



**SPORT INTEGRITY  
AUSTRALIA**

**THE  
EMBRACE  
COLLECTIVE.**

**SPORT IS FOR EVERY BODY | FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

# WORDS MATTER

## STOPPING BODY SHAMING IN SPORT

### What is body shaming?

Body shaming is any comment or action that judges, criticises, mocks, or teases someone because of their body size, shape, weight, or appearance, or makes them feel pressure to change the way they look. In sport, it might come from teammates or opponents, coaches, spectators or family members.

### What counts as body shaming?

Body shaming can be hard to identify. There are a wide range of things people say that make people feel bad about their appearance, or can pressure them to change the way they look. Some examples include:

- ✗ **Making negative judgements and comments about body shape, size, muscle tone, facial features, disability, visible difference, or height, or calling people nicknames based on these features.**
- ✗ **Comments that can be intended as a compliment or a joke.**
- ✗ **Comparing athletes to others or to the size and shape 'expected' for the sport.**
- ✗ **Comments about skin, hair, facial features, or body hair, stretch marks, acne, scars, or other traits, particularly those in relation to growth and development in puberty.**
- ✗ **Blaming poor performance on an athlete's body size or appearance, or suggesting that someone needs to change their body or appearance to be successful.**

- ✗ **Comments suggesting that an athlete should/shouldn't be performing well based on their size, weight, appearance or cultural background.**
- ✗ **Making comments about how someone looks in a team uniform or gear.**
- ✗ **Making recommendations about what athletes should/shouldn't eat based on assumptions that this would change their shape or weight.**
- ✗ **Coaches, trainers, or parents monitoring or controlling athletes' weight, body composition, or diet and equating discipline or success with thinness or leanness.**
- ✗ **Conducting weigh-ins, or taking body measurements that are not required for competition, or in ways that create comparison, pressure and insecurities around appearance.**

### Why does this matter?

Body shaming is a critical issue in youth sport right now. Sport Integrity Australia research shows that 1-in-5 athletes have witnessed body shaming in sport – it's the most commonly reported negative behaviour.

## Here's what you can do

There are actions that everyone can take to make teams and clubs feel safe and welcoming for everybody and to reduce body shaming in sport.

### On your team:

- ✓ **Focus on what you are doing with your body - not what it looks like.**
- ✓ **Don't tease or comment on anyone's body or appearance, including the opposition!**
- ✓ **Celebrate effort, improvement, dedication and attitude - not just goals, wins or appearance.**
- ✓ **Use your voice and speak up if someone is being unkind.**

### At your club:

- ✓ **Be the change:** Share the Sport is for Every BODY resources with your parents, coach or the leaders in your club.
- ✓ **Be respectful:** Respect everyone involved in your sport, including teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents and carers.
- ✓ **Take a stand:** Your thoughts and opinions are important. Work together with your teammates to speak up and talk to an adult you trust.
- ✓ **Use your voice:** If things don't feel right, suggest changes to facilities, uniforms, and policies that could help your club feel safe and supportive.
- ✓ **Create safe spaces:** Put up the Sport is for Every BODY posters in your clubhouse and change room.



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[sportintegrity.gov.au](https://sportintegrity.gov.au)