



**SPORT INTEGRITY
AUSTRALIA**

Positive Behaviours in Sport Snapshot 2025

Key findings | Athletes & Coaches



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the outstanding contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to sport in Australia and celebrate the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.



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INTRODUCTION

Sport Integrity Australia CEO
Dr Sarah Benson PSM



I am pleased to introduce the inaugural findings from the Positive Behaviours in Sport Study — an ambitious five-year research initiative led by Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) to better understand and strengthen the integrity of Australian sport.

The results from Year 1 are both encouraging and insightful. More than 1,200 athletes and coaches from across all levels of sport participated in the first annual survey, and their feedback sends a clear message: the overwhelming majority feel that sport in Australia is safe, fair, and enjoyable. This is a powerful endorsement of the values that underpin our sporting culture and a testament to the tireless efforts of clubs, coaches, administrators, and volunteers nationwide who champion integrity every day.

While the findings are largely positive, they also highlight areas for improvement across the sporting sector. Reports of body-shaming, verbal abuse, bullying, and racism — often witnessed but not formally reported — remind us that our work is far from done.

Nearly half of those who experienced or witnessed poor behaviour chose not to report it, citing reasons such as uncertainty about the seriousness of the issue or how to seek help. This is a call to action for all of us in sport: we must continue to evolve our education and communication so that every participant understands what and how to report, and to ensure they feel empowered to speak up.

SIA is well advanced on our journey to support sport in this critical work.

In the past 12 months alone, we have provided \$2.4 million in funding to 48 national sporting organisations to employ their own integrity managers, who are dedicated to preventing and addressing poor behaviour in sport.

We provided policy support and an independent complaint handling service to 95 Australian sports, and provided customised action plans to 33 sporting organisations to help them improve their child safeguarding policies and practices.

We have also developed and provided countless education resources and interventions to the sector. This includes educating 15,000 participants through face-to-face sessions across Australia and delivering free online integrity education to 157,000 participants in the past 12 months alone. This education reached all

This study is more than a snapshot – it is a foundation. It establishes a baseline from which we will track behaviours and attitudes over time, helping us identify emerging trends and proactively address risks to ensure sport remains a positive experience for all.

levels of sport, and all types of participants – coaches, athletes, administrators, parents and support staff.

Importantly, the data shows that these efforts make a difference. Those who have engaged with SIA's education programs are more confident in accessing integrity resources and more likely to believe their sport is safe and fair. This reinforces the value of our ongoing work in education, policy development, and collaboration with sporting organisations.

This study is more than a snapshot — it is a foundation. It establishes a baseline from which we will track behaviours and attitudes over time, helping us identify emerging trends and proactively address risks to ensure sport remains a positive experience for all. In 2025, we will expand the study to include sport administrators and parents, further enriching our understanding and impact.

As we mark five years since the establishment of SIA, this study represents a significant step forward. It will guide our efforts in safeguarding sport, informing our programs, and shaping a future where integrity is embedded in every aspect of the sporting experience.

Thank you to all who contributed to this important research and to everyone who continues to stand with us in protecting the spirit of Australian sport.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'SBenson'.

Dr Sarah Benson PSM
Chief Executive Officer
Sport Integrity Australia

HOW THE SURVEY WORKS

The overall objective of this research is to monitor the proportion of Australians involved in sport that understand and demonstrate positive behaviours.

A total of 1204 athletes and coaches, representing 64 sports, completed the survey in the first year. Respondents had to meet SIA's definition of participating in organised sport: *any person actively involved in an organised event, competition, or sporting activity sanctioned by a National Sporting Organisation (NSO) or National Sporting Organisation for People with Disability (NSOD) recognised by the Australian Sports Commission (or a state or district sporting organisation governed by said NSO or NSOD).*

The audience participating in the survey reflects participation and demographic data from the Australian Sport's Commission's (ASC) AusPlay survey. The methodology was informed by the ASC and approved by the AIS Ethics Committee. Participants were recruited via an external online research panel in order to maximise the likelihood of target demographic and necessary sample sizes being met.

This aims to represent an accurate picture of participants in Australian organised sport. So, sports with higher participation numbers are more commonly represented in the data. To ensure the results are representative of Australian sport, the data has also been weighted by age, gender identity and location (state/territory and metro/regional).

For reporting purposes, the total audience of respondents has also been categorised into three levels of organised sport:

- **Community sport:** grassroots participants at a local club level.
- **State sport:** the highest level of competition within each state/territory, including participants in second-tier national competitions e.g. Victorian Football League.
- **National and international sport:** state/territory representatives participating in national level competitions, including professional national leagues and national championships, as well as Australian international representatives.

