infringement and sanction
- Communicate to Playing Group the infringement & sanction

The Notes below pertaining to Factors to consider when imposing discipline shall also be taken into account.

The discipline imposed at this level may vary from counseling and request for verbal or written apology through to relegating a player to a lower grade, with a maximum of suspending the player from all grades for one match. Where the Conduct Committee determines that discipline greater than this is to be considered then the Conduct Committee shall impose its penalty and then refer to the Club Board for further consideration.

Minor infringements of the Code of Conduct by non-playing members

An Executive shall counsel the member for such infringements in the first instance.

Repeated infringements or major infringements of the Code of Conduct by either playing or non-playing members

The Committee in accordance with Article 17 of the Constitution shall address such infringements.

Factors to consider when imposing discipline

Irrespective of the level that the discipline is imposed, the following factors should be considered:

- Nature and seriousness of the behaviour or incidents;
- In a case where action is taken concurrently with or in lieu of a resolution of a formal Complaint, the wishes of the Complainant;
- If the individual concerned knew or should have known that the behaviour was a breach of the Policy;
- Level of contrition of the Respondent(s);
- The effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the Respondent(s) including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
- If there have been relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action; and/or
- If there are any mitigating circumstances such that the Respondent(s) shouldn't be disciplined at all or not disciplined so seriously.

III Social Media Policy

Introduction

It is expected that members will uphold the ethos of the club in all social media interactions. Members will not act in such a way that the image of AWRUFC is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms its immediate and wider rugby community. Social media can be, when appropriate, an effective tool and is commonly used by the AWRUFC community to express their views, comments, ideas and criticism on a whole range of issues. AWRUFC expects members to use social media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent the club or any member of AWRUFC or the external rugby community.

Rights & Responsibilities

Members are expected to show respect to others, including members of the AWRUFC and wider rugby community. Members are also expected to give due respect to the reputation and good name of AWRUFC.

When using Social Media, members are expected to ensure that they:

- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others;
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person;
- Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others;
- Do not make defamatory comments;
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the ERUFC Community;
- Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic or incites violence against others;
- Do not post content that harms the reputation and good standing of ERUFC or those within its community;

Breach of this Policy

A breach of this policy will be considered by the Board, and will be dealt with on a case by case basis. A breach of this policy may involve a breach of other AWRUFC policies and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct.

All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where the AWRUFC is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from membership of AWRUFC.

IV Personal Responsibility

All members of the Club are expected to conduct themselves with the appropriate degree of personal responsibility both on and off the field. This does not restrict our ability to “have fun” but rather facilitates it. Rugby is a team game and the team cannot function with some members failing to live up to their responsibilities to their teammates. It goes to all aspects of being a member of the Club. In particular it means:

- Attending all training sessions on time and in a state of mind to train as hard as possible. This also includes making training worthwhile for all those attending (ie no cheap shots during contract drills, respecting the age and ability of others training and assisting others wherever possible.)
- Being organized so that you are available for games whatever your other personal commitments may be. In the event of an unavoidable absence you will give adequate notice.
- Respecting your teammates, coaches, officials, club members and sponsors and doing everything in your power to enhance the clubs performance & reputation.
- Understanding that sometimes in order to advance the interests of the group personal satisfaction or glory will need to be sacrificed.

It is not up to Coaches, Managers or the Club Officials to obtain compliance with this policy. It is up to the individual.

V Child Safety Policy

Overview

The Albury-Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club Inc. is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and well-being of children are maintained at all times during their participation in sport and recreation activities run by the organization.

The Albury-Wodonga Rugby Union Football Club Inc. aims to promote a safe environment for all children and young people and to assist staff, officials, coaches, players and volunteers in recognizing Child Abuse and following the appropriate reporting/notification procedures.

Who this policy applies to

This Policy applies to the following, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- Individuals sitting the AWRUFC committees and its relevant sub-committees;
- Employees and volunteers;
- Support personnel (e.g. managers, physiotherapists, sport trainers);
- Coaches and assistant coaches;
- Athletes and players;
- Referees and other officials;
- Members, including life members;
- Parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors to the full extent that is possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Administrators, officials, coaches, players and volunteers often have a high level of contact with children in the sporting environment and play a major role in the successful operation of sporting activities.

Key responsibilities involve:

- Awareness of the magnitude and importance of Child Protection issues in sport
- Awareness of the definitions and indicators of Child Abuse
- The ability to recognize an abusive situation
- The use of discretion in determining when it is appropriate to report suspected cases of Child Abuse
- Knowledge and understanding of the requirements arising from recent Child Protection Legislation including Employment, Screening, and Prohibited Persons Declarations.
- Awareness and understanding of the organizations Child Protection Policy & Guidelines; and responsibilities arising from it.

- Recognition that as a coach/official/player/volunteer you are in a position of power and influence over young children in your care and must behave in an appropriate manner to ensure that their safety and well-being is maintained.

Policy Statement

Every person bound by this Policy must always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.

The AWRUFC acknowledges that the staff, members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of junior participants. The AWRUFC aims to ensure this continues and to protect the safety and welfare of its junior participants.

Several measures will be used to achieve this such as:

- Prohibiting any form of Abuse against children;
- Following the relevant requirements for screening for people whose role requires them to have direct and unsupervised contact with children.
- Providing procedures for raising concerns or complaints
- Providing information to those involved in rugby on Child Abuse and child protection.

The AWRUFC requires that any child who is abused or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within rugby, must report it immediately to the police, relevant government agency and the Rugby Body.

All allegations of Child Abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. A person will not be victimised for reporting an allegation of Child Abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected.

NSW Requirements to check people working with children

All organisations within NSW that employ people in child-related employment (in a paid or unpaid capacity) must meet the requirements of the Working with Children Check (WWCC). Child related employment is work that primarily involves direct unsupervised contact with children. The WWCC involves three components:

1. Ensuring all paid and unpaid employees sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration, which states they are not prohibited from working with children.
2. Submitting all applicants for paid employment to NSW Sport and Recreation for a WWCC background check. NSW Sport and Recreation only carries out checks for paid employees.
3. Reporting relevant employment proceedings for any paid and unpaid employees to the Commission for Children and Young People. A relevant employment proceeding involves any reportable conduct committed outside of work as well as in the workplace with or in the presence of a child/ren.

For more information, including the required forms:

- www.kids.nsw.gov.au or 02 9286 7219
- www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children/resources.asp or 02 9006 3700

Complaints Procedure

A Complaint can be about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that someone thinks is unfair, unjustified, unlawful and/or a breach of this Policy. Complaints will always vary. They may be about individual or group behaviour; they may be extremely serious or relatively minor; they may be about a single incident or a series of incidents; and the person about who the allegation is made may admit to the allegations or emphatically deny them.

All Complaints will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to another person without the Complainant's consent except if law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the Complaint.

General principles to be followed when completing a report of a Complaint:

- Treat all Complaints seriously.
- Deal with Complaints promptly, sensitively and confidentially.
- Maintain a calm attitude.
- Ask the complainant if they will consent to you taking notes.
- Write the description of the Complaint /problem using the complainants own words (as much as is possible).
- Find out the nature of the relationship between the complainant and the person complained about (for example, coach/competitor, team members, etc) and if there is any relevant history.
- Take a note of the facts and do not pre-judge the situation.
- Ask the complainant whether they fear victimisation or other consequences.
- Find out what outcome the complainant wants and if they need any support.
- Ask the complainant how they want the Complaint to be dealt with under the policy.
- Keep the Complaint confidential and do not disclose it to another person without the complainant's consent except if disclosure is required by law (for example, a report to government authorities) or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the Complaint.