

NRL  
Safe  
Play



# National Code of Conduct





# Introduction

Rugby League is a game for all, with a place for all.

It is a sport built by the community and bound by the values of being inclusive, positive, united and disciplined.

The Rugby League Code of Conduct is a direct reflection of the behaviours and standards that all players, parents, coaches, match officials, spectators and volunteers, expect the game to uphold.

It is not only our duty, but everyone's duty, to ensure the environment we create and expect abides by these rules, regardless of age, gender and ability.

I trust all those connected to our sport share this same view and want nothing more than to see our great game, and those within it, prosper now and well into the future.



**Peter V'landys AM**  
Chairman  
Australian Rugby League  
Commission



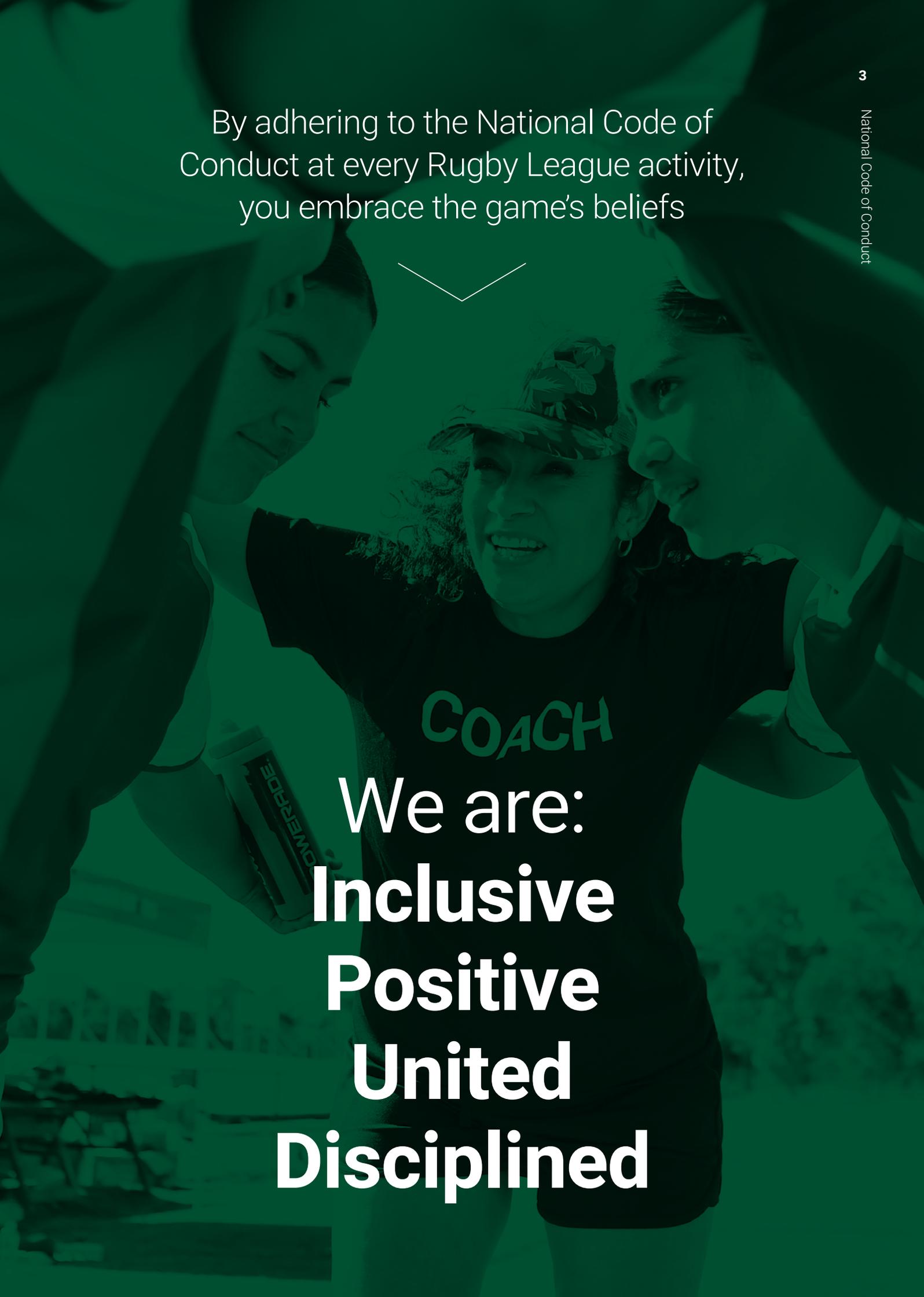
# General Principles

- › Participants in the game of Rugby League include:  
All Players, Coaches, Sports Trainers (including League Safe Officers), Match Officials, Club Officials, Volunteers, Parents/ Carers and Spectators.