All significance testing was conducted at the 95% confidence level (the chances are 95 in 100 that the true value will fall within a specified range).

LIMITATIONS

As with all research, there are limitations to the use of this data. While the recruitment methodology is largely effective for capturing broad community engagement with sport, it can be difficult to capture representation of niche groups such as those participating at an international level.

As such, the study's findings in relation to National and International level athletes and coaches should be interpreted cautiously due to the small proportion of study participants competing at this level in any broad community sample. Demographic variables beyond age, gender identity, and location were not weighted and may introduce bias when assessing trends. As such, any insights drawn from these additional demographics or high-level competition data should be considered with care to avoid overgeneralisation.

How results will be used

The intent of this survey is to inform SIA's efforts to address integrity in sport.

By gaining a deeper understanding of sport integrity threats, we can deal with any barriers and proactively enhance our programs. This could include things such as informing our education interventions, informing intelligence and child safeguarding programs and informing communication campaigns for the Australian sporting community.



ABOUT THE SURVEY

We have set out to know: How well do Australians understand and demonstrate behaviours that enable safe and fair sport?

Year 1 involved

1,204

survey respondents

879 participants (athletes)

325 coaches

64

sports

Most represented sports

18% Football



10% Netball



10% Basketball



8% Tennis



8% Cricket



7% Australian Rules



6% Golf



4% Athletics



4% Swimming



4% Rugby League



What levels of sport are they from?

81%

Community

10%

State

9%

National/International

76% metro

24% regional

Aged 15 to 65+

New groups to be added in the next survey, incorporating administrators and parents

2

Years of annual surveys to establish trends and inform education for behaviour change in sport

4

Next steps



BUILDING SAFE, FAIR AND FUN AUSTRALIAN SPORT

The majority of athletes and coaches feel sport is safe, fair and fun.

Is Australian sport safe and fair for everyone?

Yes!

88% athletes

Yes!

87% coaches

Is your own sport safe and fair for everyone?

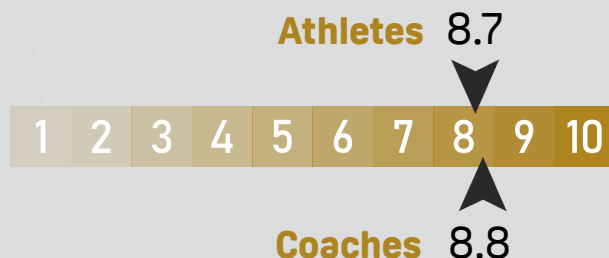
Yes!

91% athletes

Yes!

89% coaches

RATE YOUR SPORT ENJOYMENT



Gender

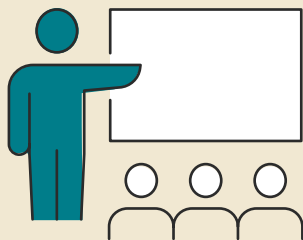
Asked to rate how safe and fair their sport is on a scale of 0-10, male athletes rated it higher.



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: 95 sports have adopted the National Integrity Framework (NIF), plus 4 more National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) have completed the Integrity standards policy review process. This work ensures there is a consistent national approach to sport integrity policies and behaviours.

EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Those who engage in SIA education are more likely to believe sport is safe and fair and to confidently locate their sport's integrity information.



Completed SIA education
in the past 12 months

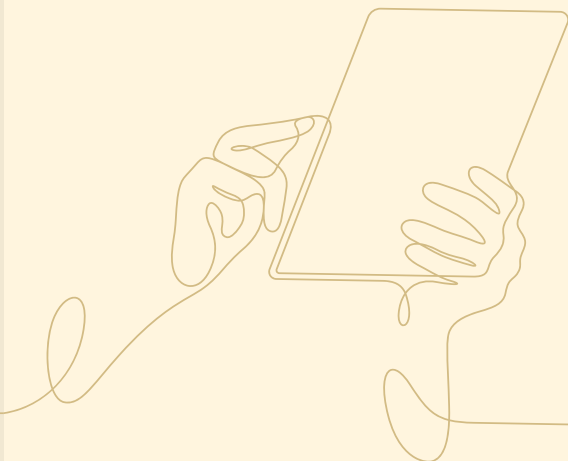
16%
of athletes

33%
of coaches

FAIRLY/COMPLETELY CONFIDENT LOCATING THEIR
SPORT'S INTEGRITY POLICIES/INFORMATION

44%
athletes

60%
coaches



Athlete groups most likely to
have received SIA education in the
past 12 months

29%
Aged
25–34

58%
Para
sport

40%
International/
National level



Coaching groups most likely to
have received SIA education in the
past 12 months

54%
Coaching at least
2x a week

60%
International/
National level



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: 150,000+ users completed SIA education activities in 2024–25, including eLearning, seminars and webinars. This includes 30,000+ national and international level participants. 445,000+ have completed SIA eLearning courses in SIA's first 5 years.

