

Rugby League says  
**NO**  
to Discrimination and  
Abuse

***TACKLE IT!***

RUGBY LEAGUE  
**SAYS NO**  
TO DISCRIMINATION & ABUSE



TOGETHER WE CAN **TACKLE IT!**

RUGBY LEAGUE. It's a whole different ballgame®



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[www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

# Definitions

- ***Racism***: behaviour, words or practices which disadvantages or discriminates against people because of their colour, culture or ethnic group and a belief that some races or ethnic groups are superior to others.
- ***Homophobia*** - An irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, their behaviour beliefs, attitude and culture

# Definitions

- **Disablism** - discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others or not acknowledging that disabled people are equal and taking reasonable measures to protect their rights accordingly
- **Sexism** is discrimination between people based on their sex rather than their individual merits. It can be the belief that one sex is superior to the other, that men and women are very different and this should be strongly reflected in society, language, and the law. Sexism can also refer to simple hatred of men (misandry) or women (misogyny)
- **Transphobia** – fear, hatred and discrimination against transsexual or transgender people based on the expression of their internal gender identity
- **Religious intolerance** (i.e. Anti-Semitism or Islamaphobia) discrimination, the fear and/or hatred of religion and those that practice that religion.
- **Ageism** – discrimination or prejudice based on a persons age

# Why is it important?

- Operational Rule
- RESPECT code of conduct for the game
- Tackle IT! programme to tackle abuse and prejudice throughout the game
- Rugby League prides itself on the values of the game: family sport, uncompromising, inclusive and passionate
- It's the law

# But it's just a bit of banter and leg pulling!

- There are codes of conduct, operational rules and legislation that protects people from being subjected to abuse, prejudice and discrimination based on their gender, race, religion, faith, age, and sexual orientation
- Saying it was just a 'joke' or 'harmless banter' is not an excuse for unacceptable behaviour or language
- It doesn't matter if the intention was not necessarily to cause offence, what is important is the perception on either the intended victim or others who may over hear or witness unacceptable language or behaviour. 'I didn't mean it like that' is not an excuse for unacceptable behaviour or language

# What is racist and homophobic abuse or behaviour?

Racist	Homophobic
Smash the big black bastard	Bender
Give it to the black bastard	Poof – poofta
F***** coon	Nancy boy
Go back to your own country	Faggot
You shouldn't be in this country	Arse bandit
BNP slogans / graffiti / leaflets	Everything negative is `gay`
Monkey chants and actions	Get the queer
Paki terrorist	.... got aids and he cant run away
N*****	Batty Boy
Dirty gypsy	Lesser / dyke /

# Impact of Racism and Homophobia - Individual

Victim	Perpetrator
Disgust	Face disciplinary action
Upset / devastated	Brought before tribunal
Isolated and vulnerable	Fine
Shocked – I cant believe it!	Suspension or ban
Fear / scared	Limit career in rugby
Angry – aggressive / fight	Impact on college / university
Loose self confidence	Impact of future job / career
Disbelief that people still say this	Damage to reputation
Affect ability to play - concentration	Anxiety / fear at facing charges
Could decide to leave the team / game	Angry
Damage to self esteem	Confused / Upset



# United they stand!

I don't mind my boy getting a few knocks on the pitch  
Because it's his choice to play  
I don't mind cuts and bruises  
Because they just fade away  
I do mind him getting racially abused  
Because it's something that he'll keep  
It hurts more than a cut or bruise because it runs so deep  
His background and his colour are not choices that he has made  
But he accepts and is proud of who he is  
And has no need to be afraid  
He'll stand tall in the taunts of racism and will dismiss the weak  
By being better and stronger and turning the other cheek  
He has the backing of his team mates so it doesn't get too much  
They will stand united and kick racism into touch

*(Poem by parent whose son was racially abused at a game)*

# Mitch Stringer – Sheffield Eagles



The kids look up to me a bit because I play rugby so hopefully some of those kids will believe what I believe, which is in equal opportunities. When I'm in school talking about tackling homophobia, the first question the kids have got for me is 'are you gay?' And I say 'no I'm not', and then they'll ask 'why are you doing this then?' And my answer is 'I think its important for everybody to be treated equally and I think everybody should be able to be themselves', and I think that's the best answer I can give.

# Impact of racism and homophobia - Club

- Damage to reputation of club & the wider game
- Other clubs wont want to play against a club with a reputation for unacceptable behaviour
- Damage to team spirit
- Lose players – loss of talent
- Lose fans and volunteers-revenue and support
- Loss of local funding / grants and sponsorship
- Banned from league
- Fine

# Reporting incidents

See it, Hear it, Tackle IT! – doing nothing is not an option

<b>Referee, touch line manager</b>	<b>Players, coaches, spectators etc</b>
Put player on report	Decide how to respond safely
Send off	Identify perpetrator if possible
Complete match report, send to RFL	Seek support / back up if required
Give evidence at investigation/ tribunal	Make details notes of incident
	Write up report and pass to club staff
	Club impose sanctions / education
	Club seeks advice from RFL
	Club forwards report for investigation
	Give evidence at investigation/ tribunal
	Promote text line service (professional game only)

# Racism a text book response

**Scenario:** Allegation of racial abuse made by a player at a junior game, alleged comment was not heard by official

## **Response:**

- At end of game official brought incident to attention of both team coaches and the players concerned.
- Players from the alleged abusers team confirmed that he had made a racist comment and said that it was wrong of him
- Alleged abuser made a sincere apology to the victim, which was accepted
- Both coaches talked to their players explaining why racism was unacceptable and providing support for the victim
- Having dealt with the situation the club then monitored the player over the next few games – he did not re offend
- In line with RFL policy the racist incident was reported – investigation revealed player was genuinely sorry and had learnt a valuable lesson
- Player given an official warning over his misconduct
- **Reporting is key does reporting always lead to investigation?**

# What are benefits of reporting

- Club takes initiative and is seen to be proactive
- Recognition by players, volunteers and spectators that club is taking these issues seriously and tackling them effectively
- Club is acknowledged as model of good practice
- Reduce the risk of tribunal with heavy penalties
- Contribute to club mark and club mark gold
- RFL recognition that the club is open and transparent

# Additional advice and information

- **RFL** - Compliance team [robert.hicks@rfl.uk.com](mailto:robert.hicks@rfl.uk.com)
  - Safeguarding Manager [colette.eden@rfl.uk.com](mailto:colette.eden@rfl.uk.com)
  - Equality and Diversity Manager [sarah.williams@rfl.uk.com](mailto:sarah.williams@rfl.uk.com)
- “Guidance for Rugby League Clubs Challenging Anti Gay(homophobic) Abuse and Behaviour” can be downloaded on RFL website [http://www.therfl.co.uk/equitydiversity/ilt\\_resources](http://www.therfl.co.uk/equitydiversity/ilt_resources)
- **Sporting Equals** – BME sports organisation promoting ethnic diversity across sport and leisure [www.sportingequals.org.uk](http://www.sportingequals.org.uk)
- **Pride Sports** – UK's leading organisation for LGBT sports development and equalities [www.pridesports.org](http://www.pridesports.org)
- **Stop Hate UK** is a charity that provides independent & confidential support to people affected by Hate Crime. [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

Doing Nothing is not an Option

**Together we can**

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