



DARTS AUSTRALIA Inc.

HEALTH, SAFETY, INCLUSION and FAIRNESS

Bullying

Every person in sport, in every role, has the right to participate in an environment that is fun, safe and healthy, and to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness.

Bullying denies participants these rights and can result in feelings of disgrace, embarrassment, shame or intimidation. Bullying can also affect an individual's athletic performance, level of enjoyment, work or school life, academic achievement and physical and mental health.

Bullying can occur both on and off the sports pitch and can involve athletes, parents, coaches, spectators or umpires. It is prohibited by Darts Australia under the Code of Conduct and can result in penalties and punishments being applied. Some forms of bullying constitute assault, harassment or discrimination under federal and state legislation and are therefore illegal.

What is bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurting a specific person either physically, verbally, psychologically or socially. It involves a power imbalance where one person has power or strength (e.g. physical, mental, social or financial) over another. It can be carried out by one person or several people who are either actively or passively involved. In a sports context bullying can take many forms, for example:

- A parent telling their child that they are incompetent, hopeless, useless
- A coach alienating an athlete (adult or child)
- Several people ganging-up on an individual team member
- Spectators verbally abusing players from the opposition
- An athlete calling a referee names and using put-downs
- A parent intimidating a young coach

Bullying can be a 'one-off' incident, but usually involves repeated actions or incidences. It can occur everywhere: at home, school, work, playgrounds, while participating in sport, when using public transport or walking to or from home. An individual may bully their victim face to face or use technology such as a mobile phone or computer.

Types of bullying

Bullies may use one or several types of bullying to hurt their victim.

Physical - pushing, shoving, punching, hitting, kicking, taking away a person's belongings (this may also constitute assault).

Verbal - name calling, banter, threatening, teasing, intimidating, yelling abuse, using putdowns.

Psychological - ganging up, preventing a person from going somewhere, taking a person's possessions, sending hostile or nasty emails or text messages.

Socially - excluding, alienating, ignoring, and spreading rumors.

Bullying behaviour is damaging to all involved: the bully, victim, family members, those that witness the behaviour and the sporting organisation involved. Athletes, parents, coaches, administrators and sporting organisations all have an ethical responsibility to take action to prevent bullying occurring in darts and manage it, should it occur.

The effects of bullying - why certain people bully and are bullied?

People that bully may:

- Pick a victim randomly, or carefully choose their victim
- Find that they get what they want by bullying (power, acceptance, admiration)
- Have been bullied themselves
- Be arrogant, aggressive or impulsive
- Enjoy having power over others
- Enjoy doing it and not care that they cause their victim distress
- Believe that some people deserve to be bullied
- Have been influenced by aggressive 'models' (at home, in real life or in television or the movies)
- See their behaviour as justified or 'pay-back' for some treatment they have received
- Any person can be bullied. Sometimes people who are popular, smarter, and attractive or possess obvious sporting ability are victims of bullying

People can also be subject to bullying if they:

- Have not had experience standing up for themselves against bullies
- Lack assertiveness, resilience and the social skills required to protect themselves against bullies
- Struggle academically or in terms of sporting ability
- Appear stressed, anxious or easily hurt or upset;
- Look different or are different
- Have a disability or illness
- Lack confidence or are shy
- Have been overprotected at home

Signs a person is being bullied

A person, especially a child, may not always ask for support when being bullied. They may feel afraid, ashamed or embarrassed and that the person they tell will think they are weak. Victims of bullying may think that they deserve to be bullied or are 'dobbing' by telling someone what is happening to them.

The following are signs that a person may be being bullied.

- Finds excuses for not wanting to attend training or games (e.g. feeling sick, has an injury, has too much work to do) or talking about hating their sport
- Wants to be driven to training or matches instead of walking
- Regularly the last one picked for team or group activities
- Alienated from social or shared activities
- Has bruising or other injuries
- Becomes uncharacteristically nervous, worried, shy or withdrawn
- Clothing or personal possessions are missing or are damaged
- Repeatedly 'loses' money or possessions
- Suddenly prone to lashing out at people either physically or verbally

Managing bullying

Bullying is more likely to occur in environments that are highly competitive and promote a 'win at all cost' mentality. By emphasising other aspects of sport such as enjoyment, team work,

sportsmanship and skill development, especially at the junior level, sporting organisations may be able to prevent bullying behaviours.

Darts Australia will not allow or tolerate bullying, under the Code of Conduct and Member Protection Policy.