MEMBER PROTECTION

Athletes

Athletes are more likely to have witnessed poor behaviour than experienced it in the past 12 months. They are mainly exposed to this behaviour from other athletes, then to a lesser extent from spectators and coaches. The behaviour may have occurred online or in-person.

Behaviour	In the past 12 months			Who was main offender?
	Experienced %	Witnessed %	Occurred often %	
Body shaming	7	20	14	Athlete 51%
Verbal Abuse	7	33	8	Athlete 54%
Bullying	5	23	11	Athlete 55%
Racism	4	18	11	Athlete 48%
Physical abuse	3	10	10	Athlete 42%
Discrimination (due to disability)	2	8	9	Athlete 42%
Discrimination (on LGBTQ+ status)	2	11	12	Spectator 39%
Inappropriate sexual behaviour	2	10	6	Athlete 41%

Coaches

Coaches are more likely to have witnessed poor behaviour than experienced it in the past 12 months. They are mainly exposed to this behaviour from athletes, then to a lesser extent from parents and spectators. The behaviour may have occurred online or in-person.

Behaviour	In the past 12 months			Who was primarily responsible?
	Experienced %	Witnessed %	Occurred often %	
Verbal Abuse	17	40	22	Parent 47%
Bullying	11	32	22	Athlete 57%
Racism	8	29	21	Athlete 58%
Discrimination (on LGBTQ+ status)	7	15	21	Athlete 49%
Inappropriate sexual behaviour	7	13	23	Administrator 47%
Discrimination (due to disability)	7	18	26	Athlete 58%
Physical abuse	7	20	20	Athlete 77%



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA's Culture and Safety Strategy is being delivered to drive greater equity and inclusion in sport. It will provide a nationally coordinated response to integrity threats to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with a disability, LGBTI+ people, and women and girls across all levels of sport. SIA has launched the Empowering Women and Girls in Sport Integrity Program Strategy, tackling critical issues such as abuse, bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, victimisation, vilification, and cheating.

INCREASED RISK FACTORS FOR POOR BEHAVIOUR

Age, cultural background and performance level are some factors that may influence exposure to poor behaviours.

Age

In the past 12 months, athletes aged 25-34 are significantly more likely to have reported they...

Felt belittled, humiliated, threatened, frightened by a coach

17% v 10% avg

Witnessed:



Inappropriate sexual behaviour

18% v 10% avg



Bullying

38% v 23% avg



Physical abuse

20% v 10% avg



Verbal abuse

44% v 33% avg

Cultural background

In the past 12 months, athletes from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are significantly more likely to have reported they...

Felt belittled, humiliated, threatened, frightened by a coach

23% v 10% avg

Experienced:

Racism

8% v 4% avg



Bullying

11% v 5% avg



Physical abuse

6% v 3% avg



Athletes from CALD backgrounds are significantly more likely to not report poor behaviour because they felt it would not be taken seriously

44% v 27% avg

Performance level

In the past 12 months, national and international athletes are significantly more likely to have reported they...



Have been yelled at in an aggressive manner by a coach as a form of discipline or punishment

36% v 21% avg

Felt belittled, humiliated, threatened, frightened by a coach

26% v 10% avg



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA, the AIS and the Western Australian Institute of Sport have united in 2025 to launch world-first eLearning course to equip coaches of junior high performance athletes with the tools they need to deliver safe, effective and athlete-centred coaching. The course is available on SIA's new eLearning hub, SIA Edge at www.elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au.

COACHING WITH RESPECT

There is generally a mutual respect and care between athletes and coaches. A key shared goal is enjoyment of sport.

Athletes who feel their coaches have some respect for their...

PHYSICAL HEALTH

97%

(either slightly, somewhat, or strongly)

MENTAL HEALTH

94%

Top athlete outcomes as ranked by coaches

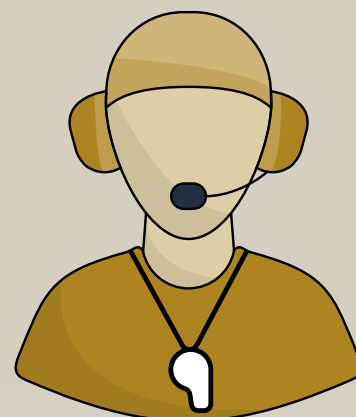
Enjoying participation
40%

Feeling safe, comfortable to be themselves
22%

Improving technical skills
15%

Other options included:

Achieving positive competition results; Being mentally resilient; and Feeling emotionally supported.



