

WELFARE & EDUCATION BLUEPRINT

ACHIEVING SUCCESS
ON AND OFF THE FIELD



THE GOAL OF WELFARE AND EDUCATION IN RUGBY LEAGUE IS TO TURN TALENTED BOYS INTO MEN OF CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY; MEN WHO ARE ALL THE BETTER FOR HAVING BEEN PART OF RUGBY LEAGUE.



CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| FOREWORDS | 4 |
| NRL & NSWRL PROGRAMS | 6 |
| JUNIORS | 13 |
| SENIORS | 19 |
| PARENTS | 27 |
| COACHES/TRAINERS | 33 |
| OFFICIALS | 39 |
| ADMINISTRATORS | 45 |
| CONTACTS | 51 |



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FINDING THE BALANCE

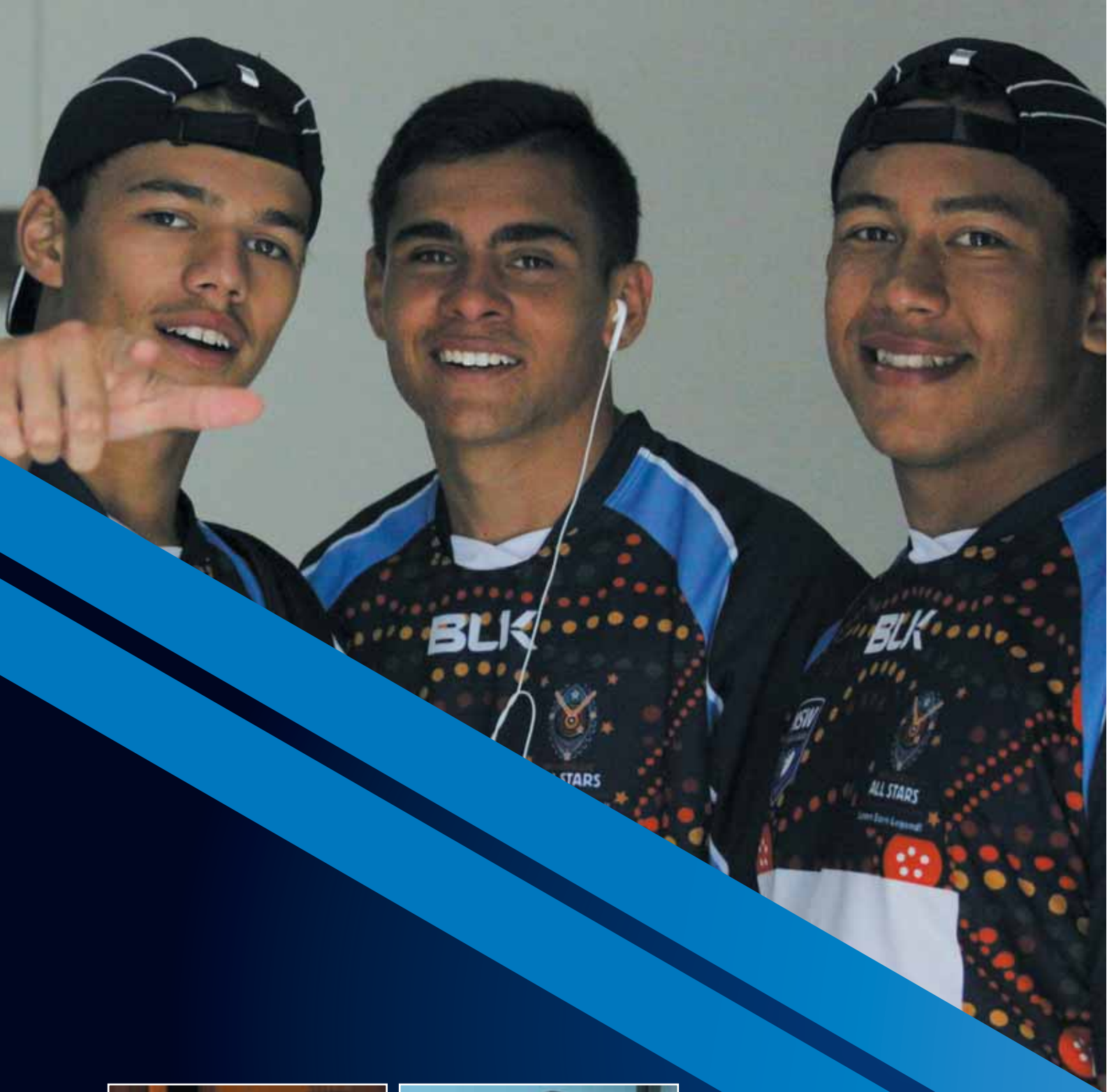
NRL and NSWRL Welfare and Education programs are designed to help our players, administrators and officials grow and develop their potential in every aspect of their lives. We want players and officials to be proud of the game they play and love, but also balanced in their approach to life. There are myriad challenges we face in sport and, no matter how successful our on-field careers, there are setbacks off it too. This street directory-style guide, with tabbed navigation specific to each type of person in our game, will help players as well as officials, administrators and parents deal with those challenges as well as embrace all of the opportunities our game presents.

In short, what we want for the young men and women who enter our program is what any good parent, guardian or teacher wants for the young people in their charge. We want all in the rugby league family to achieve success on the field as well as off it.

I sincerely hope this guide helps you and/or your family members – whether you’re a player, official, administrator or parent – fulfil your potential and overcome the many obstacles that life throws in the way... and achieve great things in footy and in your interests outside the game.

Paul Heptonstall NRL Welfare and Education Manager

“NRL and NSWRL Welfare and Education programs span through every stage of the elite pathway, delivering programs and services that assist players and officials at the start of their careers through to retirement and beyond.”
Paul Heptonstall



FOREWORDS

DAVID TRODDEN CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NSWRL



THERE'S nothing I enjoy more than seeing a player, no matter how successful he or she was on the field, fulfil their potential off it. As a sport, we are blessed with

an outstanding product – and, while they don't receive anywhere near as much publicity, our off-field endeavours are just as brilliant.

No matter where an aspiring player is in their career, the combined resources of the NRL and the NSWRL are there to help. Through our Welfare and Education program, players taking part in NSWRL-run competitions and those a part of NSWRL-affiliated sides have access to support, assistance and guidance.

There are many hurdles players need to overcome in their careers and in life and our programs are designed to help negotiate them all. Obstacles encountered by our players are just like those encountered by everyday members of the community – relationship issues, career challenges, mental health concerns, financial worries, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse to name a few. Our programs are designed to educate players to assist them to make the right decisions, ultimately using rugby league as a vehicle for change.

I hope you find our Welfare Blueprint a valuable tool in making the right decisions in life – whether you're a player or one of our valued off-field team members as a coach/trainer, official, administrator or parent.

DR GEORGE PEPONIS, OAM CHAIRMAN, NSWRL



WELCOME to the elite competitions of rugby league. If you are prepared to work hard both on and off the field you'll be amazed at just how many doors rugby

league can open for you. I speak from firsthand knowledge. A proud Canterbury junior, I had the privilege of captaining my club and Australia as I juggled a rugby league career with my medical studies.

None of which would have been possible without the support of my teammates, coaches and the entire Canterbury club.

Having come through the juniors I was graded in 1972 and made first grade two years later. After representing New South Wales (1976-80) I debuted for Australia in 1978, going on to captain my country five times.

It was fantastic to achieve my goals on the football field but equally important to me were my educational ambitions and luckily the club could not have been more supportive as I studied to become a doctor. Awarded an educational scholarship by Canterbury, I was fortunate that I didn't have to have a job as I studied and played rugby league.

I could not have done it without Canterbury and in my role as New South Wales Rugby League Chairman I'm delighted to say I know all our clubs aim to support your development as people as much as they do your development as rugby league players.

If you are willing to show the same dedication to your study and traineeships as you are already demonstrating towards your rugby league dreams then you can achieve anything.



PLAYWISE PROGRAM PREPARE PROFESSIONALLY

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE – AND THE PLAYWISE PROGRAM HELPS GIVE YOUNG PLAYERS AN IDEA OF JUST WHAT IS IN STORE OVER THE COMING YEARS.

ALIGNED with the annual intake of rookies each November, the PlayWise program delivers critical professional and life skills necessary to help elite youth athletes and also identifies barriers to learning while complementing the career development and support currently provided by the Education and Welfare teams at each of the NRL clubs.

Players learn about topics such as basic finance, payroll, resume writing, job-seeking skills, contracts, codes of conduct, match statistics and media. While a lot of this stuff may seem simple enough, it can often get lost in the hustle and bustle of training and other day-to-day commitments. Knowing how to write an appropriate

cover letter for a job may make the difference between getting an interview and being just another application in the pile.

The PlayWise program also covers what young players' responsibilities are when it comes to interacting with others on social media. Once again, this may seem like a straightforward topic but recent history shows us just what can happen when these things are used inappropriately.

The PlayWise program is a valuable tool that will help you in your day-to-day life as a footballer but also off the field too.

CAREERWISE PROGRAM PLOT YOUR CAREER PATH

THE CAREERWISE PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE TO HELP PLAYERS MAKE SMART DECISIONS THAT WILL ULTIMATELY MAKE LIFE AFTER FOOTY A WHOLE LOT EASIER.

THE best athletes in the world have a balanced approach to their lives, and the CareerWise program has been designed so players can follow in their footsteps. The program has been designed to assist athletes not only on the field but also in every other aspect of their lives too.

Football careers don't last forever so players should put the appropriate building blocks in place to ensure they have something to fall back on to when it is time to hang up the boots.

Every NRL club has a qualified career coach whose job it is to deliver the CareerWise program and help players plan for life after sport. The program is delivered to players of all ages from elite juniors (U16s and U18s) to VB NSW Cup players, under-20s and NRL players.

Based on best practice in career development, the program is there as support through every age and stage. It aids in helping players make well-informed choices about their future careers.

The CareerWise program also helps pave the way for the future by helping players engage in work, study, work experience, volunteering and networking, all of which will assist in making a smooth transition from being a professional athlete to a post-football career.

Players who have already experienced CareerWise are unanimous in their praise for the help it has given them and the tools it has provided for them moving forward. Be CareerWise – put as much time and effort into your career off the field as you do on it.



“I played my best footy when I was working or studying off the field.”

Former Australian Kangaroo & NRL Welfare & Education Manager, Andrew Ryan

NRL & NSWRL PROGRAMS



75

The number of games played, on average, by a professional during his NRL career. Be smart and plan for life post-footy, too!



TRADE UP PROGRAM
TOOLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED

LEARNING A TRADE IS AN INVALUABLE SKILL, ESPECIALLY ONCE A PLAYER HAS DECIDED TO HANG UP THE BOOTS.

TRADING in your training bag for a nail bag can be a great way to remain financially independent once your playing days are over – and the Trade Up program can help you attain the appropriate qualifications.