Participants are encouraged and expected to:

- › Show positive acts of sportsmanship, discouraging all instances of foul or illegal play, or acts of violence, both on and off the field.
- › Demonstrate the greatest levels of respect, protecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability / disability, sexual orientation, cultural background or religion.
- › Lead by positive example, and condemn the use of recreational and performance enhancing drugs and doping practices; their use endangers the health of players and is contrary to the concept of fair play.
- › Celebrate the “good news” stories, and understand that cyber-bullying, which includes negative or demeaning comments, status posts, personal messages or emails, is deemed as a serious form of harassment.
- › Accept that the integrity of the sport is of paramount importance, therefore, no coach, player, Club official or match official is allowed to participate, or be directly or indirectly involved in any way, in gambling.

By adhering to the National Code of  
Conduct at every Rugby League activity,  
you embrace the game's beliefs



We are:  
**Inclusive**  
**Positive**  
**United**  
**Disciplined**

# Code of Conduct – Player

- › Be a good sport. Respect all good play whether from your team or the opposition and shake hands with, and thank, the opposition players and officials after the game – win, lose or draw.
- › Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit.
- › Always respect the Referee's decision.
- › Never become involved in acts of foul play.
- › Honour both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and live up to the highest ideals of ethics and sportsmanship; avoid gamesmanship, and respect the traditions of the game.
- › Never engage in disrespectful conduct of any sort including profanity, sledging, obscene gestures, offensive remarks, trash-talking, taunting or other actions that are demeaning to other players, officials or supporters.
- › Care for and respect the facilities and equipment made available to you during training and competition.
- › Safeguard your health; don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances.
- › Recognise that many Officials, Coaches and Referees are Volunteers who give up their time to provide their services. Treat them with the utmost respect.
- › Do not bet or otherwise financially speculate, directly or indirectly, on the outcome or any other aspect of a Rugby League match or competition in which you are involved.

# Endorsements

Players at every level of our great game have a responsibility to always play within the Laws, and to compete with respect and sportsmanship.

Rugby League is a fantastic game, made even better when players, officials and fans all work together to make a positive, safe and respectful playing environment.

I fully endorse the player's section of the National Code of Conduct.

Best wishes,



**Cameron Smith**

Melbourne Storm, Queensland Maroons and Australian Kangaroos Captain

Rugby League is a fantastic game and should always be played in the right spirit, so that it remains enjoyable for all participants.

We all have an important part to play in ensuring that the traditions, history and beliefs of the game are respected every time we play.

I am proud to endorse the National Code of Conduct as it provides the guiding principles for the best possible Rugby League environment.

Best wishes,



**Karina Brown,**

Harvey Norman Jillaroos Player



# Code of Conduct – Coach

- Actively discourage foul play and / or unsportsmanlike behaviour by players.
- Seek to maximise the participation and enjoyment of all players regardless of ability; avoid the tendency to over-use a talented player; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a physician and/or sports trainer to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- Teach young players to realise that there is a big gap between their play and the professional game; do not coach them as if they are professionals.
- Ensure that your coaching reflects the level of the competition being played; do not be a “win-at-all-cost” coach.
- As coach, conduct yourself at all times in a manner, and in all situations, that shows leadership, respect for the game of Rugby League and respect for all those that are involved in the game – the players, officials, the fans, the parents, the referees and the media.

Remember that junior players participate for pleasure and mateship. Your coaching should create a positive environment that is **fun, safe, and inclusive.**

# Endorsement

Coaching at any level of the game is a huge responsibility, but also an immensely rewarding one!

It can be challenging and time-consuming, but the pleasure that comes from contributing to players' skill and social development far outweigh any barriers.

It is important that, as coaches, we actively demonstrate the key beliefs of our game – courage, inclusiveness, excellence and teamwork.

By being a positive leader, you have the capacity to shape lives, to mould young minds, and to provide opportunity for success and enjoyment – both on and off the footy field. Win or lose, our jobs as coaches is to always promote sportsmanship, respect, fun, and to lead by example.

Enjoy your coaching experience!

Best wishes!