98%

of athletes that say their coach

A. ensures they enjoy sport

B. provides equal opportunity

(either slightly, somewhat, or strongly)

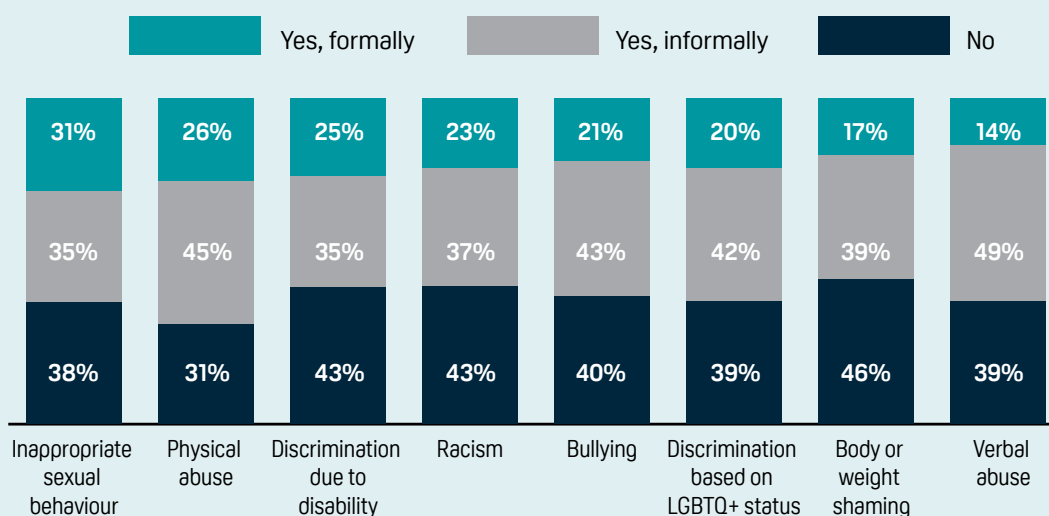


INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA is partnering with US-based We Ride Together to launch educational resources in Australia in 2025, aiming to enhance awareness of healthy and unhealthy coach-athlete relationships. It also looks at things like power imbalances and how to be an active bystander when you see poor behaviour. Find these and other resources at www.sportintegrity.gov.au.

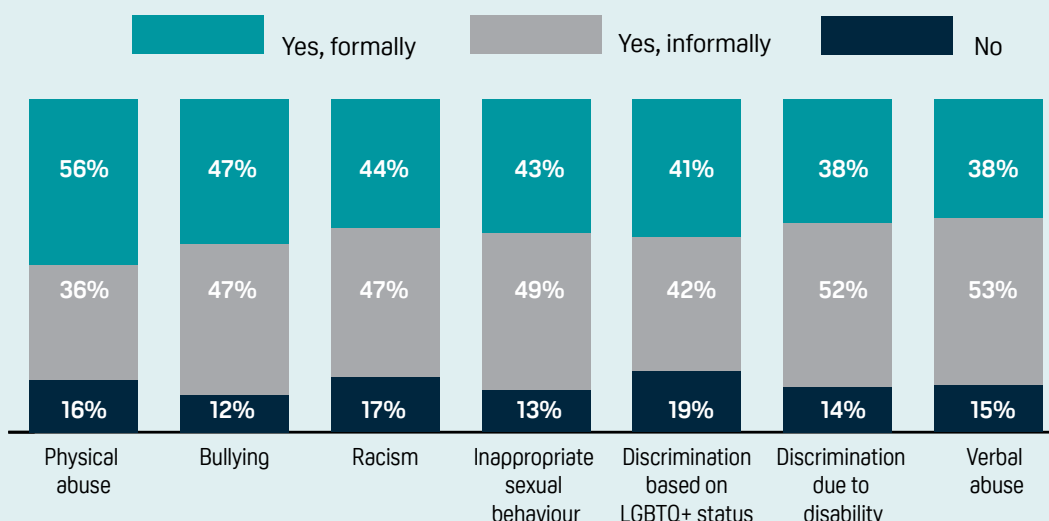
REPORTING POOR BEHAVIOUR

Most athletes and coaches report poor behaviour, but it's more likely to be done informally. Coaches are more likely to report than athletes.