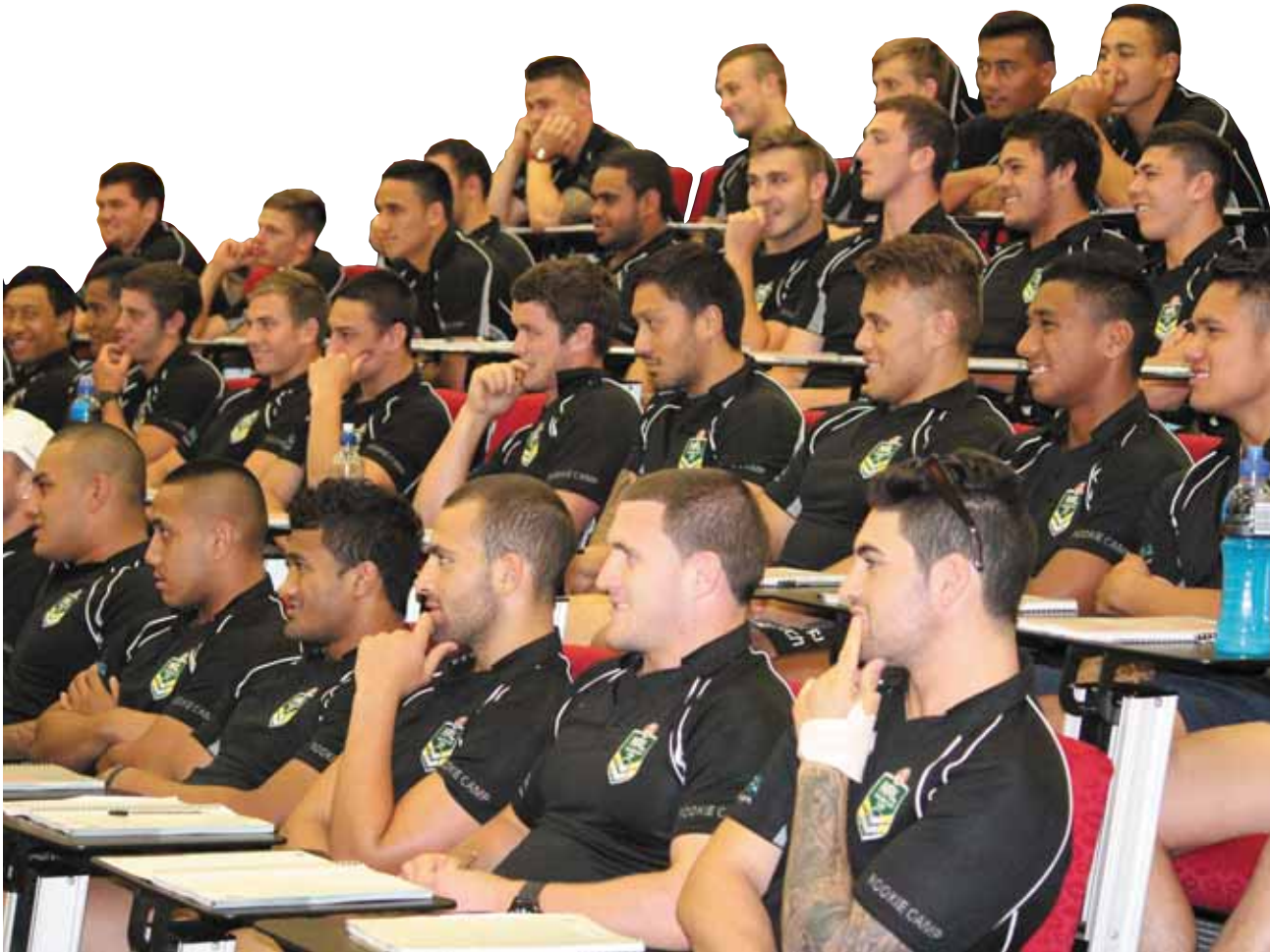
The program focuses on increasing the retention and completion rates of Australian apprentices who are also involved in rugby league. Identified mentors work with NRL clubs and regions to assist identified apprentices within the rugby league community to successfully complete their apprenticeships.

This program has a particular focus on trades within areas of identified skills shortage, including recreation, construction, related trades and hospitality.

Kicking off back in 2013, the Trade Up program provides information on industry trends, helps identify the barriers that stop some players completing their apprenticeships and creates solutions to improve completion rates.

Retired NRL players who themselves have a trade qualification have been engaged and trained as mentors across the 15 Australian NRL clubs. They use their own successful experiences of achieving their trade to help younger players follow in their footsteps.

Whether you want to be a chippy or a plumber or even have your eyes on moving into the hospitality industry, Trade Up is there to help put you on the right path.



GRADUATES OF LEAGUE PROGRAM
ASSISTING PLAYERS THROUGH UNIVERSITY

ANOTHER GREAT WAY TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR LIFE AFTER FOOTBALL IS BY FURTHERING YOUR STUDIES WHILE YOU’RE STILL PLAYING.

GONE are the days when a footy player who wanted to go to university simply couldn’t because of their league endeavours. Thanks to the Graduates of League program, players like you can juggle an education and a footy career too.

The Graduates of League is an NRL program for university students that involves NRL clubs and universities, providing mentoring, tuition and financial support while also working to increase entry, retention and completion rates of rugby league players who are attending university.

The program was created to encourage NRL and National Youth Competition players to not only enrol in further education, but complete their chosen courses successfully. The program offers interested players mentoring support and academic tuition.

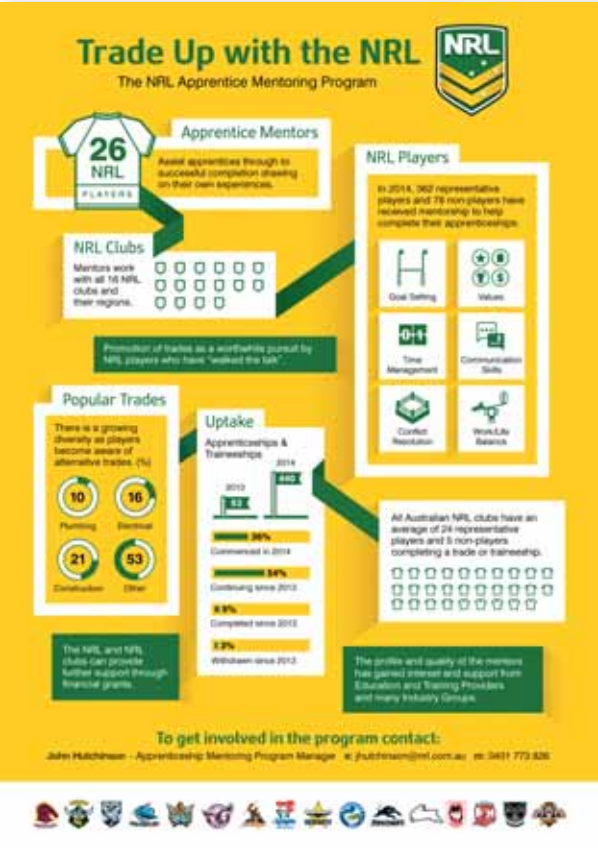
In recent years the NRL has begun to recognise the achievements of players who look to better themselves at the annual Academic Team of the Year event which

recognises players who demonstrate that a successful career in rugby league does not mean you have to choose between sport and education.

Not only does further education enable players to expand the realms of their post-football lives, but it also provides a great social conduit which can help break up the day-to-day rigours of professional or semi-professional sport.

DID YOU KNOW?

Currently 18 academic institutions deliver the Graduates of League program. The completion rate of all players attempting university courses has increased from 60% to 87% in just two years.





NSWRL & ICMS PARTNERSHIP KICKING GOALS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT, SYDNEY (ICMS) HAS JOINED FORCES WITH THE NSWRL TO OFFER THREE SCHOLARSHIPS ANNUALLY TO FURTHER ASSIST IN THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYERS.

PARTICIPANTS in New South Wales Rugby League-run competitions and programs now have the opportunity to receive a scholarship thanks to a deal struck between the NSWRL and the International College of Management, Sydney (ICMS).

The NSWRL and ICMS have partnered to provide industry placement coupled with tuition fee scholarships. In addition to tuition fee financial assistance, the scholarship winners also gain invaluable paid 'hands-on' experience working with the NSWRL.

Three scholarships will be awarded annually, with allocation based on merit as well as other factors including hardship. One scholarship will be awarded to a school leaver.

Scholarships will be awarded across a one-year period starting from February 2015, with chosen candidates to undertake a Bachelors degree of their choosing at ICMS. The ICMS campus is located at Manly on Sydney's northern beaches and can be easily accessed by public transport. The campus is set against a picturesque backdrop adjacent to spacious parklands with sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean to the east and north as well as the Sydney Harbour to the south.

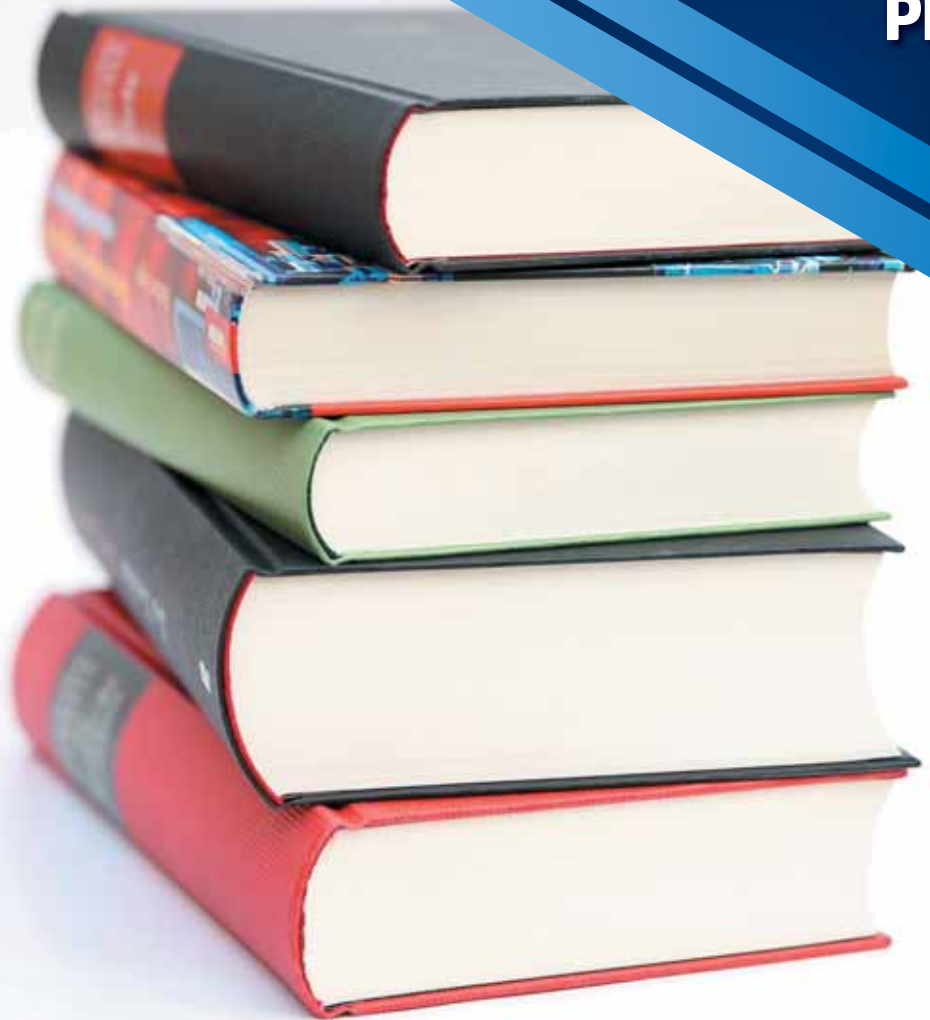
SAY WHAT?

There are currently more than 6,500 ICMS graduates working in a variety of roles right around the world.



STUDY + EXPERIENCE = SUCCESS

NRL & NSWRL PROGRAMS



EDUCATION GRANTS GET INTO THE CLASSROOM

THERE ARE A HOST OF EDUCATIONAL GRANTS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE THAT CAN HELP EASE THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF STUDYING.

To further encourage the engagement in education and career development the clubs, the NRL and RLPA are contributing more than \$2,500,000 in education grants to all NRL and second-tier players. This funding can be used for any type of education, from a forklift licence to a post-graduate degree.

The educational grants are developed to assist rugby league players with the fees and associated costs of attaining post-secondary education.

