

INTEGRITY IN COMMUNITY SPORT

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NATIONAL
SPORT CLUB
SURVEY



Rippa Rugby 17.jpg



SPORT AND
RECREATION

INTEGRITY
TRANSITION PROGRAMME

TE TĀKARO NGĀKAU PONO



AUT SPORTS PERFORMANCE
RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEW ZEALAND

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BACKGROUND

The National Sport Club Survey (NSCS) generates an annual snapshot of the management, operation, and governance of New Zealand's sport clubs. It is run through a partnership between the Sport Performance Research Institute New Zealand (SPRINZ) and the New Zealand Amateur Sport Association (NZASA). In 2023, 800 clubs (out of 7,500) responded to the NSCS across 80 sports and all 16 regions of New Zealand. Chairs, presidents, secretaries, and other leaders complete the NSCS on behalf of their club. Each year special topics are introduced with this year's topics featuring sport integrity.

Integrity in community sport matters. In New Zealand, the new Integrity Sport and Recreation Commission (the Commission) is being established with a key purpose to "enhance integrity within sport and physical recreation to protect and promote the safety and well-being of participants and the fairness of competition" (Integrity Sport and Recreation Act 2023, s. 3) and will be operational by 1 July 2024. In consultation with the Integrity Transition Programme (which supports the Commission's Establishment Board), sport integrity questions were embedded within the 2023 NSCS to better understand integrity issues in community sport and assist the Commission in its development of sport integrity codes (s. 13). This project relates specifically to the governance of community level sport within New Zealand's broader play, active recreation, and sport system.

The over-arching purpose of the NSCS sport integrity topic was to identify club committees' perceptions of the incidence of threats to integrity in community sport as well as establish an initial understanding of community sport's preparedness to manage sport integrity issues or complaints. Questions of various types, five closed (yes/no, scaled) and two open-text questions, were included in the 2023 NSCS. In the following pages of this high-level report, key results are provided as well as a discussion of key insights for the Commission (and associated sport policy makers).



LITERATURE REVIEW

The contents of this report have been informed by recent scholarly work related to national sport integrity frameworks and local / community sport integrity systems.

NATIONAL SPORT INTEGRITY FRAMEWORKS

- A focus on national level sport integrity systems (Kihl, 2019) with a theoretical gap at the local club level (Ordway et al., 2022).
- An integrated approach at the national level involves the internal and external environments and the sport actors (Kihl, 2022) including international, national, regional, and local sport organisations (Hall et al., 2021; Kihl, 2022).

COMMUNITY SPORT INTEGRITY SYSTEMS - AUSTRALIAN STUDIES

- **ACT:** Ordway et al. (2022) identified the influence of coherence (including internal and external co-ordination) and capacity (including resources, human, and financial support) on the integrity system effectiveness of local sports clubs. Internal ethics infrastructures focussed on "compliance (e.g., monitoring and investigations) and values based (e.g., code of ethics, encouraged dialogue, leadership) management tools..."
- **Federal:** Woessner et al. (2023) identified the low self-disclosure rates of children (U18) experiencing interpersonal violence (psychological, physical, and sexual) in community sports. Barriers included the nature of the relationships, the recognition (or not) of an experience as a form of interpersonal violence, and the institutional and personal normalisation and/or rationalisation of interpersonal violence in sport.
- **Victoria:** Hemphill et al. (n.d.) in a study focussing on anti-doping and match-fixing type issues, identified the need for better education (e.g., club level training and organisational/cultural building programmes), pro-active monitoring and assessment (e.g., external and internal assessment tools) and communications (e.g., organisational communication network charts, clearer points of contact and navigation procedures for participants).



RATE INTEGRITY ISSUES ON HOW OFTEN THEY ARE DISCUSSED AT YOUR CLUB'S COMMITTEE/BOARD MEETINGS

ISSUE	Not at all	Rarely / Sometimes	Often / Very Often
Competition Manipulation Match / Spot-Fixing	56%	38%	6%
Corruption Fraud / Deception / Breach of Trust	59%	38%	3%
Doping Prohibited Substances / Methods	72%	25%	3%
Abuse Violence	43%	52%	5%
Bullying Harassment / Intimidation	34%	58%	8%
Safeguarding Children	32%	39%	29%
Racism	56%	38%	6%
Discrimination	52%	42%	6%



(For those that did discuss)

RATE INTEGRITY ISSUES ON HOW THEY HAVE BEEN PRIORITISED RECENTLY AT YOUR CLUB'S COMMITTEE/BOARD MEETINGS



ISSUE	Very low / Low / Somewhat low priority	Somewhat high / High/ Very high priority
Competition Manipulation Match / Spot-Fixing	26%	10%
Corruption Fraud / Deception / Breach of Trust	29%	10%
Doping Prohibited Substances / Methods	24%	6%
Abuse Violence	29%	21%
Bullying Harassment / Intimidation	31%	29%
Safeguarding Children	18%	45%
Racism	24%	19%
Discrimination	24%	21%



