

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**INTRODUCTION**

Sport in Australia is at a crossroads with the ever challenging and increasing battle of abuse against officials. Leagues and Associations will tell you the hardest part of their jobs is getting and keeping good officials, resilient officials. However, therein lies the problem we are facing. Why does it all fall on our officials to be resilient? Abuse shouldn't be present in any sport, to anyone. It is bullying, plain and simple. Yet for years sport has made it common practice that our officials should be resilient, they should be able to overcome the weekends occurrences and players, coaches and spectators can go about their lives with little to no regard for the impact they are having on, for the most part, a young person's mental wellbeing and life. Resilience should not be needed, manners and appreciation is what we all need to be showing and should have been doing all along.

Most people in community sport do the right thing acknowledging and accepting that it's part of the social contract to protect the officials. One, because they're an isolated neutral but, two, because to make them fair game would be to cross a line in sport from which there'd be no return. It would be a green light to greater abuse. To remove the framework of rules and sanctions that prohibits criticism of them would make recruitment and retention impossible. Do officials sometimes do a poor job? Absolutely. Can we all do poorly at our jobs at times? Without a doubt.

Parents sign their children up for team sport because they see value in what it offers. Mateship, freedom, the thrill of competition, respecting your opposition, and the lessons in winning and losing well. Many of us have probably seen, heard or felt a moment when those noble ideals of sport rub up against the competitor within us, our protective instincts towards our children or our sense of justice. We also know that community sport can be where poor attitudes towards officials start to take root as young children observe the behaviours of adults interacting with the officials poorly and learn from this modelling.

Sporting organisations must do more to look after the welfare of its officials to ensure sport continues to thrive and is enjoyed by all. We need all players, coaches, and spectators to understand that our officials are, for the most part, young people who are starting out on their officiating journey and are constantly working to improve and refine their skills and without them there is no game.

It is time to change the narrative. Referees must be thanked, not abused!

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**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document and associated Framework is to ensure that all participants within the Junior Domestic Competitions of the Melbourne East Basketball Association (MEBA) can enjoy a safe, positive, and rewarding environment that is free from all forms of abuse, harassment, and bullying. It is the MEBA's strong view that the conduct of all participants should reflect the values of our sport and that this framework forms a key part in helping strengthen our capacity to manage inappropriate behaviours.

The MEBA seeks to be a force for positive change within the community. We all want our kids to enjoy sport, but we can't do that without the help of the dedicated officials who give up their time to support the Association. These officials are, for the most part, teenagers and cannot be expected to be as knowledgeable or experienced as professional referees.

This Framework reflects best practice of bodies such as Sport Australia who support a change of sport culture. There is no excuse (and no circumstance) to act poorly towards others.

Through this Framework, the MEBA is striving for a culture within our Association where:

- Respect is shown by everyone, to everyone;
- Respectful communication is displayed by everyone, to everyone;
- Participants are part of the solution by being supportive (and not part of the problem); and
- Positive supporter behaviour is the "norm".

A positive cycle of improvement is dependent on each party doing their part.

**THE MEBA TAKES A ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH TOWARDS REFEREE ABUSE!**

**SCOPE**

The MEBA Junior Domestic Competition Behavioural Management Framework outlines the expected behaviours and penalties for breach of these expectations and applies to all people participating in and attending Junior Domestic Competitions of the MEBA and GEBC including all Coaches, Team Managers, Staff, Players, Referees, Other Officials and Spectators.

The Framework is to be used in conjunction with the MEBA Competition By-Laws, Venue Conditions of Entry and Basketball Victoria Code(s) of Conduct.

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS**

**PLAYERS:**

PLAYERS MUST, AT ALL TIMES ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Players must abide by the BV Players Code of Conduct;
2. Players must not persistently question/challenge a referee's decision, nor make overly verbal or animated objections including (but not limited to) swearing, sarcastic clapping, "stepping up", slamming or throwing the ball away;
3. Players must not make statements of an abusive nature towards a referee, the nature of which includes (but not limited to) (i) Performance or competence; (ii) Racial discrimination; (iii) Gender or Sexuality based remarks; or (iv) Perceived bias of a referee;
4. Players must address any query or complaint about a referee's decision through their coach;
5. Players must not photograph, film or follow the referee's before, during or after any game.

**COACHES:**

COACHES MUST, AT ALL TIMES ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Coaches must abide by the BV Coaches Code of Conduct;
2. Coaches must not persistently question/challenge a referee's decision, nor make overly verbal or animated objections including (but not limited to) swearing, sarcastic clapping, "stepping up", slamming or throwing the ball away;
3. Coaches must not make statements of an abusive nature towards a referee, the nature of which includes (but not limited to) (i) Performance or competence; (ii) Racial discrimination; (iii) Gender or Sexuality based remarks; or (iv) Perceived bias of a referee;
4. Coaches may only ask referees a question (without malice) relating to either a rule or By-Law interpretation and must address the referees at an appropriate time and not during play except for responding to referee-initiated communication, or to point out emergencies or safety issues such as an injured player.
5. Coaches must not photograph, film or follow the referee's before, during or after any game.