Who is eligible?

Currently there are three avenues for players to become eligible to access this scheme:

- » Players who have graduated from an NYC playing contract into a VB NSW Cup playing contract
- » Players who have shifted from an NRL contract to a VB NSW Cup contract
- » Players on a NSWRL contract

In all circumstances, players must have played a minimum of 10 VB NSW Cup games to be eligible for funding.

Successful applicants can receive up to 50 per cent of the fees and/or associated expenses paid, up to a maximum of \$2,000 annually (for one year). Applications need to be submitted to the NSWRL.

For more information, email NSWRL Welfare & Education Manager Greg Nichols on gnichols@nswrl.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

There have been 450 education grants provided to players in the 2014 season from the NRL/RLPA education fund, totalling more than \$600,000.



STATS AMAZING

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM NSWRL-RUN COMPETITIONS



977

Players competing in NSWRL open-age competitions – VB NSW Cup, Ron Massey Cup and Sydney Shield.



44

Percentage of players from the 2014 VB NSW Cup who have competed in the NRL.



21

Most common age of players in the VB NSW Cup – 100 NSW Cup players turned 21 in 2014.



10

Average appearances each season by VB NSW Cup players.



37

Percentage of players in the Ron Massey Cup who also played in the Sydney Shield.



527

Number of players who competed in the Ron Massey Cup in 2014.



51

Players who competed in the VB NSW Cup in 2014 who also made their NRL debuts.



JUNIORS



IT ALL STARTS HERE

THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE IN YOUR YOUNGER YEARS AFFECT YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE – MAKE SURE YOU’RE MAKING THE RIGHT ONES!

LIFESTYLE choices you make in your life now will have a huge influence on your career and personal life – and your likelihood of achieving success both on and off the field. What you decide to do now has huge ramifications on your performance, your career and your relationships.

It’s vital to know that, as professional footballers, rugby league players are required to do more than simply play the game. They need to be good role models, people who make good decisions in the trickiest of situations. Start making the right decisions at a young age and it will be easy to make the correct ones in later life.

On the field, attitude has a big impact on making it to the professional ranks. It’s exactly the same off the field. The best players have a balanced approach to life – one that improves their focus and performance.

Make the correct decisions in your teens – on your career aims, education, who you socialise with, and what you do and do not allow to be a part of your life – and success will follow you in all aspects.

WHAT DO I NEED TO TAKE?

THE DOS AND DON’TS OF DIET, NUTRITION AND EXPENSIVE PILLS AND POWDERS.

LOTS of people imagine that athletic supplements work like spinach did for Popeye or like a power-up in a video game – that they give you a boost of super-strength or super-stamina. Not really.

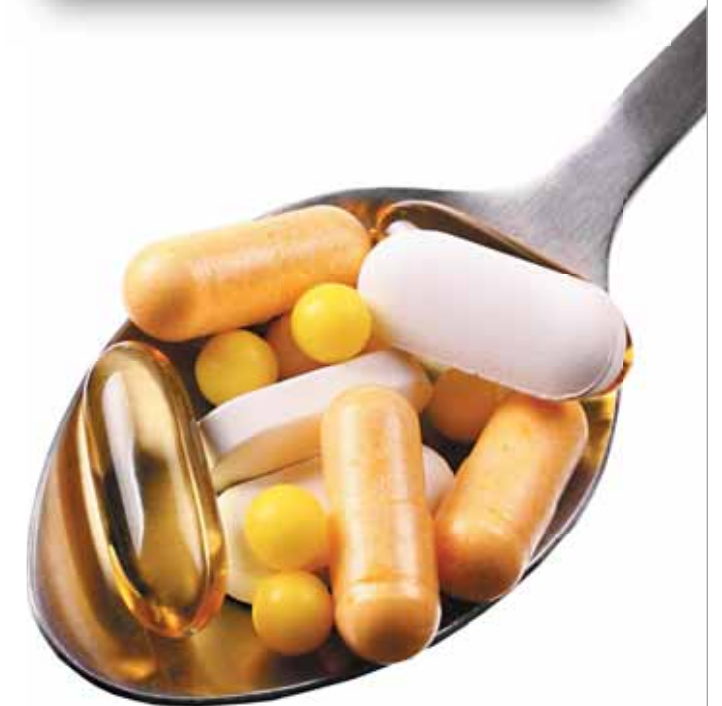
Most supplements are expensive and are often misused – you get better results from a healthy diet. Forget the mass gainers, whey protein and creatine – tackle your diet head-on to give your body the best chance of developing and meeting the rigours of high-level rugby league.

Plenty of professional athletes, like Olympic champion Sally Pearson, completely sidestep supplements altogether. The NRL’s former Chief Medical Officer Dr Ron Muratore sums it up best. “There is no conclusive proof that they do make a difference. You are far better off working on your diet.”

EXPERT ADVICE

Small changes can make a big impact to your health, energy levels and mood. Aim to:

- Cut back on sugary drinks
- Keep a fruit bowl stocked at home for fast and low-calorie snacks
- Eat breakfast every day
- Avoid adding salt to meals



DIET TIPS FOR TEENS

Many teenagers eat junk food every day, like chips, sweets and soft drinks. Your body, however, can’t run properly on poor fuel. Compared to a home-cooked meal, junk food (which includes fast food) is almost always:

- Higher in fat, particularly saturated fat
- Higher in salt
- Higher in sugar
- Lower in fibre
- Lower in nutrients, such as calcium and iron
- Served in larger portions, which means more kilojoules

A poor diet can cause weight gain, high blood pressure, constipation, fatigue and concentration problems – even when you’re young.

If you’re aiming to become a professional athlete and live a long and successful life, why would you put poor fuel in your body?

DIET & SUPPLEMENTS

SOCIAL MEDIA

'PRIVATE' MESSAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

THINK THOSE MESSAGES AND COMMENTS YOU'RE POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE VISIBLE ONLY TO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY? THINK AGAIN!

You think that online post, Tweet or message is just between you and your inner circle, right? Try as you might, most of the content you write online can be seen by plenty of other parties – parents, coaches, employers, teachers and even the police can see what you are posting!

Once a photo or post is on the internet, it is very hard to erase – sometimes even impossible. Be very careful what you choose to share with the world. Used correctly, social media is a great tool but used inappropriately and it can become deeply embarrassing. It could even cost you a job or a shot at a career as a professional rugby league player.



Vilification is behaviour which insults, humiliates, intimidates, threatens or disparages another person on the basis of their age, race, religion, colour, descent, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status or disability. You will face time on the sideline as the minimum consequence if you do this in person or on the internet.

Photos you think are funny, sexy, silly and/or fun at the time can definitely come back to haunt you. Before you post something, imagine what your mum, dad or someone else you trust and respect would have to say if they read it.



MENTAL HEALTH AND BULLYING

BE A LEADER, NOT A BYSTANDER

STAND UP AND TAKE ACTION AGAINST BEHAVIOUR AND TREATMENT THAT IS NOT RIGHT.

BULLYING, the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively dominate others, is something we can all help eliminate.

If you see behaviour you know is not right, stand up and take action. You don't fight the person or abuse them back – simply support the person who is being bullied and let the bully know their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bullying can affect a child or teen's mental health and wellbeing. It is also associated with low self-esteem, and can contribute to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. It can also lead to feelings of helplessness and being suicidal.

Bystanders who watch, laugh or encourage bullying behaviour are just as much to blame as the person carrying out the bullying. Be a man, be a leader and stand up against bullying.



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

DATING ADVICE

IT'S NORMAL TO THINK ABOUT DEVELOPING NEW RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR TEENAGE YEARS.

TEENAGERS experience a hormonal rollercoaster as they enter puberty. It's the time of life when everyone's bodies change, people's views start to take shape and where sexual interests and desires develop.



- » Give respect to the person you are dating – treat him/her as you would like to be treated
- » Never force or pressure the person you are dating into something they don't want to do
- » If you are dating one person exclusively, be faithful and honest – trust is the foundation of all relationships
- » Never let someone talk you into violating your own principles
- » Practise safe sex – contracting a sexually transmitted disease could affect the rest of your life.



Males, especially, need to be very conscious about what to expect from their relationships as they get older, particularly with the opposite sex. Here are some tips to earn respect and have meaningful relationships as you enter adulthood:

PLAYER BEHAVIOUR

ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT DRUGS

THE FATE OF YOUR CAREER IS IN YOUR HANDS

DRINKING AND TAKING DRUGS? YOU SIMPLY WON'T MAKE THE GRADE.

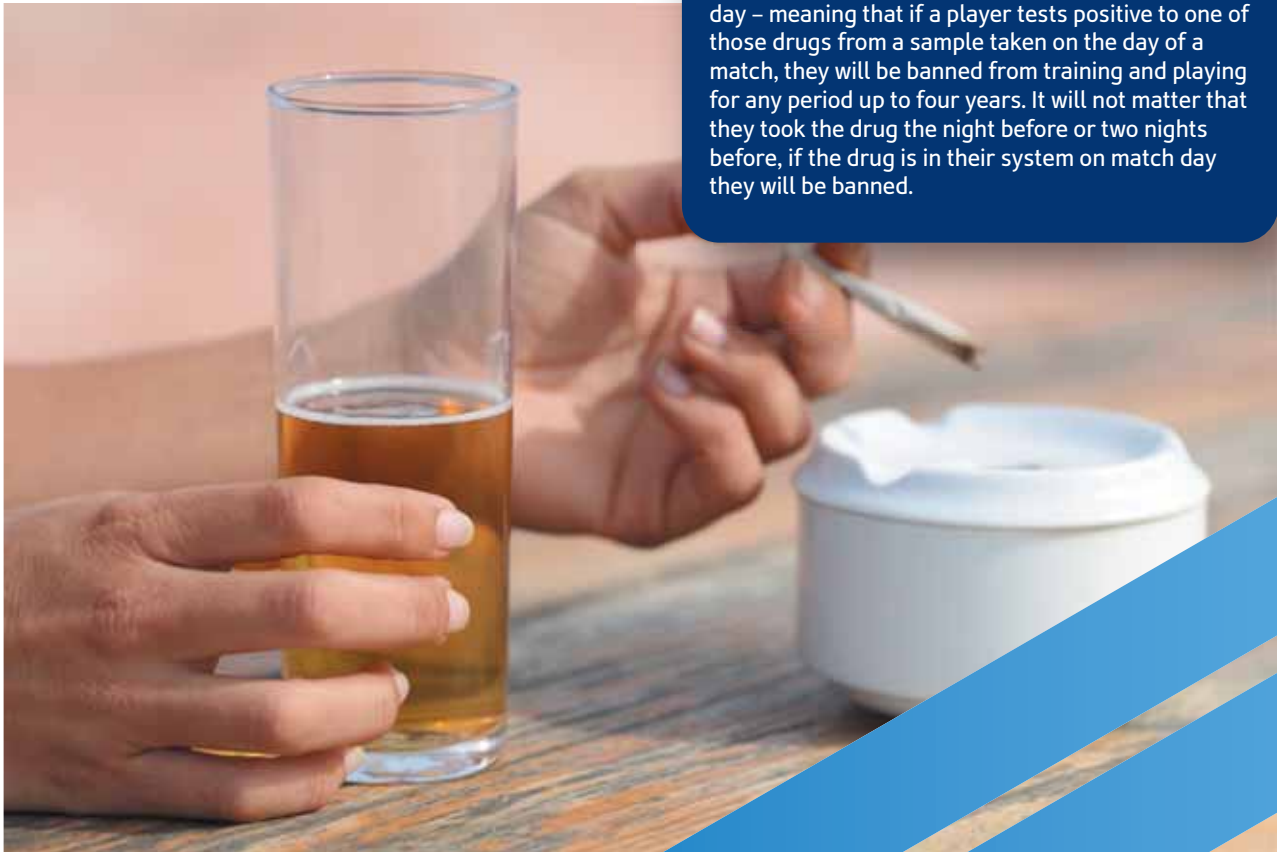
THERE are two types of players – one dedicated to achieving his/her dreams and the other with flexible morals. Which type are you?