DIGGING DEEPER



Clubs did not differ based on a number of club characteristics related to how often they discussed and prioritised integrity issues:

- Financial Health
- Urban / Rural
- Membership Trend
- Paid Administrator
- Chair Gender

ABUSE

Netball, Gymnastics and Rugby clubs are more likely to discuss integrity issues related to abuse at their committee/board meetings

LARGER CLUBS

Larger clubs are more likely to discuss and prioritise integrity issues related to abuse and safeguarding

CHAIR TENURE

The longer the chair is in their position, the more often integrity issues are discussed and prioritised



**MY CLUB IS WELL
PREPARED TO MANAGE
INTEGRITY ISSUES**



56%

**OF CLUBS SAY THEY
AGREE, OR STRONGLY
AGREE, THAT THEY
ARE WELL PREPARED
TO MANAGE
INTEGRITY ISSUES**

PREPARED

Golf and Gymnastic clubs are more likely than other sports to report they are well prepared to manage integrity issues

Athletics, Rowing and Football clubs are less likely than other sports to report they are well prepared to manage integrity issues

GROWING CLUBS

Growing clubs are more likely to report they are well prepared to manage integrity issues

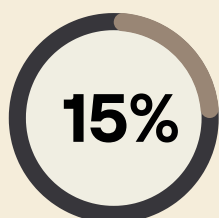


HAS YOUR CLUB USED INFORMATION AND/OR SUPPORT FROM YOUR NSO TO HELP ADDRESS AN INTEGRITY ISSUE?

22%

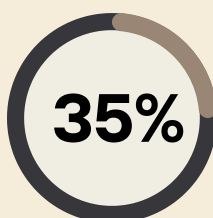
OF CLUBS HAVE USED INFORMATION
AND/OR SUPPORT FROM THEIR NSO TO
HELP ADDRESS AN INTEGRITY ISSUE

ATHLETICS



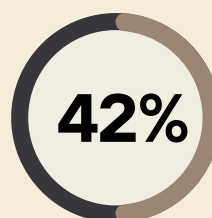
15%

CRICKET



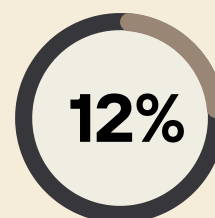
35%

FOOTBALL



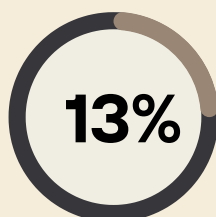
42%

GOLF



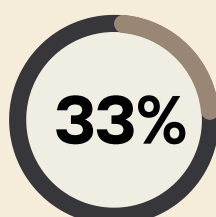
12%

NETBALL



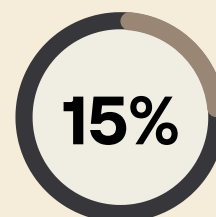
13%

ROWING



33%

RUGBY



15%

LARGER CLUBS

Are more likely to have used information
and/or support from their NSO to help
address an integrity issue



ARE YOU AWARE OF THE SPORT & RECREATION COMPLAINTS & MEDIATION SERVICE ?

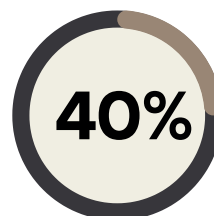


34%

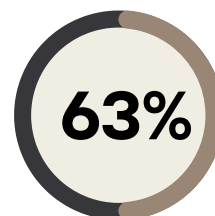
OF CLUBS ARE AWARE
OF THE SPORT &
RECREATION
COMPLAINTS &
MEDIATION SERVICE

Clubs did not differ based on a number of club characteristics related to how aware they are of the Sport & Recreation Complaints & Mediation Service.

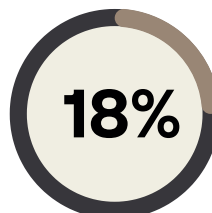
CRICKET



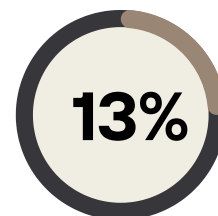
GYMNASTICS



HOCKEY



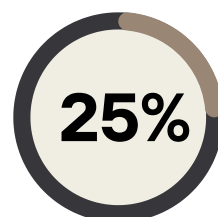
NETBALL



ROWING



RUGBY



14%

of clubs who are aware of this service also informed their members of it



HOW IS YOUR CLUB CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO RAISE INTEGRITY ISSUES?