**SPECTATORS:**

SPECTATORS MUST, AT ALL TIMES ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Spectators must abide by the BV Spectator Code of Conduct;
2. Spectators are not permitted to enter the playing area **AT ANY TIME!** and must not impede the referees 'path of travel';
3. Spectators are not permitted to approach the referees at all, including before, during or after any game.
4. Spectators are not permitted to engage, question, challenge, abuse, threaten or ridicule the referees or any decisions made by any means including (but not limited to) swearing, sledging, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, condescension, or discriminatory comments **AT ANY TIME!**
5. Spectators are not permitted to provide "advice" to the referees including (but not limited to) "watch certain players" or count "time in the key";
6. Spectators must not approach or engage with the scorebench about a score, foul, or timing discrepancy.
7. Spectators must not abuse the scorebench officials, opposition coach, players or spectators by any means including (but not limited to) swearing, sledging, harassment or intimidation;
8. Spectators must not photograph, film, or follow the referee's before, during or after any game.

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**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

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The Behavioural Management Framework is a multi-faceted structure that brings together education, operational procedures, and penalties into an easily identifiable chain of actions and consequences.



In all, four components make up the initial Framework starting with education of the wider community on the expected behaviours through an advertising campaign. This campaign will highlight what behaviours are and are not allowed through a series of posters to be placed throughout the competition venues, direct distribution by clubs to their members and through online/social media promotion. As part of this “education” piece, we are expecting all clubs coaches to register into PlayHQ as the team coach and by registering confirm they have read, understood and accept the Framework, BV Code(s) of Conduct, along with completing the “Play By The Rules” course on “abuse”.

The second component of the Framework will see the introduction of match suspensions for players and coaches who receive multiple behavioural technical fouls in a season. The process for suspending players/coaches for behavioural technical fouls has been practised for several years in the VJBL and the MEBA has operated under this model for its Senior Domestic Competition for several seasons. Should a player or coach receive multiple technical fouls in a season, they will be suspended for “x” number of weeks from the Association’s domestic competitions (does not relate to VJBL matches or matches at other Associations).

The third component of the Framework provides the Association with the ability to escalate the penalties distributed against a spectator who continues to display behaviours that breach this Framework. Where a spectator has been ejected from a match due to abusive behaviour, the team they are there supporting will be impacted through the loss of “Premiership Points” which could ultimately impact their position on the ladder and qualification for finals.

Finally, if a spectator is ejected from a match/venue following the abuse of an official, and that spectator is reported to the Tribunal and subsequently found guilty, the Association will add a loading to the BV imposed penalty of 25% should the official be a minor (Under 18).

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADHERANCE**

Overall, each Club is responsible for the behaviour of their teams as a collective group. At each individual game however, the Head Coach of the team (or Team Manager where the coach is under 18 years of age) is responsible for ensuring themselves, players and spectators of their team adhere to all behaviour guidelines outlined above.

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**BEHAVIOURAL TECH FOUL SUSPENSION**

Players and Coaches (Including Assistant Coaches) who receive two or more "Behavioural Technical Fouls" during a junior domestic season will be suspended from playing/coaching as follows:

<b>1 Behavioural Technical Foul</b>	<b>= Warning</b>
<b>2 Behavioural Technical Fouls</b>	<b>= Automatic 1 Week Suspension</b>
<b>3 Behavioural Technical Fouls</b>	<b>= Automatic 2 Week Suspension</b>
<b>4 Behavioural Technical Fouls</b>	<b>= Automatic 4 Week Suspension</b>
<b>5 Behavioural Technical Fouls</b>	<b>= Automatic 6 Week Suspension</b>

*Note: If a player or coach is ejected from a game, and both technical fouls related to referee abuse, the Competition Administration may invoke an additional game suspension.*

*Note: A reminder that it is the responsibility of the coach (or Team Manager where coach is under 18 years of age) to manage the behaviour of their team and as such, if a behavioural technical foul is issued to the teams' bench, this shall be issued to the Coach and will be added to the coaches season tally and any penalty applicable will be imposed.*

**TEAM TECH FOUL PENALTY**

Where a team displays consistently poor behaviour that results in multiple technical fouls collectively across a season, that team shall be penalised through the loss of Premiership Points. This premiership points penalty is included as a "team based" penalty where there may be multiple individual offenders within a single team who may receive one tech foul each and as such only receive a warning, but as a collective group the team is not displaying the expected behaviours of the Association.

**PENALTY**

Each TEAM that receives more than 4 technical fouls in a season shall receive a one (1) "premiership point" deduction for EACH tech foul received after receiving their 4<sup>th</sup> tech foul of the season.

**RECORDING OF BEHAVIOURAL TECH FOULS**

Where a referee gives a technical foul to a player or coach during a game, the referee must "log" each tech foul via the prescribed "Behaviour Log" JotForm at the end of the game or by the end of the days' fixture. An explanation as to why the player/coach received a technical foul is required on the form. If a player/coach is also reported by the referee, then this must be indicated on the form and the official BV Tribunal Report Form must also be sent to the competition administration.