**Mal Meninga**

Australian Kangaroos Coach



# Code of Conduct – Match Officials

- › Place the safety and welfare of the players above all else; be alert to minimise dangerous physical play, fair or foul, especially in junior matches.
- › Accept responsibility for all actions taken.
- › Avoid any form of verbal contact with coaches, team officials, parents and spectators during play.
- › Be impartial! Also, be consistent, objective and courteous.
- › Avoid any situation which may lead to a conflict of interest, both on and off the field.
- › Maintain an appropriate level of fitness for the standard of game at which you are officiating.
- › Condemn all and every instance of unsportsmanlike, foul or unfair play.
- › Set a good example by the way you dress, speak and act towards players, coaches, officials, parents and spectators.
- › Show concern and caution towards sick and injured players.
- › Officiate to the age and/or experience of the players.

**Referees are the key to the successful application of the Safeplay Code**  
(up to and including 15 years)  
in Junior Rugby League.

# Endorsements

Match Officials play an integral role in our great game. Just as we look to support our young players through their Rugby League journey, we need to be as supportive of our Referees.

Learning the Laws of the Game and how to implement them in a practical manner whilst communicating with, and managing players is no easy task!

It takes a lot of courage to be a Referee, so please respect their role, just as they will respect the role that players, coaches and officials play.

Remember - Without Referees, we don't have a game!

Best wishes,



**Kasey Badger**  
Referee

Like players and coaches, Match Officials play a vital role in the establishment of a safe, friendly and conflict-free environment on the field. Your actions must be beyond reproach, maintaining the integrity of the Laws, the game, and yourself.

By demonstrating a positive attitude and promoting good sporting behaviour, referees are an integral part of every match played across the country.

All match officials have a responsibility to apply their thorough knowledge of the Laws consistently, and to communicate with players in a fair and measured manner.



**Ben Cummins**  
NRL, State of Origin and Test Match Referee



## Code of Conduct – Team and Club Officials

- › Uphold the integrity of the game of Rugby League at all times.
- › Always act in a sportsmanlike manner, respecting opposition players, team and club officials and spectators.
- › Make decisions in the best interests of the game of Rugby League.
- › Place the safety and welfare of players as the top priority.
- › Accept responsibility for all decisions made.

## Code of Conduct – Parent / Spectator

- › Condemn all violent or illegal acts, whether they are by players, coaches, officials, parents or spectators.
- › Respect the Referee's decisions – don't complain or argue about decisions during or after a game.
- › Behave! Unsportsmanlike language, harassment or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- › Encourage players to play by the rules and to respect opposition players and officials.
- › Never ridicule or scorn a player for making a mistake – respect their efforts.
- › Understand that sport is part of a total life experience, and the benefits of involvement go far beyond the final score of a game.
- › Participate in positive cheering that encourages the players in the team you are supporting; do not engage in any cheering that taunts or intimidates opponents, their fans or officials.
- › Remember that all participants are involved in the game of Rugby League for their own enjoyment, not yours!
- › At all times, follow the directions of the Ground Manager and/or other duty officials.
- › Never arrive at a Junior League game under the influence of alcohol, never bring alcohol to a Junior League game and only drink alcohol, if it is available, in a responsible manner in the designated licensed area.

A young girl with long hair, wearing a school uniform, is smiling and holding a white football with the brand name 'STEEEDEN' printed on it. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

**Children learn from  
positive experiences  
and positive examples  
of best practice**

## We are inclusive

- › Engaging and empowering everyone to feel welcome in our game.
- › Reaching out to new participants and supporters.
- › Promoting equality of opportunity in all its forms.
- › Respecting and celebrating diversity in culture, gender, sexuality and social background.

## We are positive

- › The ability to see opportunities in the face of adversity.
- › The willingness to stand up for our beliefs and empowering others to do the same.
- › The commitment to stand up and be recognised as a brand ambassador.
- › The tenacity to do something despite how hard it is or how long it takes to achieve.

## We are united

- › Recognising and respecting our differences in the pursuit of achieving a common goal.
- › Putting the game ahead of individual needs and personal agenda.
- › Be a source of motivation and support to those around me.
- › Commitment to a culture of respect, honesty, and trust.

## We are disciplined

- › We are disciplined
- › Say what we are going to do and do what we say.
- › Have the strength to make the right decisions, placing facts ahead of emotion.
- › Take responsibility for your own actions and the impact they have on others and the wider game.
- › Champion processes, procedures, and the governing principles of the game.





National Rugby League  
Rugby League Central  
Driver Avenue  
Moore Park NSW 2 021  
T: 02 9359 8500 | W: [www.nrl.com](http://www.nrl.com)

Published February 2020



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Sports Commission**