Is the dedicated 'professional' taking drugs and partying too hard? Chances of someone like that making it to the NRL are pretty damn slim.

Players in the 'too smart for it' category know where they want to be and are already making choices to make it happen. To make the NRL and have a successful career away from the game, a player needs to be smart about their decisions.

If it's an ambition to make it to the highest-quality rugby league competition in the world, getting caught up in the world of illicit drugs and alcohol consumption at an early age ultimately makes that dream a lot harder to achieve. You decide whether you make it or not.

All junior representatives need to sit an NRL Aware test too. Find the answers on page 26.



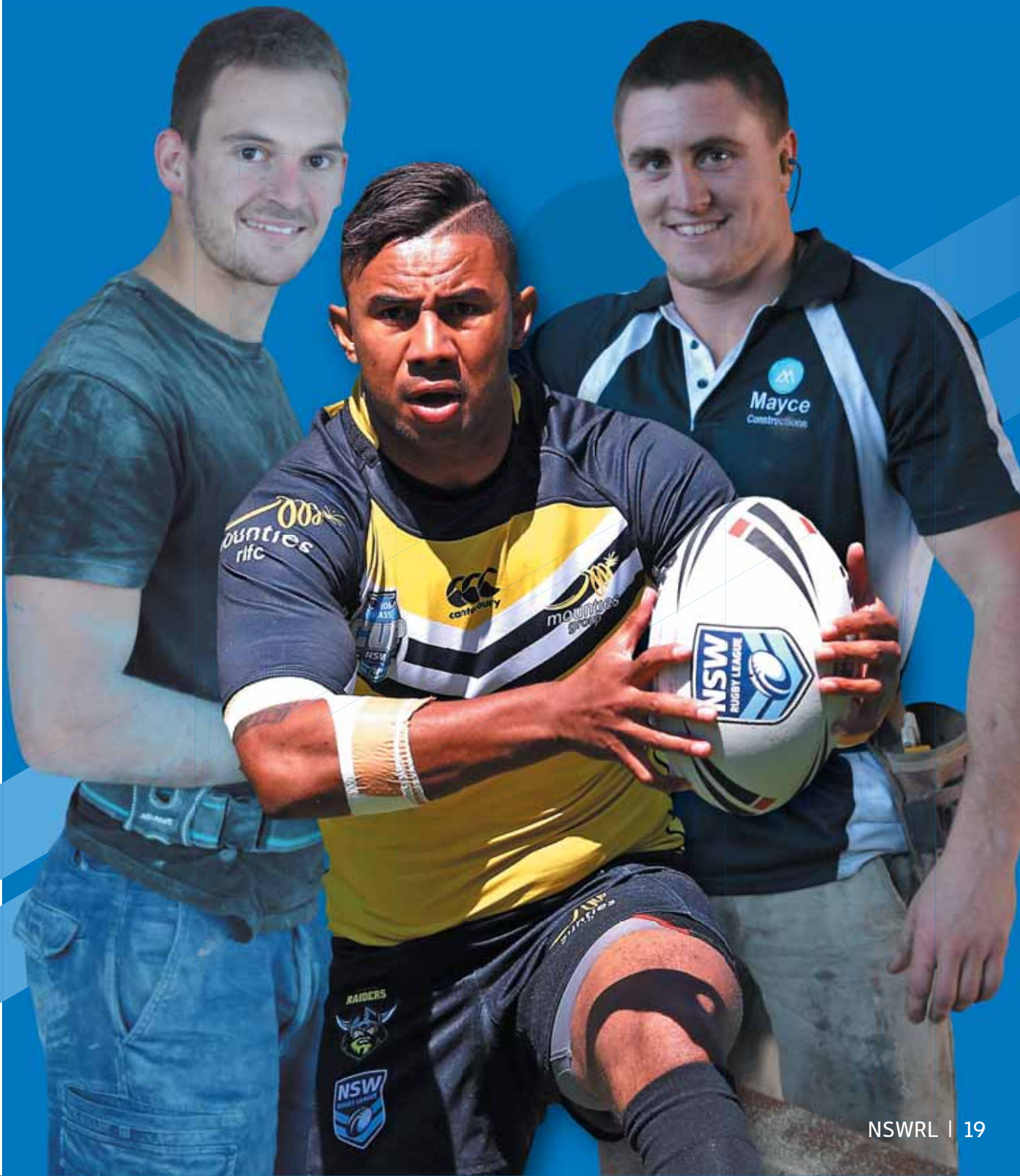
DRUG TESTS AND YOU

- The NSWRL, through ASADA, has the right to conduct both random and targeted tests on players.
- Players are not only banned after testing positive to a prohibited substance. Players, and also club staff, can also be banned for trafficking, supplying, or possessing performance-enhancing drugs, helping another player use them, or for evading a test.
- Players must always provide a sample when asked. If they don't, it will be viewed the same as if they took a performance-enhancing drug and will be banned anyway.
- The NSWRL takes a strong stance against players who choose to dope. Those who dope because they haven't got the talent or who are unwilling to do the training only cheat those who do have the natural talent and motivation to train. As such, it is the responsibility of all clean players to ensure rugby league is free of doping and should report it when they become aware of it.

If you have any concerns that a teammate or a player from another team is doping you can confidentially report this to ASADA at www.asada.gov.au/stampoutdoping/index.php or by calling 13 000 ASADA (13 000 27232).

Most illicit drugs, or "party" drugs as they are sometimes known as, such as ecstasy, cocaine, ice, and speed are stimulants so they are also seen as performance-enhancing drugs when taken on match day – meaning that if a player tests positive to one of those drugs from a sample taken on the day of a match, they will be banned from training and playing for any period up to four years. It will not matter that they took the drug the night before or two nights before, if the drug is in their system on match day they will be banned.

SENIORS



FULFILLING YOUR DREAMS

AFTER TOILING AWAY IN HAROLD MATTHEWS, SG BALL AND THE HOLDEN CUP JUNIOR COMPETITIONS, THE TIME HAS COME TO GRADUATE TO SENIOR FOOTBALL – AND ADULT LIFE.

WHETHER you are playing in the Sydney Shield, Ron Massey Cup or VB NSW Cup competitions, you should be proud of what you have already achieved in your career. These competitions form the cornerstone of open-age football in NSW and place you in the perfect position to continue to chase your NRL dream.

More players graduate out of the VB NSW Cup into the NRL than from any other competition and, with 12 of the sides set to compete in 2015 having an NRL affiliation,

you never know just who might be watching you strut your stuff.

Regardless of which grade you are currently playing, it is time for you to become a leader on and off the park – and set yourself up for life after football too.

You never know what is right around the corner so put your best foot forward on and off the field, be committed to being the best you can be and the rest will look after itself.

SUPPLEMENTS & ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES NOT WORTH THE RISK

IF SOMETHING IS WORTH DOING, IT'S WORTH DOING RIGHT. DO THE WRONG THING, LIKE TAKE PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS TO BOOST YOUR GAME, AND THERE'LL BE CONSEQUENCES.

If something is worth doing, the positives need to outweigh the negatives. And when it comes to the consumption of drugs or unauthorised supplements, it is pretty simple – the negatives always far outweigh the positives.

The intake of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) can lead to a multitude of health issues, both short- and long-term and in some severe cases can be life-threatening. Studies show those who use PEDs are prone to uncontrollable mood swings, for example, which can place high levels of stress on the user and lead to the breakdown of relationships with friends and loved ones.

Apart from all of the physical side effects, players who take drugs and/or unauthorised supplements run the very real risk of being caught – something that will almost always ultimately result in suspension and a loss of income. Then there's the stigma associated with being a 'drug cheat', and the related problems it causes later in life.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) recently published the 2015 Prohibited List, which will come into effect on January 1, 2015. To view it visit WADA's website - www.wada-ama.org

The consumption of PEDs and other illicit substances will hurt your body, hurt your family, hurt your wallet and most likely hurt your career and reputation... It's just not worth it! Always remember the golden rule: if in doubt, don't!

DID YOU KNOW?

The two most recent players to wear the no.6 jersey for the NSW VB Blues both won VB NSW Cup titles before making their mark in the NRL – James Maloney (Wentworthville Magpies, 2008) and Josh Reynolds (Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, 2011 & 2012).



GAMBLING DON'T PUNT YOUR FUTURE

THE HOUSE OR BOOKMAKER ALWAYS WINS IN BETTING, A FACT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER.

AUSTRALIA has more than 20 per cent of the world's total number of gaming machines, a sad reflection on our status as one of the punt-mad nations on earth.

A total of 38.6 per cent of adult Australians play the pokies. While a small flutter can be enjoyable, it's worth mentioning the pitfalls and dangers associated with them. Don't put your future on the line!

- » It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 problem gamblers in Australia
- » The average payout percentage of pokies is 90.89%
- » The average chance of winning the jackpot playing one line is one in 50,000,000
- » The average player loses \$380 every year
- » The average problem gambler loses \$12,000 each year

The most important fact to keep in mind when playing poker machines is that they all have a payout percentage of less than 100%. Any gambling game with a payout of lower than 100% will eventually lead to you losing all of your money if you play long enough.

Who really wins? The answer is the gaming operators (pubs, clubs and casinos) and the government which collect billions every year as gambling taxes.

You cannot bet or be involved in betting on any rugby league games anywhere in the world when you sign an NSWRL or NRL contract. Betting on rugby league matches will result in sanctions. You may also be charged with criminal offences. Just don't do it.



ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE THE REAL CHAMP WALKS AWAY

IT TAKES GRUNT TO THROW A PUNCH
BUT IT TAKES GUTS TO WALK AWAY.

IT'S late, everyone has had a little too much to drink and a random pest gets aggressive for absolutely no reason at all. It happens time and time again, weekend after weekend, and guys like us keep getting caught up in the middle of it.

Fast forward that scene 20 minutes and, often times, the police have arrived, there are men bleeding from their heads and the red-and-blue ambulance lights are swirling. Violence ruins nights – and, on many occasions, lives too.

Let's rewind that scene to where the pest comes in. This is where we can make a choice. This is where we can avoid bleeding heads, the police questioning, the ambulance, the hospital visits and the upset girls. This is where you need to STOP, THINK and WALK AWAY. Control your temper and be very aware of the consequences that follow the action of throwing a punch – criminal charges, court proceedings, lawyers' costs, broken bones and even death.

Be the real champ and walk away. A fight: it's dead set not worth it.

GROG AFFECTS YOUR GAME

IT'S NOT JUST YOUR WALLET, YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND YOUR HEAD THAT YOUR DRINKING HABIT IS HURTING.

ALCOHOL is detrimental to your sports performance as well as almost every other aspect of your life. As a diuretic, drinking alcohol can lead to dehydration. Athletes need to be hydrated when they exercise to maintain the flow of blood through the body, which is essential for circulating oxygen and nutrients to muscles. Hydration also helps control your body temperature so you're more likely to overheat if you've been drinking alcohol.

National guidelines recommend men and women drink no more than two standard drinks on any day, reducing their risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury over a lifetime. They also state drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion. The best advice: go easy on the grog.



DID YOU KNOW?

Drunken assaults claim more victims in NSW than any other state, with a shocking total of 88,100 men and women reporting, over a year-long period, that their attackers – both strangers and those they knew – were affected by drugs or alcohol.

