

# Guidelines for Dealing With Sports Rage



## Introduction

Sport rage is any violence, foul language, harassment, abuse or bad behaviour by athletes, coaches, officials or spectators of Little Athletics.

Simply put, sport rage is bad for children and bad for Little Athletics as a whole. At its worst, sport rage reduces a child's enjoyment of Little Athletics, risks safety, tarnishes the sport's reputation and can lead to participant drop out.

The Little Athletics NSW Codes of Conduct and Behavioural Guidelines clearly indicate that sport rage in any form is totally unacceptable.

Little Athletics NSW and its centres have a duty to address behaviours which offend community standards, as well as those standards set by Little Athletics NSW.

## Reporting of Incidents

The reporting of inappropriate behaviour should be a clear process and is the responsibility of everyone. Any behaviour that contravenes the Little Athletics NSW Codes of Conduct should be reported to the appropriate official who will address the situation.

Reportable behaviour includes:

- Violence, threats or abuse
- Ridiculing or yelling at athletes or officials
- Encroaching on the arena or competition sites when not officiating
- Inappropriate social behaviour such as harassment of another individual, smoking outside a designated area, being intoxicated or using bad language.

When confronted with sport rage individuals should not:

- Retaliate or approach the offenders
- Get upset by emotional reactions
- Ignore it and allow situations to get out of hand

## Dealing with an Incident:

The process for dealing with a sport rage incident should be the responsibility of a designated official. The following steps can be taken depending on the seriousness of the sport rage incident:

### Approaching the Offender:

Only the designated official should calmly approach the offender. This will prevent the situation from escalating.

### Issuing of Warnings:

The first time a person breaches the Code of Conduct, they may be issued with a warning. The person might not be aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and should be notified of Little Athletics NSW's rules regarding behaviour.

### Removing People from the Competition Area or Venue:

Officials should communicate directly and immediately with the designated official to remove a person who encroaches on the arena or competition sites.

If an individual is bound by "Conditions of Entry" to a venue, persons can be evicted from the venue for unacceptable behaviour.

In other words all in attendance must adhere with ground entry protocols or face eviction from the event and a possible permanent ban, where the severity of the behaviour breach so warrants. Where attendance is not bound by conditions of entry an offender can be asked to leave a venue.

Little Athletics NSW recommends that all centres have a ground entry behaviour code as this makes the policing of the attendees' behaviour easier and the application of consequences more effective.

**Suspending Competition:**

If deemed necessary, an event or carnival can be suspended and not re-started until an individual obeys requests to cease their inappropriate behaviour or leave the venue.

**Involving Police:**

If it is felt that the behaviour of an individual constitutes a criminal act the police should be notified immediately.

NOTE: While it is lawful to detain a person who has committed a criminal offence until police arrive, it is recommended that this is only done as a last resort. Officials are able to exercise reasonable force in detaining a person who has committed a criminal offence until the police arrive, but this should not be disproportionate to the conduct of the offender.

**Notifying Little Athletics NSW:**

Little Athletics NSW should be notified of any repeated or serious breaches of the Code of Conduct so that appropriate action can be taken as required.

**Disciplinary Action:**

If an individual's conduct is repeated or of a serious nature, Little Athletics NSW or a centre committee may consider taking disciplinary action in accordance with its rules. Any penalties that are imposed should be appropriate to the seriousness of the breach. For repeated or very serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, a banning from future participation in the sport may be imposed by the Little Athletics NSW Board of Management.