

PARTICIPATION VERSUS PERFORMANCE

Managing (dis)ability,
gender and cultural
diversity in junior sport

TIP SHEET #2 COACHING INCLUSIVELY

Coaches are a critical link between clubs' commitment to inclusion and diversity, and practice on the ground. They can make the difference as to whether a young person and their family feels welcome and part of the club or not. Below are some tips and guidance to help with coaching inclusively.



1. Ensure that coaches are aware of the club's commitment to inclusion and diversity and that it is important that they display this in their practice. Policies such as 'equal game time' for all junior players can be a great way to make sure everyone is included but this needs to be enforced by coaches.



5. Celebrate the achievements of all players. Award individual improvement in skills, tactics or fair play rather than continually highlighting the more highly skilled players.



2. As a coach, adapt your communication styles to suit the needs of diverse young people. Visual demonstrations and pictures can be useful to break down complex concepts to learners who may struggle with verbal instructions.



6. 'Best players' are generally looked up to by other junior players. Encouraging high ability players to act as diversity champions, who support and advocate for positive attitudes towards diverse players can have a powerful impact.



3. Acknowledge there might be cultural and social reasons for young people's behaviour and try where possible to be accommodating of this. For example, being persistently late for training does not necessarily mean a lack of commitment from a young person and their family.



7. Encourage your players and parents to 'call out' poor or inappropriate behaviour to you, within their own teams or others. Ensure they are aware of the club code of conduct and feel confident telling you if they hear racist, ableist, sexist, homophobic or generally aggressive comments or action and let them know you will respond to this.



4. Try to encourage contact and communication among diverse young people by organising activities where they have to work with different partners and groups. This can prevent 'in' and 'out' groups emerging and diverse young people being made to feel unwelcome.

This tip sheet has been developed from the findings of the 3-year Australian Research Council project 'Managing Diversity in Junior Sport: Participation versus Performance' led by Victoria University in partnership with VicHealth, the Australian Football League and the Centre for Multicultural Youth. The guidance has been authored by Dr Ruth Jeanes, Monash University and Professor Ramón Spaaij, Victoria University. For more details on the research project please see our summary and full report at <http://www.cmy.net.au/publications/participation-versus-performance>