Did athletes call out poor behaviour, either formally or informally?



Did coaches call out poor behaviours, either formally or informally?



* Some survey respondents reported poor behaviour both formally and informally, which explains why the graphs above don't total 100%.



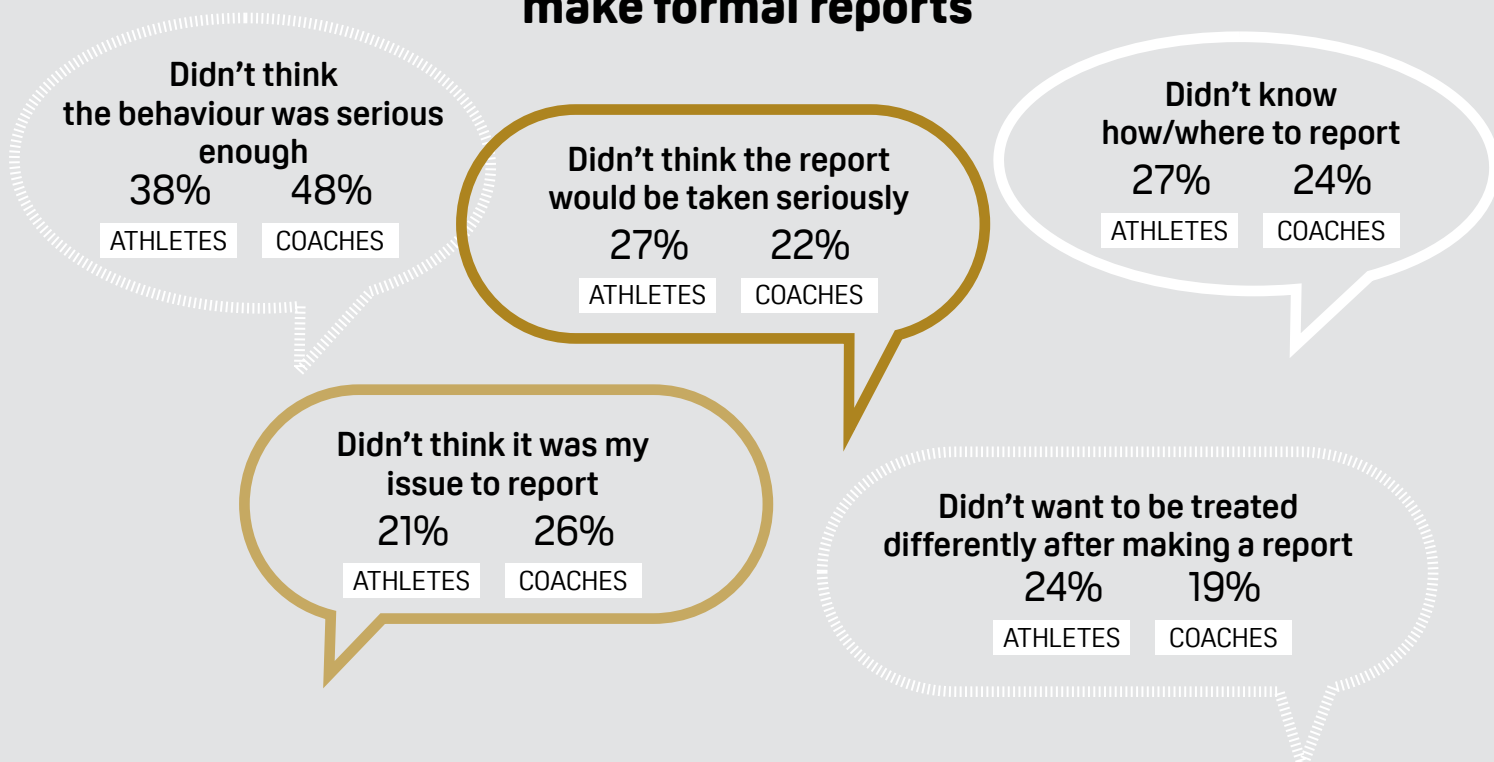
INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA has funded **32** integrity manager roles across **48** sports. In 2024/25, SIA also worked with Play by the Rules to update the Member Protection Information Officer training and accreditation program for 5,000+ volunteers in community sport. These roles play a critical role in promoting and supporting complainants in sport.

BARRIERS TO REPORTING POOR BEHAVIOUR

There are barriers to formal reporting.

The main reason for not making a formal report, for both athletes and coaches, is that people did not think the behaviour was serious enough.