21st CENTURY RELATIONSHIPS DATING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

JUST because the times are changing doesn't mean society's standards are.

Today, thousands of relationships each year are formed through the digital world – through online dating sites, hook-up apps and other meeting places on the world-wide web. It's a huge change to how people met and interacted as little as 10 years ago.

That, however, doesn't mean what was once unacceptable is now ok. Take, for instance, the case of a Gold Coast man who was jailed for sending a woman

1439 abusive text messages. The abuse and ridicule caused her great distress, with her later falling from a balcony to her death.

Who you talk to on hook-up apps, dating websites and via text messages is up to you, but remember what you do can have legal consequences.

Remember, people with whom you have relationships deserve respect. Treat them as you would like to be treated. Relationships should be honest, open and respectful.

SEXTING NAKED PHOTOS AND THE LAW

LET'S break down the law around mobile phones and nudity. It is illegal to use a mobile phone or another recording device to take photos or film somebody without their consent in a place where they could either reasonably expect privacy or while doing a private act.

- » It is a criminal offence to film or take photos of a person during sex, if you do not have their consent.
- » It is a criminal offence to show or share a naked picture of someone to a third party without the consent of the person in the photo, even if they consented to the photo being taken.

» It is a criminal offence if you have been sent a naked picture of an underage person and you keep it on your phone or if you continue to share that image. If found guilty of this offence you could end up on the sex offenders list alongside rapists and paedophiles.

The best advice: Treat your partner as you would like to be treated.



VILIFICATION

STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK BONES BUT NAME-CALLING MAY LEAD TO SUICIDE

WE'RE NOT AT PRIMARY SCHOOL ANYMORE – THERE IS NO NEED FOR TEASING.

HAVE you laughed at someone being hammered about being a red head? Have you stood by when they are being continually harassed about it? Did you feel like sometimes it was a bit harsh and you should have said something? Imagine if they were saying it about someone's skin colour instead – would you have said something then? Is that the same or is it different? Why?

Bullying and vilification are two very powerful and destructive forms of abuse. Sure, it's fine to have a joke here and there as long as what's being said is not offensive. Sometimes jokes go on and on, day after day, time and time again and the 'jokes' that follow begin to become nastier and less funny. It shouldn't get this far. You need to take action before it gets to that point. Stop being a bystander and start being a leader. Stand up, speak up and don't let it continue – usually by telling the person or people who started the 'jokes' that they have run their course. If this doesn't work there are always alternatives, like a quick chat with the coach or team captain. If that doesn't work, talk with the CEO or even the police if it's a really desperate situation.

Vilification doesn't need to necessarily offend the person who it is intended for. If it's on social media or there are other people who are in earshot of what is being said then they could definitely be offended by certain comments. Comments which involve another person's race, religion, colour, descent, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability or HIV/Aids status can have a massive impact on someone's state of mind. Be aware of what you say!



MENTAL HEALTH

DEPRESSION - HOW COMMON IS IT?

On average, 2.5 players in every run-on rugby league team will experience depression. Symptoms of depression include negative self-talk, lowered self-esteem, low energy levels, drastically increased/decreased appetite, changes to sleeping patterns, uncontrollable emotions, increased anxiety, increased anger and more. Anyone experiencing these symptoms for more than a fortnight should seek professional help. If a person indicated they think they might be suffering depression, use these steps to help guide you both through it:

1. Assess the situation: How desperate is the person? Are they suicidal?
2. Listen without judgement: Ask questions to find out more about the situation.
3. Give support and information: Depression is a very common disease. It's no-one's fault.
4. Encourage the person to seek professional help: Suggest 'League Support', Blackdog Institute and MensLine.
5. Encourage other support: Family members, partners, friends, NSWRL Welfare and Education.

If the person in question is suicidal, do not leave them alone until professional help is sought.



SUICIDE LEADS MALE DEATHS IN AUSTRALIA IN AGES 15-44

Men are three times more likely to kill themselves than women and suicide is the leading cause of death in men aged between 15 and 44. On average there are five male suicides per day in Australia. Vilification and continual bullying are contributors to this. If you or someone you know is experiencing negative or dark thoughts, seek professional help immediately.

There are a host of organisations who can provide assistance to those who are struggling and need someone to talk to. Beyond Blue, for example, does wonderful work and can be contacted at any time on 1300 224 636.



SOCIAL MEDIA

YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME!

HAVE you ever picked up your phone, flicked through your Facebook feed then paused and wondered, 'What am I even looking at this for?'

You're not alone. On average Australians spend seven hours a week on Facebook alone – seven hours! Imagine if you combined that with YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Tinder, Snapchat, Ebay/Gumtree, emails and everyday general web surfing. It's a bit scary.

Be conscious of your 'marriage' to social media and the internet for a day. Just think: do you check your phone as soon as you wake up? Take it to the toilet? What about when you're driving? During dinner? At the movies? At work? You get the point. Maybe there's something more constructive you can do with your time!



NRL AWARE THE ANSWERS ARE HERE

YOU NEED TO PASS THE NRL AWARE TEST BEFORE YOU CAN PLAY FOOTY IN 2015. RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE MORE THAN JUST GOOD AT PLAYING SPORT IN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT AND THIS MEANS BEING A GOOD DECISION MAKER. THE ANSWERS TO THE TEST ARE HERE.

MODULE 1 – ALCOHOL

Binge drinking is the consumption of an excessive amount of alcohol in a short period of time. The aim of binge drinking is to drink with the intention of getting drunk. The irresponsible use of alcohol can affect you in many different ways including being banned from the sport and negatively affecting your reputation and health.

Often people get more drunk than they intended because they get themselves into shouts, drink shots and get carried away in the moment.

These days it's becoming more and more common for rugby league players not to drink and this is because they are focused on their health and fitness, they don't want drinking to affect their playing performance and some for religious reasons.

There are approximately 1.5 standard drinks in a schooner of full-strength beer. Nothing other than time without drinking will reduce your Blood Alcohol Concentration.

MODULE 2 – ILLICIT DRUGS

Illicit drugs do not have quality or pricing controls and include substances such as cannabis, ecstasy and heroin. All illicit drugs have a significant impact on your health and this is why they are illegal.

Drugs can stay in your system for different periods of time and substances such as cannabis can take longer than four weeks to exit the body. If you take illicit drugs and get caught, it could ruin your career as you can be banned from the sport for life.

You can be charged with drugs distribution if you are in possession of a greater amount than that of personal use, if you are preparing drugs for sale or if you are handing drugs to others.

You can never refuse to take a drug test from the police or rugby league authorities. To do so is deemed and treated the same as returning a positive test.

Do not take drinks from strangers when out drinking and do not share protein shakes with other players, as in both circumstances you may be contaminated with illegal substances.

If you believe you have been spiked with a drug, see a doctor immediately and notify your coach as soon as possible.

MODULE 3 – SUPPLEMENTS AND ASADA

The best way to check whether your substances are banned or not in Australian sport is to use the 'check your substances' tool on the ASADA website.

Misusing prescription medication means that you are taking medication that is not prescribed for you, taking medication not in the prescribed way and taking medication for other reasons than stated for by the doctor.

All athletes have rights and responsibilities within the doping control process however you will always have to be seen by the chaperon when providing a sample. It is never ok to inject a supplement, unless it is approved by a doctor and the club supplements committee. You should only be taking supplements which have been approved by the club supplements committee.

MODULE 4 – GAMBLING

You should never accept a bribe. All bribes must be reported to the club, who will notify the governing body. It's deemed people have a gambling problem when they think about gambling all the time, they gamble in an attempt to win money back and they borrow money to gamble with.

You cannot bet on any rugby league match at any level, anywhere in the world, including betting within a syndicate. You cannot pass on or share information that is not available to the general public.

MODULE 5 – RESPECTFUL RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

It is a criminal offence to share sexually explicit images and/or videos without the consent of the person who is in the image. The golden rule in relationships is to treat others how you would like to be treated.

Due to the fact that you have signed a contract with the NSWRL or the NRL, you cannot say whatever you like on social media or publicly. Anything which contradicts or puts the integrity of rugby league at risk is breaking the terms of the contract.

It's never a good idea to take to social media and engage in an argument – the public domain is not a place suited for private conversations.

PARENTS



GUIDING YOUR CHILD THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

AS THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A GIFTED RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES YOU MAY FACE.

THERE are many pressures on young athletes that need to be managed to ensure they have the best chance of achieving success on and off the field. Just as it is throughout early childhood and adolescence, being a positive role model and investing time in your child's interests can minimise the influences of external pressures such as expectation, stress as well as the disappointments of burnout and failure.

Becoming an elite athlete requires a great deal of dedication and commitment, and the privilege of being

an elite athlete comes with great responsibility. Whilst it is important for your child to maintain a healthy social life, there are added responsibilities that need to be adhered to when they become an elite athlete.

The modern media landscape is full of tales of athletes who have brought themselves undone through the use of drugs, alcohol, gambling and social media – it is vital for you and your child to understand the possible consequences of an individual's actions.



SUPPLEMENTS PILLS AND POWDERS

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO TAKE?

SUPPLEMENTS will eventually be introduced to most elite athletes. Your child is no different. With so much information and advice being offered through television, magazines and social media outlets, it's hard to decipher what the basic requirements for a supplements program are and what benefits they actually offer.

You may have heard that protein powders are a necessary component of building muscle or that a lack of protein on a regular basis will decrease your muscle mass – the truth, however, is far simpler. Muscles require protein, but no more than provided by a healthy balanced diet. If you're getting enough in your diet, there is no need for protein supplements.

No supplement is ever required to be taken by an athlete, unless he/she has a particular illness, nutritional or hereditary problem, or is required by a doctor. The human body evolved over thousands of years before pills and powders came along and can still thrive without

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

The WADA Strict Liability Rule states that an athlete is responsible for any substance found inside his/her body regardless of how it got there. Make sure your son/daughter is aware of this.

There have been more than 30 players who have tested positive for banned substances over the past 15 years within NSWRL-administered competitions. Players who continue to ignore the warning signs run the risk of being caught.

For more information on performance-enhancing and illicit drugs visit www.asada.gov.au and www.druginfo.adf.org.au

them. A long-term healthy diet and regular physical activity is irreplaceable and will provide an athlete with everything needed to achieve their goals.

Here's what young athletes should be doing instead of relying on supplements; eating a balanced healthy diet, getting plenty of uninterrupted sleep and maintaining a good life and training balance. Long story short, they do not need supplements.

VILIFICATION AND CYBER BULLYING

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

PARENTS NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE DEFINITIONS AND EFFECTS OF VILIFICATION AND CYBER BULLYING – TWO ISSUES THAT CAN HAVE WIDE-REACHING NEGATIVE INFLUENCES ON YOUNG PEOPLE.

VILIFICATION is disparaging spoken or written words that involve another person's race, religion, colour, descent, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, age, weight, disability or HIV/Aids status. These comments can be delivered in many different ways and can affect people differently.

Vilification sometimes doesn't necessarily offend the person for whom it is intended. If the comments appear on social media or there are other people who are within earshot of what is being said then they could definitely be offended by certain comments. Be aware of what you say: it can be taken in many different ways.

Parents should be setting the example for children to follow. Be sensitive and aware of what you say because

children are likely to mimic behaviour. This could land them in trouble, whether it's at school, in rugby league or involving the law.

Cyber bullying, meanwhile, is using the internet to deliberately and repeatedly bully someone. Is it ok to bag a referee on social media? What about an opposing team member or supporter? The short answer is no – it's actually illegal. What might have been called 'character building' 30 years ago is now actually a criminal offence.

Use your knowledge and experience to help your kids make wise choices on and off the field.