Information for: The Law

Bullying that involves physical assault is against the law. Bullying that involves, harassment or discrimination can be against the law under certain circumstances (e.g., racial and sexual harassment). Because bullying can contribute to psychological injury it may be covered under occupational health and safety legislation.

Verbally Abusive Coach

Coaching can be a rewarding and enjoyable task. But it also has its challenges – challenges that may sometimes prompt coaches to become verbally abusive. Such behaviour goes against the principles of dignity and respect and, depending on the circumstances, may be unlawful.

Information to help you understand the issue

Verbal abuse typically involves swearing, threatening language, ridicule, personal abuse and comments designed to demean and humiliate.

Verbal abuse can lead to increased aggression, low morale, loss of self esteem, a reluctance to continue playing, high drop out rates amongst young people, fear and resentment.

- You send a poor message if verbal abuse is excused or tolerated because :
- The coach 'has had a bad day'
- It's an important match
- 'Men/boys should be able to handle a bit of rough language' □ 'The team needs a good boot up the backside'.
- Verbal abuse rarely motivates people to improve their performance – in most cases it has the opposite effect, causing embarrassment and humiliation.

Information for: The Law

All verbal abuse is inappropriate. It can become unlawful if it involves harassment, vilification, or the threat of physical harm and/or the emotional abuse of children.

Physical Contact with Children

Issues surrounding physical contact in sport can be controversial and complex. Some sports require physical contact between adults and children for skill development; others do not. If physical contact is to occur, it should always be within clear guidelines to reduce the risk of inappropriate touching and to ensure people working with children e.g., coaches, officials etc. are not placed in situations where they could be accused of abuse.

Physical contact is appropriate if it:

- Is used to assist in skill development
- Is required for the child's safety
- Occurs with the player's understanding and permission
- Is for the child's benefit, not adult gratification □ Occurs in an open environment.

Physical contact is **inappropriate** if it:

- Includes touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
- Frightens, distresses or embarrasses a child □ Destroys their trust
- Occurs in a private place.

Information for: The Law

Laws exist throughout Australia to protect children and young people from abuse. Measures that are genuinely necessary to protect the health and safety of children and young people are permitted. In deciding whether contact is appropriate ask: "Is it serving the needs of the player/participant or the adult?"

Intimate Relationships

An intimate (sexual) relationship between a coach and athlete has the potential to be damaging even if it doesn't constitute harassment.

Athletes, coaches and sports administrators need to be aware of the potential problems that such a relationship can create for the coach, athlete, team members and the sports organisation.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Not every intimate relationship between a coach and player is of concern. Many club teams are coached by a member's husband, wife, partner, relative or friend.
- Relationships where there is a great disparity between a coach and athlete in terms of authority, maturity, status and dependence have the potential to be harmful, even if the athlete has reached the legal age of consent.
- Factors to consider when assessing potential harm include:
 - The age of the athlete
 - The potential for 'grooming' or undue influence
 - Differences in authority or status
 - Patterns of inappropriate behaviour (e.g., has the coach had previous relationships with players?)
 - The impact on the team and the club
 - Marketing and sponsorship opportunities for the club Possible impact on the sport's public image.

Information for: The Law

While an intimate relationship between an adult coach and adult athlete is not unlawful, an intimate relationship between an adult coach and athlete under the age of consent is illegal.

Infectious Diseases

The issues surrounding infectious diseases are emotive and complex. This is particularly the case given that blood borne infections can be transmitted during body contact and collision sports. Fortunately, there are many practical and common sense steps clubs can ^{take} to reduce the risk of infectious disease transmission.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Blood borne diseases include HIV and hepatitis B and C.
- Other infectious diseases include tinea (a fungal skin infection), chlamydia, gonorrhoea and scumpox (bacterial infections), genital warts and herpes (viral infections) and scabies and pubic lice (parasites).
- Although people can be exposed to infection by participating in sport, the risk of acquiring a blood borne virus is extremely low.
- People with blood borne diseases may be gay or straight, married or single, very young (e.g., under 10) or middle aged.
- Not everyone with an infectious disease knows they have one.

Information for: The Law

State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of their disability or impairment (which includes presence in the body of disease-causing organisms such as HIV or hepatitis). [Pregnancy and Participation](#)

Playing sport can contribute to a person's health, fitness and physical and emotional wellbeing. These factors don't change because a player is pregnant.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Pregnancy is a normal human condition, not an illness.
- There are numerous benefits for women who remain active during their pregnancy.
- Pregnant women should be able to enjoy some level of sport or physical activity throughout the pregnancy unless there are complications.
- Each woman should discuss her wishes with her doctor. These discussions should cover the type of sport, previous sporting history, level of participation, stage of pregnancy and medical/obstetric concerns.