Reasons athletes, coaches did not make formal reports



75%

of athletes

say their coach would support them to make an official report if something happened

72% and **77%**

of athletes and of coaches

believe their club/organisation addresses poor behaviour that occurs

27% and **34%**

of athletes and of coaches

claim to have been treated negatively after reporting poor behaviour

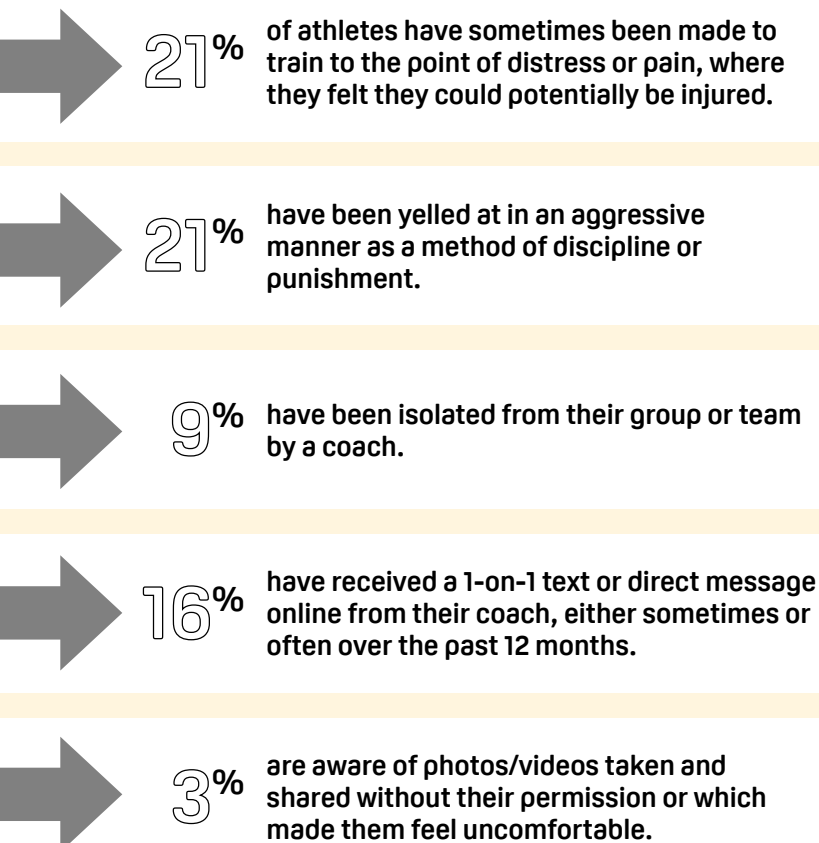


INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA's Safe Sport Hotline (1800 161 361) provides opportunities for people to be heard in sport and seek guidance on integrity matters.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Coaches still require some guidance and education around professional boundaries, especially one-on-one situations with athletes under 18.

Based on responses from
**ATHLETES
AGED UNDER 18**
and their experiences in
the past 12 months



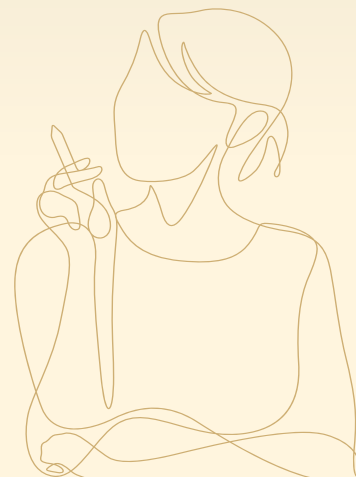
37%

of coaches believe it is appropriate to **withhold a young person's access to their phone** during overnight trips, allowing family contact only in an emergency.

25%

of athletes feel U18 athletes should be **treated like adults** if they participate in open-age competition.

This rises to 53% for national and international level athletes.



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: 33 NSOs and 13 State Sporting Organisations are part of SIA's Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program, providing a tailored action plan to improve child safeguarding practices. 95 Australian sporting organisations have access to SIA's independent complaint handling service, meaning high-risk child safeguarding matters are investigated independent of sport, and law enforcement referrals are seamless.

HOW RISKY ARE THESE CHILD SAFE SCENARIOS?

Coaches

Coaches assessed the risk of 5 scenarios involving a 22-year-old coach and 16-year-old athlete.

Coaches who considered the activities extreme or considerable risk...

62% Driving the athlete home from training without parent permission.



46% Being the only adult present supervising athletes in changerooms.



22% Attending an athlete's birthday celebrations.



