

One of the objectives of the Shires Umpires Association is to ensure that the standards of player behaviour are improved and enforced as a benchmark for the local cricket scene. To that end we wish to clarify our expectations regarding what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour and our insistence on consistent reporting standards for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

As Umpires we have a responsibility to the players, the controlling authorities, and the clubs and to the other umpires to ensure that reportable behaviour is not allowed to pass without action being taken.

Reportable behaviour is rare, but if it does happen we must report it. A failure to report an incident can leave the impression that the behaviour is acceptable; and this may well lead to a repeat of that behaviour or worse which another umpire will have to deal with. Also when the behaviour is reported it can then reflect badly on the umpire who chose not to report and also can lead to a defence that a previous umpire condoned it.

Most of the clubs have written in their members' handbooks that they will not accept bad behaviour. It is our role to support the clubs in their desire to improve the standards of player behaviour. The clubs also watch out to ensure that other teams behave just as well. It is embarrassing for our Association to have the Sydney Cricket Association ask us why a complaint has been made by a club about a player's behaviour yet no report has been made by the umpires.

The Preamble to the Laws of Cricket set out the principles.

Player's conduct

In the event of a player failing to comply with instructions by an umpire, or criticising by word or action the decision of an umpire, or showing dissent, or generally behaving in a manner which might bring the game into disrepute, the umpire concerned shall in the first place report the matter to the other umpire and to the player's captain, and instruct the latter to take action.

It is against the Spirit of the Game:

To dispute an umpire's decision by word, action or gesture

To direct abusive language towards an opponent or umpire

To indulge in cheating or any sharp practice, for instance:

(a) to appeal knowing that the batsman is not out

(b) to advance towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing

(c) to seek to distract an opponent either verbally or by harassment with persistent clapping or unnecessary noise under the guise of enthusiasm and motivation of one's own side

These broad principles cover an infinite variety of circumstances. To provide some practical assistance to you in understanding what is and is not acceptable we have the following guidance.

The following do NOT need to be reported:

- A few seconds delay after being given out reflecting simple disappointment
- Low level bad language between players or simple cut and thrust which can be dealt with quietly with the captains on the field.

You will find valuable assistance in the Library section of the SSCUA website to help you deal with conflict that should prevent minor issues on the field developing into a situation that you have to report. Please find the time to familiarise yourself with this document.

However, the following are actions that we **insist** are unacceptable and **MUST** be reported.

Dissent exhibited by for example:

- Standing at the crease for a more than few seconds staring at the umpire after being given out
- Waving the bat at an Umpire after being given out LBW to indicate that the ball was struck.
- Audible disagreement or challenge to the decision including deprecating comments about the decision. A recently heard comment such as "That's the worst umpiring I've ever seen"

Actions & Words exhibited by for example:

- Knocking down the stumps after getting out (or any other form of equipment abuse)
- Swearing at other players in a way that exceeds the normal range of patter in a game
- Repeated audible obscenities especially where they can be heard by members of the public outside of the playing area
- Aggressive foul language from players in the stands
- Loud dissent by players from the stand to umpiring decisions
- Racial or religious vilification

Conflict exhibited by for example:

- Obstructing either fielders or batsmen
- Any sustained non-friendly argument / disagreement / exchange
- Any threatened or actual physical contact between players or officials such as the raising of fists— or advancing towards another player with menace.

And

- Any behaviour which persist after you have asked the Captain to deal with it

Some umpires are reluctant to report players for a variety of reasons. The following list addresses some of these.

- This note should allay any concerns about your authority to report
- The Judiciary System permits a player to accept a penalty without a hearing, so in many cases the umpire will not have to give evidence at a hearing.
- If you do have to give evidence in most cases you can now do so by phone.
- As an umpiring team you may find that your partner does not support your choice to report a player. In this case you need to refer the matter to the Secretary for guidance. Still put it in your match report.
- It is not our job to decide the motives behind a particular action. If a player does something that constitutes a reportable event, then he can explain or plead leniency or motive to the body that decides guilt or innocence; the Code of Conduct Commission.

If you do decide to report an incident, then a) take good detailed notes, and b) talk with the Secretary for assistance on producing the actual Code of Conduct Report.

Finally, even though it can be stressful and possibly frustrating if the Commissioner hands down a decision that you feel is inappropriate, it is not our role to decide guilt or sentence; simply to report what we see as accurately as we can.

Please be assured that you will be supported by this Association, the Sydney Cricket and NSW Cricket Umpires Associations in your choice to take strong and positive action to improve player behaviour and the image of the game.