Of the club representatives who completed the sport integrity questions, 467 responded to this question. Coding templates (Brooks et al., 2015) were developed with the responses categorised under attitudes and values based management tools (VBMT).

ATTITUDES	REFERENCES
No Problems (<i>Not an issue for our club</i>)	54
Open Door (<i>Open door policy, approachable committee members</i>)	221
Work Needed - Self-Identified (<i>Overtly self-identified</i>)	6
Work Needed - Not Done Much (<i>Acknowledges not doing much</i>)	18
Not sure	6

VBMT - FORMAL	REFERENCES
Policies	80
Positions	34
Practises	82
Training	5
VBMT - INFORMAL	
Cultural - Generic	124
Cultural - Specific	7
Leadership	138



OVER CONFIDENCE

The NSCS results suggest an over-confidence by community sport club committees in either the (non) relevance of integrity issues for them or their level of preparedness to deal with such issues. The closed questions revealed that 56% of club committees felt 'prepared' and yet over 80% rarely discussed most of the identified integrity issues. The context provided by the open questions suggest possible explanations for this mismatch. Some clubs consider that age (older participants) and size (smaller) reduce their integrity risks. Others demonstrate a narrow recognition of what 'counts' as an integrity issue (e.g., competition issues only). Prior non-reporting may also support perceptions of non-relevance. However, this over-confidence is contrary to the Sport & Recreation Complaints & Mediation Service's experience with 75% of its complaints (to July 2023) coming from community sport and 25% relating to 'inadequate complaint handling' (Moore, 2023).

"We do not compete in competition but develop skills. So, it is not an issue for us"

"Not something we have ever thought of or spoken about and I've been on the committee for 15 years"

OVER RELIANCE

An overwhelming 221 (out of 467) relied on the 'open-door' nature of their club culture and 'approachable' committee leadership to create safe environments for speaking up. This combined with a strong reliance on the existence of policy (80/467) creates a re-active, as opposed to pro-active approach. There are dangers with this approach. Prior non-disclosure does not mean that such issues do not exist with evidence suggesting low self-disclosure rates in community sport (Woessner et al., 2023). Whilst committee members may be 'friendly and approachable' it may be that it is not so much their nature but the nature of the relationships which is important with disclosures to community sport club managers in some contexts being described as 'exceedingly low' (Woessner et al., 2023).

"We have an open-door policy and members know that they can approach any committee member or administration person with any concerns they may have"



LESSONS TO SHARE

Other clubs report a more pro-active approach with specific attention to creating a 'safe' culture and initiating values-based management tools (Ordway et al., 2022) such as specific positions (34/467), practices (82/467) and training (5/467). Positions include athlete representatives, peer supporters, welfare officers, coach integrity officers and child protection officers. Practices include anonymous reporting mechanisms (online or suggestion boxes), regular integrity messaging (committee/team meetings, newsletters, posters, flyers) and regular/intentional check-ins with coaches/participants (to promote visibility/approachability). However, the training has a narrow focus with most (3/5) concentrating on child safeguarding as opposed to broader integrity education. The sharing of such positive practices could contribute to the systemic cultural change necessary to promote 'safe' sport (Komaki & Tuakli-Wosornu, 2021).

"We surveyed all members on an anonymous basis on all matters related to the club culture with particular emphasis on 'being heard', transparency, discrimination, and social responsibility"

We repeatedly discuss our core values and have zero tolerance for bullying and segregation"

"A new President after far too many decades has introduced aspects of tikanga...We are working on good communication, living/modelling our recently articulated values"



HOW WOULD YOUR CLUB MANAGE AN INTEGRITY ISSUE OR COMPLAINT IF IT WERE TO BE RAISED TO THE BOARD/COMMITTEE?

Of the club representatives who completed the sport integrity questions, 474 responded to this question. Generic responses to this question ranged from 'very seriously' to 'poorly' to 'not sure'. The more detailed responses were categorised into three data-driven coding templates to summarise the key principles, processes, and external actors a club committee would apply, undertake or involve (respectively) to progress the resolution of an integrity issue or complaint.