21% Conducting extra 1-on-1 training with an athlete, with parent permission.



13% Giving a gift to an athlete to celebrate a personal sporting goal.



Athletes

Athletes assessed the risk of 5 scenarios involving athletes aged under 18.

Athletes who considered the activities extreme or considerable risk...

68% Buying a beer for a young participant at a club function.



68% Encouraging a young athlete to ignore injury during training.



64% Telling jokes about sex in a group setting including a young athlete.



43% Taking a selfie with a young athlete in the changerooms after competition.



42% Sharing a twin room with a young athlete on an interstate trip.



All of these scenarios are examples of possible inappropriate behaviour with athletes U18.



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: 84,000+ people have completed SIA's Safeguarding Children in Sport Induction course since 2021. More than 95% of users report they are: more motivated to champion safe and positive environments for children and young people in sport; more aware of child-safe practices and; more confident in their ability to respond to alleged breaches of policy.

ANTI-DOPING AWARENESS

National and international level athletes are more confident in their ability to explain anti-doping rules.

National/international level athlete confidence explaining anti-doping rules

*completely/
fairly confident*
49%

*somewhat/
slightly confident*
43%

not at all confident
8%

Global Drug Reference Online (GlobalDRO)

National/international athletes who have
a level of confidence explaining GlobalDRO
as a tool to check medications.

78%



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: 110,000+ people have downloaded the free Sport Integrity app, a one-stop tool for anti-doping information, medicine and supplement checkers, to report an integrity issue or access education. You can access GlobalDRO directly from the Sport Integrity app.

SUPPLEMENTS REMAIN A RISK

4-in-10 athletes reported taking supplements in the past 12 months, but there are knowledge gaps about what's safe. Younger athletes are more likely to be encouraged to take supplements.

Athletes who took supplements in the past 12 months

40%
OF TOTAL
ATHLETES

52%

athletes at
state, national or
international level

54%

aged 35-44

55%

aged 25-34



Batch tested supplements

57%

of athletes who took a sport supplement said it was not batch-tested, or they didn't know.

30%

of athletes at state level or above are fairly/completely confident explaining batch-testing.
(33% not confident or unaware)