SEXTING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Seventy per cent of sexually active year 10-12 students have sent explicit text messages to someone – and 84 per cent of them have received explicit text messages from someone else.

Snapchat, Facebook, Tinder, WhatsApp, Viber and smartphones in general are all making it easier for teenagers to make the mistake of sharing sexually explicit images. What people don't understand is that once shared via the internet, these images cannot be deleted, even if they have been deleted off the device. Once shared, these images can end up in the hands of someone they were not intended for and can be used for things for which they were not intended.

Parents need to alert their children of the pitfalls of using such devices and online services. Once they share it, it's out there forever.



VIOLENCE AND VERBAL ABUSE

WE ALL LIKE SUPPORTING OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS – BUT OVERZEALOUS AND OVERLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

RUGBY league is making a stance against violence on the paddock and off it – and that includes spectator behaviour.

Supporters can be sanctioned for either inciting violence or becoming involved in an assault or vilification against another person. A common misconception of most supporters is that the crowd has paid their money for entry and this entitles them to say what they wish. This is false. Fans cannot say what they like; you cannot abuse players, referees or opposition supporters. The conditions of entry into a rugby league arena are that supporters abide by the rugby league code of conduct and this includes supporter responsibilities.

Playing a contact sport does not provide consent to an assault. Another common misconception is that playing a contact sport means 'you're going to get hit once in a while' – this is not true and this mentality needs to be dissolved. It is not ok to assault someone. It is not acceptable to verbally abuse someone. In serious instances, the police will be notified to investigate incidents which could result in criminal charges, such as assault and affray.



INSURANCE

FUN AND GAMES... UNTIL SOMEONE GETS HURT

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD DEAL WITH THE DRAMAS ASSOCIATED WITH INJURIES SUSTAINED ON THE PLAYING FIELD.

INSURANCE can be complicated at the best times so we are going to make it as clear as possible:

- » All players are responsible for all elective medical and associated costs in regards to injuries sustained while either playing or training in a NSWRL-administered competition
- » Every player who is competing or training to compete in an open-age NSWRL administered competition must purchase and maintain private health insurance for the entire duration of their contract
- » The NSWRL purchases a limited-cover insurance policy to cover any person who sustains a life-threatening or fatal injury. This includes injuries which cause paralysis of the limbs and refers specifically to paraplegia or quadriplegia.

If the player is currently working full-time and the injury will prevent him/her from working employment for more than two weeks, the player may be eligible to apply for an income protection claim. For more information on this, please contact the NSWRL.



GAMBLING ON RUGBY LEAGUE

Players cannot bet or be involved in betting on any rugby league games anywhere in the world when they are bound by a NSWRL or NRL contract. Rugby league players also cannot share information which is not available to the public.

Betting on matches or sharing information which is not available to the public will result in sanctions. The police may also charge players with criminal offences. Asking for inside rugby league information could be putting a player's career in jeopardy.

COACHES & TRAINERS



DIET & SUPPLEMENTS



HELP PLAYERS MAKE THE RIGHT CALLS

AS COACHES AND TRAINERS, YOU HAVE THE POWER TO INFLUENCE ATHLETES' PLAYING CAREERS AS WELL AS OFF-FIELD ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS.

As people in positions of power, and usually older than the athletes themselves, coaches and trainers have a great deal of influence over the players they support and mentor.

Whether at the elite level in Origin, in second-tier competitions or in junior reps, coaches and trainers are trusted by players – trusted to give accurate feedback and information, relied upon to assist and counsel, lent on to support in injury and in sickness. With that respect and reliance, though, comes great responsibility.

Coaches and trainers are employed to help players make the right calls, both on the field and off it. Only then, when the correct decisions are made, can players fulfil their potential.

Use this section to find the answers to common issues raised by players – on a range of topics including supplements, mental-health issues and betting – and help your team perform its best in football and in life.

PLAYERS' SUPPLEMENT REQUIREMENTS

VITAMINS, SHAKES AND SO ON – THE LIST OF ADD-ON PILLS AND PROTEINS SOME ATHLETES CONSUME IS INCREDIBLY LONG... AND POTENTIALLY CONFUSING.

It's inevitable. Players are going to ask you from time to time about what kind of supplements they should be taking or if what they are talking is best for them.

Let's keep this really simple. Do not advise players to take any form of substance regardless of its status. The only advice you should give players is: "Consume a healthy variety of vitamins and minerals naturally from healthy foods." In layman's terms, a healthy diet is all that should be advised when it comes to players seeking supplementary advice.

Coaches and trainers should always refrain from pushing supplements, pills powders or potions, because,

ultimately, players can be banned from the sport for life if the advice given to them is wrong. You are in a position where players assume you have up-to-date information and the advice you offer is correct. If your information is out-dated or you are not a professional in this realm, then there is every chance you could be giving them the wrong information – a mistake that could result in hefty sanctions from ASADA.

If a player is seeking advice about more than what you have recommended, refer them to a professional such as a local nutritionist or club doctor.



CHECK YOUR SUBSTANCES

If a player is concerned or unsure if the substance they are taking or wishing to take is banned, they should refer to the 'check your substances' tool on the ASADA website – www.checksubstances.asada.gov.au

PLAYER BEHAVIOUR YOU SET THE STANDARD

WHAT HAPPENS ON AND OFF THE FIELD IS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF WHAT YOU VIEW AS BEING ACCEPTABLE.

In rugby league there is saying that some of you may have heard: “The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.” There are coaches and trainers who use this saying to refer to training standards; however the saying can apply to standards that go much further than simply training effort.

As coaches and trainers within the club you are the ones who players look to when gauging social acceptance, particularly in relation to situations and comments. Players mimic the behaviours of the coaching staff as they subconsciously know that’s the best way to fit into the environment.

When setting standards, coaches need to be firm and consistent and the rules need to apply to everyone from the CEO to the gear steward. Training staff should be open about the standard and let it be known that below-standard behaviour will not be accepted.

Vilification relates to comments which involve a person’s race, religion, colour, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, age, weight, disability or HIV/Aids status. Comments can affect people differently. Vilification sometimes doesn’t necessarily offend the person who it is intended for.

Be aware of what you say and do as a coach and/or trainer – and what you deem to be acceptable and unacceptable.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ‘I THINK I HAVE DEPRESSION’

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE INCREDIBLY COMMON – IT’S IMPORTANT COACHES AND TRAINERS KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

STATS suggest depression will affect, on average, one in every five players in a rugby league squad. If a player is depressed coaches and trainers won’t necessarily know straight away – sufferers are usually quite good at masking feelings and symptoms. This is why coaches and particularly trainers need to be very in tune with their players and need to be clear with the fact that they are open to conversations of all natures.

If, as a coach or trainer, a person does come to speak to you about something that seems private, the first thing you should do is let him know that that’s exactly what the conversation will be – private. There are some simple steps that can drastically help you both navigate through this situation. These steps include:

1. Assess the situation: How desperate is the person, are they suicidal?
2. Listen without judgement: Ask questions to find out more about the situation.
3. Give support and information: Depression is very common and is a disease, it’s no-one’s fault.
4. Encourage the person to seek professional help: Suggest ‘League Support’ as first Professional help followed by the Blackdog Institute and MensLine.
5. Encourage other supports: Family members, partners, friends, NSWRL Welfare and Education.

*If the person is suicidal, do not leave them alone until professional help is sought.



HEAD KNOCKS & CONCUSSION

Experts define concussion as a head injury with temporary loss of brain function, which can cause cognitive, physical and emotional symptoms. Concussion may also be defined as an injury to the brain generally caused by a jolt or blow to the head – in the majority of cases the individual does not lose consciousness.

The brain floats in cerebral fluid which protects it from jolts and bumps. A violent jolt or a severe blow to the head can cause the brain to bump hard against the skull. This can result in the tearing of fibre nerves as well as blood vessel ruptures under the skull, leading to an accumulation of blood. There is research which suggests that concussion, especially repeated concussion, can lead to a whole host of problems: memory loss, dizzy spells, clinical depression, Alzheimer’s disease, ringing in the ears, persistent headaches and more.

It is imperative that, as coaches and trainers, we ensure the welfare of the player is always the number one priority. If this means the player must be substituted after a heavy knock, then that’s in the best interests of the player, the team and the sport. We look again for the leadership of the coaching staff at each of the clubs to help our sport evolve and to help enforce this as the new standard. No longer can we see players suffer through the symptoms of concussion and allow them to play on.



GAMBLING

SPORTS BETTING AND YOU

YOU DON'T TOUCH THE BALL IN PLAY OR EVEN STEP FOOT ONTO THE FIELD, SO WHAT ARE THE RULES WHEN IT COMES TO PUNTING ON GAMES?

SORRY to spoil the party but no, you cannot bet on the NRL. You can't bet on rugby league at all, anywhere in the world, at any level.

The common response to receiving this information is 'but I haven't signed anything that says I can't bet on rugby league'. The truth is coaches and trainers don't have to actually sign anything to be bound by the rugby league code of conduct and criminal law.

The position you hold within rugby league gives you the potential to receive information before it is available to the general public. This information can therefore be used to gain an unfair advantage over the betting agencies and the general public.

The type of information coaches and trainers might get before the general public includes news about player

inclusions and injuries – for example, overhearing a NSW Cup player will make his NRL debut to fill the position of another regular NRL player. This information alone can affect the betting market and therefore gives someone an unfair advantage.

It is also illegal to pass on inside information to someone else so they can bet. The same principal applies and if you are found guilty of sharing information that is not available to the general public, it is deemed to be as illegal as betting directly.

Betting on rugby league is taken very seriously by the sport and by the police. The consequences are heavy, so don't risk it!



OFFICIALS



MAKE YOUR DECISIONS THE RIGHT DECISIONS USE YOUR SKILLS

AS AN OFFICIAL, YOU PLAY A
CRITICAL ROLE IN THE GAME OF
RUGBY LEAGUE.

As match officials, be it as a touch judge, ground manager, interchange official or refs assessor, you are required to make myriad decisions every time teams of rugby league players take to the field.

It's a tough job being a match official but, being well prepared, cool, calm and collected, your job is made a lot easier. Sport reflects life – there are many challenges. It's your job to overcome them.

No matter what challenges face you – on or off the field – we are here to provide the tools and the support to help you succeed.

There are plenty of potential pitfalls in the world of officiating. This guide aims to help prepare you to negotiate them all.

GAMBLING YOUR CAREER'S ON THE LINE

AFTER attending the NRL Integrity Unit and theatre sports sessions delivered at Rugby League Central, the issue of sports gambling should be very clear. Officials are not allowed to bet on any form of rugby league anywhere in the world and officials are not allowed to share information which is not available to the public.

VILIFICATION YOU DRAW THE LINE

WHEN it comes to vilification of another person on the field, officials are the ones who set the line in the sand. They decide which comments are acceptable and which comments are not acceptable. On the footy field officials are the police, the judge and the jury when dealing with indiscretions and poor behaviour. There are two distinctive differences between sledging someone's performance and vilifying a person.

SLEDGING: The practice whereby players seek to gain an advantage by verbally insulting an opposing player's performance or ability to perform.

VILIFICATION: Comments which involve another person's race, religion, colour, descent, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, age, weight, disability or HIV/Aids status.

If any 'sledging' involves 'vilification', it immediately becomes an issue for officials to address.

SOCIAL MEDIA NOTHING NICE TO SAY? SAY NOTHING AT ALL

THE USE OF FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM PRESENT UNIQUE
CHALLENGES FOR OFFICIALS.

As you all are no doubt aware, referees and touchies are scrutinised more heavily than any other individuals involved in rugby league. Unfortunately, there will always be a winner and a loser and sometimes people will use the anonymity of social media to vent their vicious, rude and often-inaccurate statements about officials' performances.