Information for: The Law

Preventing a woman from playing, because she is pregnant may breach anti-discrimination legislation; however, also have a Duty of Care to the woman and her unborn child, it is suggested that administrators and coaches warn pregnant players about the possible risks involved in their participation and advise them to seek medical advice.

Cultural Differences

A love of sport can be found in people of different races, backgrounds and cultures. Yet this shared interest can raise a number of complex issues that involve balancing a person's cultural traditions with their compliance with social norms and club rules and procedures.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Australia is a culturally diverse nation in which people from more than 200 different countries live, work and study.
- People from multi-cultural backgrounds have a significantly lower level of club participation than those from English speaking cultures.
- The structure of Australian club sport is unique and it may take time for people from other *cultures* to understand our sporting system, practices and expectations (e.g., arriving at practice on time, questioning the umpire's decision).

- Each sporting club determines its own culture, which means it has the opportunity to be flexible and supportive of people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Information for: The Law

Although it is unlawful in most states and territories to discriminate against a person on the basis of their race, ethnic or ethno-religious background, some laws permit discrimination in sport (e.g., clubs can be established to meet the needs of particular cultures). You need to check the law in your state/territory to see if any exceptions/exemptions apply.

Disability Inclusion

Australians with disability participate in a range of sports. There are many practical ways to include people of all abilities in sport at a level of their choice whilst still maintaining the integrity of the activity.

Information to understand the issue

- Sport for people with disability is not 'one size fits all'. The focus for clubs should be on finding practical ways for people with disability to participate in sport at a level of their choice.
- Inclusion is about providing a range of options (e.g., options that are only for people with disability and options that are for everyone, but happen to include people with disability with some modifications).
- It is not reasonable that all people with disability must be included in all activities all of the time. However there are usually ways to include most people (e.g., athlete, coach, instructor, administrator, official, parent or volunteer).
- People with disability are often the best source of information as they know what they can do and they can tell you about possible modifications to assist with inclusion.
- It is alright to ask a person with disability questions and give things a go as this is often the best way to learn.

Information for: The Law

There is federal, state and territory legislation in place that makes discrimination and harassment in relation to a disability unlawful.

Religious Inclusion

Sport is an activity that attracts people of all religious beliefs. Yet those beliefs can sometimes pose challenges to established club rules and procedures – challenges that can be met by adopting practical and non-discriminatory strategies.

Information to help you understand the issue

□ There are more than 55 different religions practiced in Australia – the five largest being Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. □ Islam is the country's fastest growing religion.

Given sport's popularity, it's to be expected people from different religious groups will want to join clubs and participate in sporting activities.

People's religious practices will vary from individual to individual e.g., attitudes to dress and religious observations, so it's important not to generalise or stereotype.

Each sporting club determines its own culture, which means it has the opportunity to be welcoming and provide support to individuals or groups whose needs may differ from other members of the team.

Information for: The Law

Although it is unlawful in most states/territories to discriminate against a person on the basis of their religion, some laws permit discrimination in sport. Check the law in your state/territory to see if any exceptions or exemptions apply.

Racial Discrimination

Racism can have a profound impact on people's involvement in sport. It can affect motivation, enjoyment and levels of participation and, if unchecked, may result in inappropriate, potentially dangerous and violent behaviour.

Racial harassment, discrimination and vilification have no place in

Australian sport.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Australia is a culturally diverse nation in which people from more than 200 different countries live, work and study.
- Sport attracts people from all different races and life-styles and provides an opportunity to build social and cultural bridges based on shared interests.
- Successful sporting clubs break down racism by focusing on inclusion, team camaraderie and developing individual and team skills.
- Racial discrimination and unlawful behaviour can result in disciplinary action, suspension, expulsion, and financial costs.
- A club or association found liable for racism occurring at sporting events may have their reputation seriously damaged; face legal action and financial costs.

Information for: The Law

It is unlawful in all states and territories to discriminate against a person on the basis of their race. It is also unlawful in some jurisdictions to incite hatred, serious contempt or ridicule (vilification) on racial grounds.

Sex Discrimination

Although people like to think of sport as being fair and open to all, sometimes individuals or groups are excluded or prevented from participating equally. If the unfair treatment is based on gender, then it could be sex discrimination.