PRINCIPLES	REFERENCES
Case by Case	31
Fairly	15
Quickly	17
Discrete	34
Open - Transparent	27
Professionally	5
Independent	4
Conflict of Interest (free of)	6
Natural Justice	3
Honest	4
Respectful	6
Restorative	5
Future Focus	4
Wellbeing - Complainant	3





PROCESSES	REFERENCES
Committee Action	207
Chair - President Action	26
Sub-Committee/Officer Action	48
Discussion - People Involved	82
Discussion - All Members	4
Special General Meeting	2
Follows Policies / Laws	110
Written Complaints	10
Investigate	51
Mediate	19
Report Back	19
Appeals	2
Seek Advice / Help	89

EXTERNAL ACTORS	REFERENCES
National Body	72
Regional Body	45
Sport NZ	4
SRCMS	6
Other External (RST, Police, Independent Expertise)	30



INTERNAL CLUB ACTORS

The internal club actors (Ordway et al., 2022) or 'players' involved with club sport integrity matters include the club committee, the chair/president, and specific sub-committees (complaints/disciplinary) or 'officers'. Whilst many (110/474) referenced their constitution or policies, a significant number (207/474) referred integrity complaints to their committee for discussion to confirm the appropriate process and/or outcomes. Some mentioned reliance on expertise with their committee with many (79/474) acknowledging the need to seek external advice or support. Notably, none overtly referenced education as part of their processes for managing an integrity issue or complaint.

"An issue would be tabled and discussed at a committee meeting. Our committee comes from a range of employment and ethnicities, and I feel that we would be able to support a complainant with any issues they might raise"

EXTERNAL CLUB ACTORS

The external club actors (Ordway et al., 2022) from whom the clubs sought advice or support included their national body (72/474), regional body (45), Sport NZ (4), the SRCMS (6), their regional sports trust (2), the police (4) or other independent sources. Such support included the use of national level policies. Whilst reassuring that many clubs are accessing these resources to enhance their capacity this also provides both an opportunity and a challenge in terms of ensuring coherence between these entities and systems (Ordway et al. 2022).

"Discussions would be held, support and advice sought from various sources, ARU, NZRFU and Sport NZ"

"The details would be discussed within committee and investigated. If there were any concerns with process legal advice or advice for regional body would be sought"





PRINCIPLES - CONFIDENTIALITY vs. TRANSPARENCY

In terms of the general principles applied to their management of an integrity issue or complaint, there was some acknowledgement by clubs of the need for a fair and speedy process. Within those processes, a key tension is suggested between the desire for confidentiality and transparency. Some clubs prioritised confidentiality (34/474), the need to be discrete and respect the privacy (and in two clubs, wellbeing), especially of a complainant. Others emphasised transparency (27/474), openness, and even inclusion of the whole club (6) in relevant discussions. A re-framing of integrity systems to positive culture reinforcement instead of the punishment-redress approach (Komaki & Tuakli-Wosornu, 2021) could go some way to minimising the inherent tension between these competing principles.

"Respect privacy, research the issue thoroughly, conduct an appropriate process, communicate with all involved, facilitate a resolution, put steps in place to minimise the chances of it happening again, move forward"

"We would discuss it openly while respecting any privacy concerns and follow guidelines for natural justice. Our committees would respect any group decisions reached"



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Informed by the NSCS 2023 results, other academic studies and consultation with the Integrity Transition Programme team, future considerations for this project and the enhancement of sport integrity at community club level could include:

COMMUNITY SPORT

Sport integrity for club committees and policy makers.

1. **Recognise** the absence of reporting does not mean there are no integrity issues. In this context, no news is not necessarily good news.
2. **Focus** on positive culture reinforcement to reduce the need for integrity issue punishment-redress.
3. **Educate** everyone, about club culture/values and what 'counts' as an integrity issue, and where/how to progress an issue.
4. **Communicate** regular updates about club culture/values, sport integrity issues, complaint systems and contact points.
5. **Monitor** the promotion of club culture/values and the identification and redress of sport integrity issues/complaints.
6. **Appoint** sport integrity/club culture champions (officers/contact points).
7. **Club accreditation.** Include integrity measure in any club accreditation system.



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

NATIONAL SPORT CLUB SURVEY

Sport integrity for the Commission's consideration.

1. The 2023 NSCS provides a baseline. We recommend re-measuring after the release of the voluntary Integrity Code (and its implementation across subsequent years).
2. Future NSCS iterations could also explore the roles of:
 - External actors in promoting system coherence. For example, Sport NZ, the Commission, the Sport & Recreation & Mediation Service (or equivalent service), RSTs, regional and national entities.
 - National and regional entity escalation/cascading triggers (including optional interviews in the 2024 NSCS).
 - Demographic and socio-economic context. The impact of deprivation.
 - Mātauranga, as a possible context for re-framing club integrity systems to focus on positive 'holistic' culture reinforcement.
 - Education (including the current work of Drug Free Sport NZ and the future work of the Commission).

"Every person in the Club is considered to be a Leader. Everyone has a role to play at training,... volunteering, and looking after one another.

Each person is seen as an individual, encouraged to be the best they can be in a nurturing, safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

Each week at training, opportunities are given for individuals to express their hopes, aspirations, fears, achievements, and an emphasis placed on group support dynamics"



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