The best motto to follow when dealing with social-media abuse is, 'If you don't have anything nice to say, say nothing at all'. Sidestepping the overly harsh criticism can be difficult. Some tips to help include:

1. Don't participate in social media
2. Change the privacy settings so people can't post without prior acceptance
3. Change names to something only friends/family know, so you can't be searched by random people

All of these tips help officials avoid nasty keyboard warriors. Just remember, as officials you have much more to lose than most critics do.



MENTAL HEALTH TOUGH TIMES AFFECT US ALL

THERE are times in everyone's lives when things don't go exactly as planned. We have heard stories about NRL players, mental health battles and how depression, anxiety, OCD and bipolar disorders have affected the lives of even the best athletes.

The general public understand that this comes with the pressures of the job. Injuries, non-selection, judiciary and media can all exacerbate the feelings and emotions players go through. But what about referees and officials?

Don't they have to endure all those things as well? Some would even suggest officials have it harder than players, because at least the players have a fan base that will support them through the difficult periods. It is so important during tough times, officials look after one another. Speaking about depression is the first step towards finding a solution to cure it. It's a disease that affects one in five people. If someone does want to speak

about what they have been dealing with, be open and try and use the following steps to help navigate through it;

1. **Assess the situation:** How desperate is the person, are they suicidal?
2. **Listen without judgement:** Ask questions to find out more about the situation
3. **Give support and information:** Depression is a very common disease. It's no-one's fault
4. **Encourage the person to seek professional help:** Suggest 'League Support', Blackdog Institute and MensLine
5. **Encourage other supports:** Family members, partners, friends, NSWRL Welfare and Education

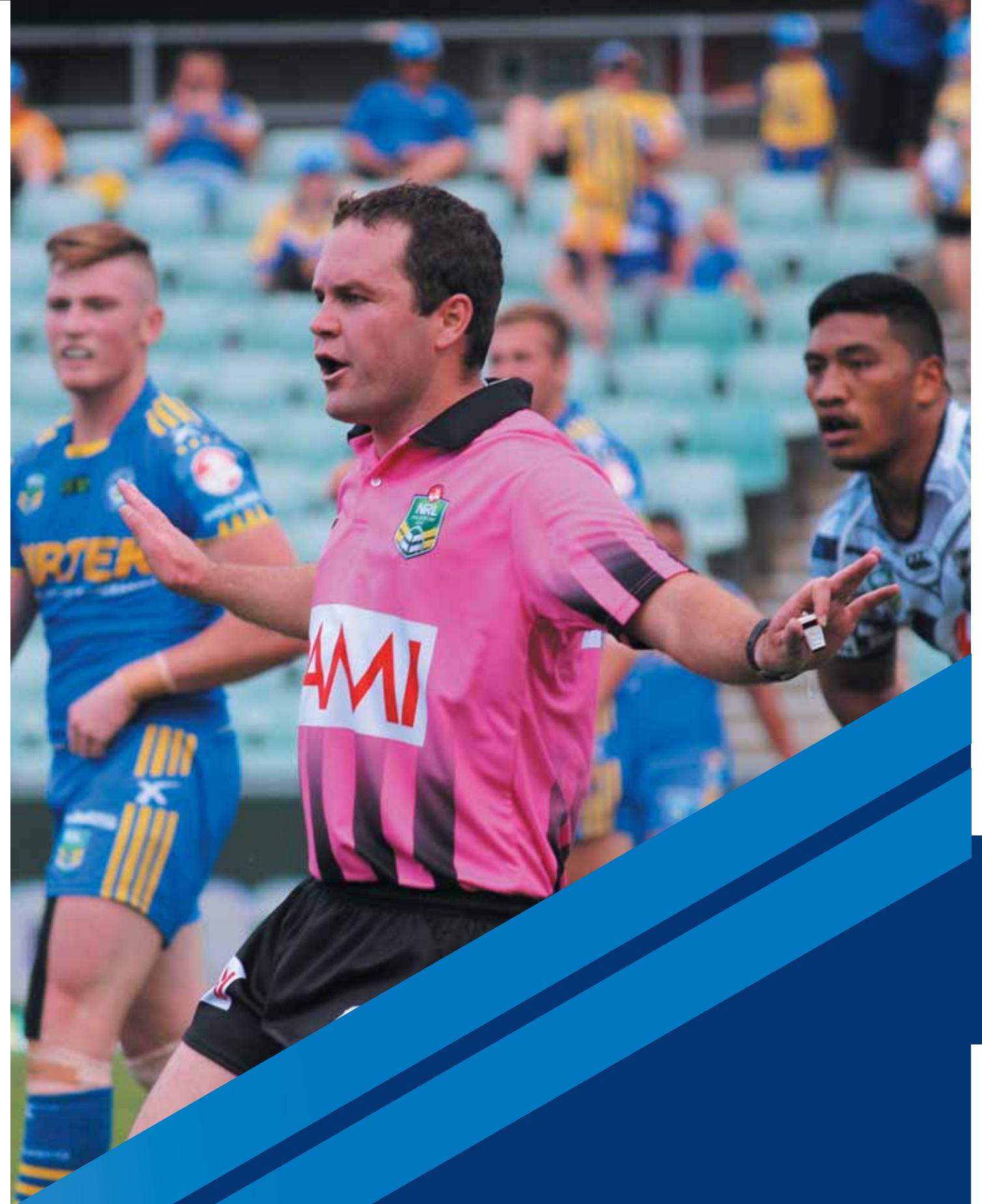
*If the person is suicidal, do not leave them alone until professional help is sought.

DEPRESSION HOW COMMON IS IT?

On average, one in every five people in your squad will experience depression. Symptoms of depression include negative self-talk, lowered self-esteem, low energy levels, drastic changes in appetite, changed sleep patterns, uncontrollable emotions, increased anxiety, increased anger and more. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms for more than a fortnight, it's strongly suggested you seek professional help.

SUICIDE A MAJOR ISSUE

Men are three times more likely to kill themselves than women and suicide is the leading cause of death in men aged between 15 and 44. On average there are five male suicides per day in Australia. Vilification and continual bullying are contributors to this. If you or someone you know are experiencing negative or dark thoughts, seek professional help immediately.



**CRISIS MANAGEMENT
DEALING WITH DRAMAS**

SOMETIMES tempers flare on the footy field – even despite officials’ best efforts. That’s why NSWRL officials now receive more training and support than ever before, including intensive situation-based training sessions at the start of each season.

NSWRL referees and sideline officials are supported on and off the field through the NSWRL Referees’ Association social welfare program. It means that no matter what happens on or off the field support is available to officials.

Say, for instance, an incident occurs on the field of play involving a group of players and officials. The presence of match-day assessors and members of the NSWRL Referees’ Association ensures those officials in question are provided with the support and guidance they require to not only defuse the situation but to protect those involved and ascertain how to prevent similar occurrences in future. Incidents that require further follow-up are referred to the Referees’ Coaching and Development Manager.

In instances of high stress and controversy, take a step back, reflect on what’s occurred and make what you believe to be the right decision. With careful consideration, officials who have undergone NSWRL’s training get the decisions right more often than not.



1000

The number of referees the NSWRL manages across Sydney, with the organisation’s dedicated Referees’ Coaching and Development Unit providing officials with development opportunities and a clear pathway from grassroots district football all the way to the NRL.



ADMINISTRATORS



LAYING LEAGUE'S FOUNDATIONS

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS

MUCH RESPONSIBILITY AND POWER FALLS IN THE HANDS OF RUGBY LEAGUE'S ADMINISTRATORS – PEOPLE WHO SHAPE THE GAME'S FUTURE.

SPORTS administrators are responsible for running individual clubs and leagues, ensuring the future of the game is as bright as its past and present.

In rugby league, administrators are responsible for developing people and fostering talent as well as ensuring base-level standards are created and met by players and staff both on the field and off it.

The job of administrators at rugby league organisations is varied and complex – from marketing and financial management to recruitment and running events – and often difficult.

The pointers contained in this chapter are designed to help administrators run their club as effectively as possible, in particular dealing with a range of increasingly important and relevant topics including anti-doping, alcohol management, insurance and mental health.

The ability of administrators to deal with complex issues and solve such problems, as well as develop a proactive and responsible culture for the years ahead, are vital to the game's success.



ANTI-DOPING AND ASADA

THE RULES, STRAIGHT FORWARD

EACH PLAYER AT EVERY CLUB NEEDS TO BE AWARE OF THE RULES ABOUT ANTI-DOPING – AND SO DO ADMINISTRATORS.

- » If a player has taken any substance/s or used any doping method that is prohibited, could potentially be prohibited or that he/she is unsure about – notify the NSWRL as soon as possible and do not participate until the situation is resolved
- » Strict liability means that the player is ultimately responsible for any substance found within their testing sample. There are no excuses when a player is caught with a prohibited substance
- » The NSWRL suggests players do not take any form of 'supplement' as the ingredients cannot be determined by any means other than a laboratory test and this therefore indicates that supplements could potentially contain a prohibited substance.
- » If you need to take medication which is prohibited it must be registered to the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee (ADSMAC) and be approved by a Doctor. (The club must apply for a TUE form available on the NSWRL website)
- » Taking any form of illegal recreational drug is strictly prohibited
- » Distribution of any prohibited substances including illegal recreational drugs is prohibited
- » A player must always comply if asked to undertake an ASADA doping test
- » Players can be subject to any bodily form of testing including; urine, blood, saliva etc
- » The player has the right to a witness when being tested
- » The consequences of violating the rules of the Rugby League Anti-Doping Policy can be at maximum a lifetime ban within the sport
- » All Rugby League Anti-Doping documents can be found at www.nswrl.com.au under 'documents'. Further anti-doping information is available on the ASADA website www.asada.gov.au and World Anti-Doping website www.wada-ama.org

GOOD HOST

HOSTING SAFE EVENTS

IT IS THE JOB OF CLUB AND LEAGUE ADMINISTRATORS TO PROVIDE CONSISTENT MESSAGES AROUND EXPECTED ALCOHOL BEHAVIOURS AT GAMES AND FUNCTIONS.

OVER the past 12 months the NRL, NSWRL and the Australian Drug Foundation have been working to develop a robust program around how the sport manages alcohol consistently so that it fulfils our Alcohol Management Strategy Vision and Mission.

Our Vision: Reducing alcohol-related harm in rugby league environments

Our Mission: Wherever you go in rugby league, from an under-six match to a corporate function, you will get consistent messages around expected alcohol behaviours

GoodHost is a hospitality-based program developed by the Australian Drug Foundation to provide organisers of functions with a set of minimum standards and procedures that help:

- » Reduce the potential for intoxication and alcohol-related harm
- » Protect the image of the club and the game
- » Consistently deliver events that are safe and enjoyed by all guests

This program does not take away from the theme and entertainment of the event, but gives the organiser a

helping hand to ensure nothing is missed or overlooked when it comes to how alcohol is supplied and consumed at an event.

By becoming a GoodHost, administrators host functions designed to be enjoyed by all guests, where the entertainment and activities are not focused around the consumption of alcohol.



MENTAL HEALTH LEAGUE SUPPORT

LEAQUE support is a confidential counselling service for players, match officials, staff and their eligible family members. All counsellors are qualified, experienced professionals who have extensive training and experience in counselling, coaching and workplace consulting.

All consultations are strictly confidential. League Support does not share consultation information with anyone unless authorised to do so by you in writing, or if required under Australian law.