Information to help you understand the issue

- Sex discrimination can happen to both men and women, although it is more likely to occur against women.
- Although women make up more than 50% of the population, they are not equally represented in leadership and decision making positions. It is estimated that women fill less than one third of key decision making positions nationally.
- Offering women different terms and conditions of membership, limiting access to facilities, reducing training/competition opportunities and assuming individuals or groups won't be interested in or good at certain tasks because of their gender are all examples of sex discrimination.

Discrimination can affect an individual's health, confidence, self-esteem and performance and may result in them leaving the sport.

Clubs that allow sex discrimination risk losing members and volunteers, and having reduced income. They also face the prospect of legal liability and associated financial costs.

Information for: The Law

Treating someone less favourably on the basis of gender is against the law.

Clubs are required to take steps to prevent discrimination – if they fail to do so, they may be legally responsible for the behaviour

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in sport can result in loss of enjoyment, reduced participation, lack of development and an array of negative consequences for clubs and sporting associations (e.g. declining membership, poor reputation, and possible legal and financial costs). Everyone has the right to participate in sport in a safe and respectful environment without the threat of sexual harassment.

Information to help you understand the issue

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual attention and can involve:

- physical contact
- demeaning jokes
- innuendo
- displays of sexually explicit or offensive material
- repeated requests to go out
- persistent questions about an individual's personal life.
- Activities associated with sport often have complex inter-personal relationships with one person having power over others (e.g., team selection).
- Sexual harassment is not just about sex and sexual harassment, it's also about exerting power over someone else.
- Sexual harassment can involve participants, coaches and administrators. It can occur between men and women and people of the same sex.

Information for: The Law

Sexual harassment is against the law although the extent that sports is covered by antidiscrimination legislation varies between Australian states and territories.

In some states and territories clubs are required by law to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. If they don't, they may be legally responsible for the behaviour of their personnel and members.

Homophobia and Sexuality Discrimination

Sexuality is a very individual thing. Although most people are 'straight' (heterosexual), a significant percentage of the population are gay, bisexual, celibate or asexual. Unfair treatment on the basis of someone's sexuality – or assumptions about their sexuality – is discrimination and has no place in the sport's environment.

Information to help you understand the issue

People often feel very strongly about sexuality, particularly homosexuality, because of their background, values, beliefs and fears.

Assumptions about a person's sexuality can be based on stereotypes, ignorance and little or no personal association.

Myths about homosexuality – particularly homosexual coaches 'converting' young players or players 'catching' AIDS from gay men have no basis in fact.

- Discrimination against someone on the basis of their sexuality can cause immeasurable damage to their health, self-esteem, personal life and work/sport performance.
- Sexuality discrimination can take many forms ranging from put downs, verbal abuse, demeaning comments and jokes, threats, damage to personal property, undermining, ostracism and exclusion.
- Sexuality discrimination that is not addressed creates an environment of fear, hostility and embarrassment.

Information for: The Law

Although it is unlawful in most states and territories to discriminate against a person on the basis of their sexuality, there are some variations between states. Where discrimination is against the law, it can result in legal claims against the individuals and clubs that allow it to happen.

Examples

Examples of sexuality discrimination, harassment and homophobia in sporting clubs There are many ways (some blatant, some subtle) that discrimination, harassment and homophobia occur in sporting clubs. Some examples include:

- A club official spreads rumours about a 'lesbian take-over' and covertly lobbies against the nomination of a female club member for a position on the executive committee, because of her perceived homosexuality.
- A parent suspects that his son's coach is gay (and therefore a paedophile) and demands that the coach be removed from the position.
- A selection panel discusses an applicant's sexuality when considering her for a place on the team or an administrative position.
- Team members refuse to accept instructions, make derogatory comments and openly undermine an official's authority because they think that he's gay.
- A parent complains that she doesn't want her daughter playing in a team full of 'dykes'. □ A male player is 'outed' by someone in the club and subjected to taunts from other players.
- A player is dropped from the team once it's known that she's a lesbian.
- Only 'wives and husbands' of club members are invited to club social activities or allowed access to club facilities and equipment.
- A team manager is sacked before a tour because he leaves his wife for another man and doesn't deny the nature of the relationship.
- Players refuse to play against a team with a gay team member because of fears about HIV transmission
- Snide sexual remarks are made about a female athlete because she has had a number of male partners.
- A female club member is ridiculed and called 'lezzo' because she has short hair, is very fit and muscular and doesn't wear makeup.
- A young male player is called 'poofster' and 'nancy' because he objects to the offensive comments made about women by some of the other team members.