Coaches who encouraged athletes to take a supplement

23%

of total coaches

48%

of coaches at national/international level

25%

of athletes say they were encouraged to take a supplement

This rises for younger athletes

33% of 15-24-year-olds

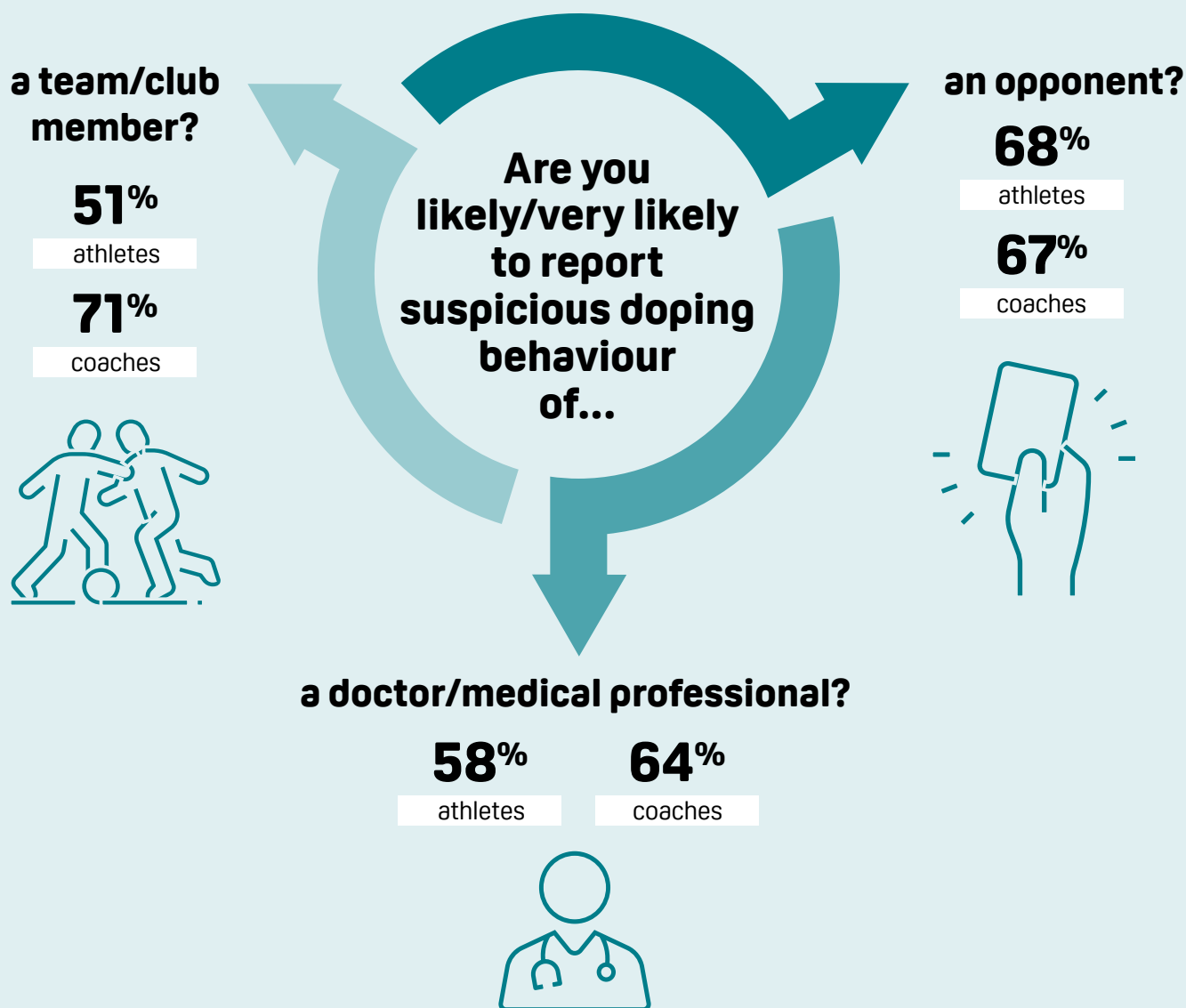
35% of 25-34-year-olds



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA continues to focus on education and communication to reduce the risk of doping due to supplements, including the Supplement Checker on the Sport Integrity app. The number of anti-doping rule violations caused by supplements has dropped from 16 athletes in 2016/17 to no athletes in 2024/25. SIA continues to actively warn athletes of the risks of unintentional doping, including supplements.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS DOPING BEHAVIOURS

Coaches are more likely to report suspicious doping behaviour than athletes, especially within their own organisations.



The majority of coaches consider anti-doping relevant to their role

87%
Anti-doping rules

70%
Batch-tested supplements

62%
GlobalDRO



ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT DRUGS

Illicit drug use is far less common than excessive consumption of alcohol, but has a greater negative impact on people's experiences in sport.

How many people that coaches and athletes claim use illicit drugs at their club or organisation? (on average)



Athletes who claim people at their club or organisation's events or venues have excessively consumed alcohol at least sometimes.

Yes!

Excessive alcohol consumption or illicit drug use at your sporting organisation negatively impacts sporting experience.

ALCOHOL
35% and **48%**
of athletes of coaches

ILLICIT DRUGS
44% and **66%**
of athletes of coaches

ILLICIT DRUGS

Athletes at state level or higher are significantly more likely to claim people at their club, organisation, events or venues have used illicit drugs often.

7% v 3% avg

61%

of coaches are comfortable **proactively discussing illicit drug use** in their club.



INTEGRITY IN ACTION: SIA hosted an Illicit Drugs in Sport Roundtable in 2025 to bring together leaders in sport, healthcare, law enforcement and wellbeing to discuss this complex issue. It is part of SIA's commitment to collaborative leadership for safe, clean and fair sport in Australia. 75 sports also attended SIA's inaugural CEO Sport Integrity Forum in 2025, while the [Law Enforcement Partnership Program](#), launched in 2024, has enhanced partnerships and information sharing for the benefit of sport.

COMPETITION MANIPULATION AND GAMBLING RISKS

Betting activity of athletes and coaches is quite similar.

While 1-in-3 coaches say they would be willing to take steps to create an easier path to winning in the long term, there is little evidence of participants being asked to disadvantage their team.

Who has **placed a bet on their main sport** in the past 12 months?

35% **42%**
athletes coaches

This does not necessarily represent a breach of sport wagering policy, depending on the rules of the sport.

Athletes who have been asked to **deliberately do something** that would disadvantage themselves or their team while competing.

8% **14%**
overall at state level or higher

This does not necessarily represent a breach of sport competition manipulation policy, depending on the rules of the sport.

32%

of coaches claim they would engage in at least one of the following steps to create an **easier path to winning** in the long term...

- encourage participants to give less than their best, or to take it easy (**21%**)
- move participants to unfamiliar positions (**17%**)
- lose on purpose (**3%**)





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