



CLUB GUIDE - DEALING WITH CONFLICT

All registered members of the hockey community must abide by the Hockey Australia (HA) Code of Conduct. Breaches of the Code are rare but when they occur and St Pats members are involved it is unpleasant for all involved and reflects poorly on our good club name.

This Guide outlines how club and team officials can attempt to deal with situations involving conflict as they occur, and where there is a breach of the Code of Conduct. Situations that have occurred in the past, such as an individual reporting a conflict that occurred during a previous match should be reported to the Club President for the club to manage.

If you do not feel comfortable dealing with a conflict or believe it is not safe to do so, do not intervene. If you do not intervene please observe what is happening and speak to a club committee member about the matter.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

How you deal with the matter will vary significantly depending on what has occurred, how serious the matter is, who is involved and how comfortable you are dealing with it. If an incident occurs involving players during match play the umpire should deal with it. If it occurs 'off-pitch', the captains are usually held responsible for managing the behaviour of their players and spectators.

Your role when attempting to deal with a conflict is to:

Observe and monitor – observe what is happening so you can provide an accurate report of what occurred and what led up to it. We will need to know – what occurred, when, why, who was involved, any way you were involved or interacted and any other information you believe we may need to be aware of.

Approach the individual/s involved – if it is safe to do so and you feel comfortable doing so approach the individual/s. The goal of speaking to the individual is to make them aware of their behaviour and that it does not reflect the Code of Conduct. It is not your role to manage or stop the behaviour. This is ultimately up to the individual.

If poor behaviour is coming from members of another club consider speaking to someone in a leadership position from that club about your concerns. The person whose behaviour you're concerned about is more likely to respond to someone from their own club.

If the behaviour continues – if you are comfortable doing so speak with them again or observe and monitor their behaviour so you can provide a report to the Club President.



Report – inform a St Pats committee member of what you have observed as soon as possible. Alternatively and if it is appropriate, you may want to speak with a team official. If immediate action is not required or you are not comfortable intervening, and you feel the club should know about the matter, send an email to the President outlining what you have observed. If you are unsure what to do or if a significant incident has occurred, inform the Venue Manager immediately.

HOW TO INTERVENE?

STEP 1 - ASSESS THE SITUATION

If any behaviour is significantly inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, particularly if it is unruly or aggressive, report the matter to the President. Remember it is not your responsibility to manage anyone's behaviour.

Behaviour to consider intervening in includes:

- Aggressive behaviour towards umpires, players or spectators;
- Repeated foul language, name calling or abuse;
- Inappropriate physical reactions to situations within the match (excessive pushing and shoving, etc);
- Behaviour that involves bullying, harassment or intimidation;
- Any signs of distress from the umpires, spectators, players or other attendees as a result of someone's actions (physical or verbal).

As part of assessing the situation, you will need to determine:

- Is it an individual, or a group of people, behaving inappropriately, aggressively or in an overly hostile manner?
- Do I need to intervene?
- When should I intervene? It is often effective to nip the problem in the bud, but having said that overreacting can also escalate the issue.
- From which club is the person/persons that are behaving inappropriately?
- Is the behaviour consistent throughout the match or occurring sporadically or once?
- Are the actions of the individual causing distress to anyone else?
- Do you have reason to believe the individual is under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

STEP 2 - INTERVENING

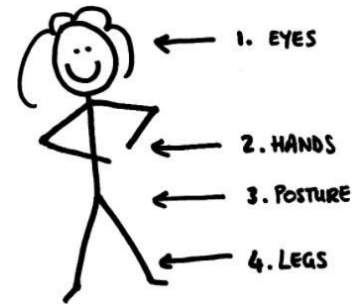
- Decide what words to use in advance and ensure that your approach is respectful, calm and succinct.
- Explain that you are concerned with the behaviour from 'the spectators/player x/the coach' and state exactly what the concerning behaviour is.
- Ask them if there are any issues or comments they would like to raise and try and hear their side of the story.
- You may need to spend some time listening to the person after raising your concerns. If you can empathise with them, they may appreciate you listening to them.
- Remind the individual that if they have any comments or issues to raise, they can contact Hockey ACT or the Club President after the match has been completed and reassure them that their feedback will be listened to. Provide contact information as appropriate.

STEP 3 - TAKING FURTHER ACTION

- Only intervene if it safe to do so, you are comfortable doing so and you strongly believe the individual will respond positively.
- Reiterate that any problems can be raised with HACT after the match has been completed and that the ideal outcome is for the match to be finished in a safe and positive manner for ALL participants: both teams, umpires and spectators (+ yourself!).

A FEW MORE POINTERS

- Have a look at the table below which provides a few suggestions of what to say/not say to maintain cooperative communication.
- Remember, our first priority is your wellbeing. Do not put yourself in danger. If the person you are speaking too becomes aggressive with you, threatens you or you are feeling unsafe remove yourself from the situation. Perhaps say something like: *'we are not getting very far so I am going to remove myself from the situation,'* and walk away. Please also report the matter to the Club President.
- Be confident in your approach but not overconfident.
- Do not judge or use put-downs.
- Remain calm, polite and professional and try to focus the individuals on getting the remainder of the match played in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Make sure your body language is welcoming and open:
 - Do maintain a neutral stance and facial expression and maintain eye contact.
 - Do not point at or stand particularly close to the person you are speaking to. Instead maintain a relaxed stance.
- Consider if you are the best person to deal with this or if there someone else likely to be more successful dealing with this. If you have 'history' with the person who is behaving poorly then seek assistance from someone else. If you are under 18 do not approach the person, and instead seek the assistance of an adult.
- If the situation continues to escalate and you feel it is necessary, call the police on 000.



EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY

- Hey! Watch your language please.
- Excuse me, can I have a word with you?
- The umpire/coach has asked me to come over and talk to you – they are concerned about
- Excuse me, I can see you're frustrated with the umpiring but calling out is not helping.
- I notice you're getting frustrated with some of the umpire's calls. If you would like to provide feedback there are opportunities to do so directly to HACT.
- I am speaking to you because you are being argumentative/loud/are swearing/calling out. The umpire has advised that if the behaviour continues the Captain will be sent. Settle down so they get to play a full game.
- Thanks for the chat and assistance – enjoy the rest of the game/have a good evening.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT NOT TO SAY

- I need to speak to the team manager immediately about your team's poor behaviour!
- Your behaviour is appalling/disgusting/revolting.
- I'm in charge – you'll do as I say.
- Stop your behaviour now – its f*****g disgusting!
- We are not putting up with your crap any longer!
- If things do not change I am going to report you to Hockey ACT!

DO YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR HAVE A QUESTION?

Please reach out to a member of the Club Committee member – a list is available on the [Club Website](#), or email secretary@stpatrickshockey.com.au.