Issues League Support can assist with a range of issues:

- » Work/life balance
- » Career
- » Change
- » Family, child and eldercare
- » Anxiety, stress and depression
- » Difficult customers
- » Relationships
- » Suicide

INSURANCE COVERING YOUR PLAYERS

COVER is limited to injury whilst an insured person is:

- » Playing in club and representative games, competitions and performances
- » Participating in training or practice sessions, or official functions arranged by the insured
- » Travelling directly to or from club and representative games, competitions or performances, training or practice sessions, meetings or official functions arranged by the insured (limited 20 per cent of the Capital Benefit)
- » Engaged in activities connected with the insured whilst staying away from home during a tour for the purpose of participating
- » Playing in trial games of the player's own club and/or any game in which the player is participating in an attempt to be graded for an NRL club, including the Under 20s National Youth Cup.

Injury means bodily injury which:

Injury which is sustained by an Insured person during the period of Insurance and while they are covered as an Insured Person under this Policy results from an Accident and is caused by sudden, violent, external and visible means occurs solely and directly and independently of any other cause, including any illness, sickness, disease, pre-existing physical or congenital condition or heatstroke, except illness or sickness directly resulting from, or medical or surgical treatment rendered necessary by such Injury occurs whilst they are engaged in the activities (outlined above) on behalf of the Insured. Injury does not include any event caused as a result of heatstroke and/or caused directly or indirectly by or attributable to any sickness or disease.

- » Team performance
- » Communication
- » Work crisis and trauma
- » Violence and anger
- » Bereavement, grief and loss
- » Alcohol and addictions
- » Work performance
- » Legal and financial
- » Conflict
- » Managing life stages
- » Bullying and Harassment
- » Redundancy/career transition
- » Gambling

Accessing League Support is easy, thanks to the 24/7 telephone service. Six free face-to-face sessions are also available, with locations all across Australia and New Zealand.

For confidential information and appointments call 1300 360 364 (Australia) or 0800 327 669 (New Zealand).

BENEFITS

Capital Benefits

Event Maximum Benefit:

1. Paraplegia and Quadriplegia - \$300,000
2. Accidental Death and other Capital Benefits - \$100,000
3. Accidental Death under 18 years limited to - \$15,000

Weekly Benefits

1. Loss of Earnings Max 85% up to \$500 per week 14-day excess, maximum 52 weeks
2. Student Assistance Max 80% up to \$500 per week 14-day excess, maximum 52 weeks
3. Home Help Max 80% up to \$500 per week 14-day excess, maximum 52 weeks

Additional Benefits

Non-Medicare Medical Expenses:

- » 80% to a maximum of \$3,000 per injury maximum
- » Excess \$100 for all claims for physiotherapy and chiropractic
- » Nil excess any other non-Medicare claims cover for the above expenses will only apply if treatment has been certified necessary by a legally qualified medical practitioner to a registered provider

Funeral Expenses

- » Maximum Benefit \$10,000

Making a Claim

- » Contact NSWRL for an application
- » Complete and return the application to NSWRL



GO EASY ON THE GROG

SETTING STANDARDS FOR ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT WITHIN RUGBY LEAGUE

THE purpose for the development and implementation of an Alcohol Management Strategy in NSWRL is to educate and protect rugby league players and other NSWRL stakeholders, along with the rugby league brand, from the potential dangers surrounding alcohol consumption.

The emphasis is not on banning alcohol, but rather putting measures in place to reduce the likelihood of problems or incidents occurring when alcohol is present in the rugby league environment. The measures will focus on preventative actions such as education, prior planning, access to help and changes to traditions.

Five core goals were designed by the NSWRL, in consultation with the ADF and the NRL, in the attempt to

raise the standard of alcohol management throughout NSWRL and its associated clubs. The Rugby League Alcohol Management Strategy, with the assistance of all NSWRL stakeholders, aims to achieve this.

3200

The number of alcohol-related deaths in Australia each year. Booze also hospitalises more than 81,000 annually. Manage it properly at your functions and ensure you don't become a part of the statistics.



CONTACTS



WELFARE AND EDUCATION CONTACTS AT THE NSWRL AND NRL

THE people dedicated to helping you achieve your off-field goals as well as realising your on-field potential:



Paul Heptonstall
pheptonstall@nrl.com.au

Senior Welfare and Education Manager

Paul manages the entire Welfare and Education department on behalf of the NRL/RPLA Welfare and Education committee. He has a broad experience within the game having worked within a number of NRL clubs over the past 20 years.



Cathryn Raper
craper@nrl.com.au

NRL Welfare & Education Operations Co-ordinator

Cathryn is a qualified career coach and works as the operations co-ordinator for the NRL Welfare and Education Department



John Hutchinson
jhutchinson@nrl.com.au

NRL Apprentice Mentoring Program Manager

John joined the NRL to manage the apprenticeship mentoring program after spending many years working within NRL clubs.



Paul Walker
pwalker@nrl.com.au

Community Clubs & Schools Welfare & Education Manager

Paul is a former physical education teacher and has worked in rugby league for over 20 years as a coach, development manager and administrator. Paul is predominately responsible for looking after the Community Clubs and Schools Welfare & Education Programs.



Nigel Vagana
nvagana@nrl.com.au

NRL Welfare and Education Manager – Pasifika

Nigel joined the NRL five years ago after playing 13 years at the highest level in the NRL, Super League and for his country. He is predominantly responsible for the Welfare and Education programs for current NRL players.



Andrew Ryan
aryan@nrl.com.au

NRL Welfare and Education Manager – Regional NSW

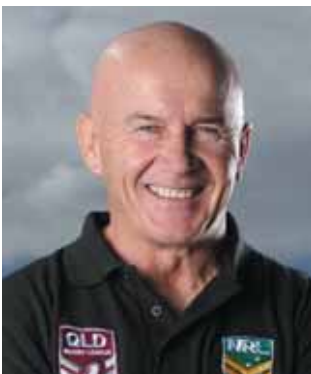
Andrew played 12 years in the NRL and the last five as the captain of his club. Andrew is responsible for delivering Welfare and Education to regional NSW and helping players with the transition from country to city living.



Tony McFadyen
tmcfadyen@nrl.com.au

Holden Cup Welfare & Education Programs Manager, Operations

Tony worked at club level for five years and now is predominantly responsible for overseeing the philosophy and guidelines for the NYC. This is Tony's fourth year within the Welfare and Education department.



Murray Hurst
mhurst@nrl.com.au

Welfare and Education Manager – QRL

Murray has worked as a Head NRL coach and in game development in the past and works now on delivering Welfare and Education within Queensland.



Greg Nichols
gnichols@nswrl.com.au

Welfare and Education Manager – NSWRL

Greg has worked previously within operations and logistics of NSWRL-run competitions and now works on delivering Welfare and Education within NSWRL.



Dean Widders
dwidders@nrl.com.au

Welfare and Education Manager – Indigenous

Dean played 13 years in the NRL as well as two years in the English Super League. Dean is predominately responsible for delivering Welfare and Education to current NRL players.



Jane Lowder
jlowder@nrl.com.au

NRL Career Transition Coach

Jane has run her own career coaching company for the past nine years and now assists players in making a smooth transition from professional sport to other employment.



Dr Sam Jebeile
sjebeile@nrl.com.au

NRL Graduates of League and Playwise Program Manager

Dr Sam Jebeile has spent over 15 years working as a senior lecturer and presenter at undergraduate and post-graduate levels for the University of Wollongong. He is now responsible for the delivery of the Graduates of League and Playwise programs.

FAIR PLAY GLOSSARY

THE A-Z OF MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES IN YOUR CAREER IN RUGBY LEAGUE AND IN LIFE.

ALCOHOL & ALCOHOL ABUSE

Alcohol is a leading cause of death amongst Australians, particularly young males. Alcohol guidelines state men and women who drink no more than two standard drinks on any day reduce their risk of harm from alcohol-related disease. They also recommend drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injury. Alcohol affects athletes' on-field performance, too.

Phone Alcoholics Anonymous on **1300 222 222** or visit www.alcohol.gov.au for more.



DRUGS

Drug use affects more than just the user. Cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and speed, to name a few, can destroy families, cripple relationships and even kill. Illicit drug use ends football careers too. Think about the impact of your choices.

Phone Alcohol and Drug Information Service on **(02) 9361 8000** (Sydney) or **1800 422 599** (regional NSW) or visit www.drugs.health.gov.au for more.



EDUCATION

Just because you're focussed on your footy career doesn't mean you can't be focussed on other things too. The NRL and NSWRL offer a range of programs and

scholarships to help players achieve their off-field goals – like attend university or become a qualified tradesman.

Read pages 6-11 or email NSWRL Welfare and Education Manager Greg Nichols on gnichols@nswrl.com.au for more information.

GAMBLING

It is estimated there are more than 300,000 problem gamblers in Australia. In any form of punting, whether it's on sports betting, at casino tables or the pokies, the gaming operators are the only people who truly win. Remember: you cannot bet or be involved in betting on any rugby league games anywhere in the world when you sign an NSWRL or NRL contract. Betting on rugby league will result in sanctions and possible criminal charges.

Phone the Gambling Help hotline on **1800 858 858** or visit www.problemgambling.gov.au for more information.

INSURANCE

All players are responsible for all elective medical and associated costs in regards to injuries sustained playing in or training for NSWRL-administered competitions. The NSWRL purchases limited-cover insurance to protect any person who sustains a life-threatening or fatal injury. Injured players unable to work may be eligible for an income protection claim.



MEN OF LEAGUE

Men of League was founded on the principal that people who are or have been a part of the great rugby league family should be able to find support when they fall on hard times. Men of League can assist young footballers who have had their lives seriously impacted by injury, guiding them to a better and more secure future. Men of League is about all the people who make rugby league such a great game, not just players at the elite levels.

Phone **(02) 8765 2232** or visit menofleague.com for more information.

MENTAL HEALTH

Statistics show that in each year approximately one in every five Australians will experience a mental illness – and footballers are not immune. If you or someone you know is struggling, help them on the road to recovery.

Phone MensLine on **1300 789 978** or Lifeline (crisis support) on **13 11 14** for immediate support or visit the Black Dog Institute website www.blackdoginstitute.org.au for more information.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Dating and relationships in the 21st century are much different to how they were even just a decade ago, but just because the times are changing doesn't mean society's standards are. Today, many people meet up via apps and websites – but respect remains a key in relationships. Treat others as you would want to be treated.

Phone Relationships Australia on **1300 364 277** or visit www.nsw.relationships.com.au for more information.



SUPPLEMENTS

Lots of people think pills and powders work like a power-up in a video game. They don't. The best thing players can do to give themselves and their bodies the best chance of success is to eat well. Remember, any substance found in a player's body is their own responsibility.

Visit www.checksubstances.asada.gov.au for more information.

VIOLENCE

Acts of violence will not be tolerated at rugby league matches – on or off the field. Australia says no to violence in football and in society. Players who have committed violent acts risk suspension/expulsion from the league and jail time.

Phone **000** to report incidents of violence to the police.

VILIFICATION

Comments which denigrate another person based on their race, religion, colour, descent, nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability or HIV/Aids status are referred to as vilification. This powerful form of abuse can have a massive impact on someone's state of mind. Don't accept it in your team!

Phone the Australian Human Rights Commission or visit www.humanrights.gov.au for more information.

RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS ASSOCIATION



The Rugby League Players Association (RLPA) was established in 1979 to promote and safeguard the interests of its members, being professional Rugby League Players in Australia and the New Zealand Warriors. The RLPA is the collective voice of the Players that seeks to effectively influence decision makers within the Game, and secure the best employment environment and career path in Australian sport for its members. So that this "collective voice" continues to be effective and influential, all members need to be actively engaged, whether it be attending meetings, functions or simply voicing their opinions.

Chief Executive Officer

David Garnsey
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General Manager: Player Engagement and Development

Tilda Khoshaba
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General Manager: Media and Communications

Gennie Sheer
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Manager Player Liaison

Michael Crocker
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