**BEHAVIOURAL TECH FOUL REPORTING**

After the completion of each round the competition administrator will complete a review of all tech foul logs received and send a summary email to each club contact to inform them of any indiscretions during that week. If a player or coach has received their first tech foul the club will be issued with their warning. For any player or coach who has received their 2<sup>nd</sup> or more technical foul the competition administration will advise the club that the relevant person is suspended for 'x' number of weeks in accordance with the above guidelines and the date which they can return.

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**APPEALS**

Players and coaches who receive a behavioural technical foul do have the right to appeal to the MEBA Competition Appeals Committee for a review of their behavioural technical foul record by close of business on the next business day. The appeal must be made via email through their Club Delegate and be accompanied by a \$50 payment. The request for a review will be completed within 48 business hours of the request being received. The MEBA's Competition Appeals Committee decision is final.

**SPECTATOR EJECTION**

Where a spectator or spectators are being abusive and in contravention of the BV Code of Conduct and this Framework, each spectator risks "ejection" from the venue. Where spectators are bordering on breach, the referee will stop the game and either advise the coach or request the assistance of the referee/venue supervisor to advise the coach that the spectator(s) are receiving their "formal warning". If the spectator(s) continue in the same vein, the referee will again stop the game and "eject" the spectator(s) from the venue. If a spectator is asked to leave the venue by a referee or referee/venue supervisor, said spectator/s must do so immediately without issue or a tribunal report will be lodged, and loss of game may be applied.

Any spectator who is ejected by an official will be banned from entering association venues as follows:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Spectator Ejection</b>	<b>= Automatic 1 Week Suspension</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Spectator Ejection</b>	<b>= Automatic 3 Week Suspension</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Spectator Ejection</b>	<b>= Removal from Club/Competition</b>

*Note: Automatic suspensions administered by the competition do not cover any suspensions handed down by the BV Tribunal.*

**SPECTATOR EJECTIONS ARE CUMULATIVE AND DO NOT RESET EACH SEASON.**

**RECORDING OF SPECTATOR EJECTIONS**

Where a referee or other official eject a spectator during a game, that referee or other official must log each ejection via the prescribed "Behaviour Log" JotForm at the end of the game or by the end of the days' fixture. An explanation as to why the spectator was ejected is required on the form. If a spectator is also reported by the referee or other official, then this must be indicated on the form and the official BV Tribunal Report Form must also be sent to the competition administration.

*Note: Where the officials are unable to ascertain the name of the spectator ejected, the club or team associated with the individual MUST provide competition management with the individuals' contact details within 24 hours of being requested by competition management. **Where the club or team associated with the spectator who has been ejected fail to advise of the spectator's name and contact details within 24 hours of the request, that team will be removed from the competition and be charged a walkover fee for each game missed until such time as the contact detail information has been provided.***

*Note: Not all ejections require an official BV tribunal report, this is only required when the action(s) of those involved warrant a formal tribunal report.*

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS**  
**BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**SPECTATOR EJECTION REPORTING**

After the completion of each round the competition administration will complete a review of all ejection logs received and send a summary email to each club contact to inform them of any indiscretions during that week. If a spectator has been ejected the competition administration will advise the club that the relevant person is suspended for 'x' number of weeks in accordance with the above guidelines and the date which they can return.

**LOSS OF PREMIERSHIP POINTS**

As noted above, it is the team's responsibility to ensure that all spectators of their team abide by the BV Spectator Code of Conduct as well as the Behavioural Framework. As such, where a spectator(s) is ejected from a match due to abusive behaviour, the team they are there supporting will be penalised through the loss of "Premiership Points" which could ultimately impact their position on the ladder and qualification for finals.

This premiership points penalty is included as it is a "team based" penalty where there may be multiple offenders within a single team who may only be ejected once each, but collectively the team is not upholding the expected behaviours of the Association.

Teams who have one or more spectators ejected from any match will lose one (1) "premiership point" for each individual person ejected.

**Each Spectator Ejection = Automatic 1 Premiership Point Lost**

*Note: If a spectator is ejected during "grading" where no premiership points are awarded, that team will still lose a premiership point for each ejection that will be deducted prior to the commencement of the "regular season", thus starting the team with negative premiership points.*

*Note: The loss of premiership points penalty is in addition to any other individual suspensions handed down to the individual spectator by the competition and BV Tribunal.*

**POST-MATCH INCIDENTS**

Where a player, coach or spectator approaches a referee at or after the conclusion of a game to engage, question, challenge, abuse, threaten or ridicule the referee (and as such cannot be issued a technical foul or ejected by the referee) the referee will submit a BV Tribunal Report against the player, coach or spectator. Where a player, coach or spectator is reported to the BV Tribunal and found guilty, the team that the individual is associated with will have three (3) "premiership points" deducted from that teams' season points tally.

**MULTIPLE SPECTATOR INCIDENTS**

Where an individual team is logged on more than two (2) occasions in a season for having spectator incidents including ejections and/or reports, that team may be removed from the competition for the remainder of that season. Where a team is removed from the competition due to repeated logs as a result of spectator behaviour, the team will be charged a walkover fee for all matches remaining until the end of the regular season and the team members registered with that team shall not be permitted to join any other club/team until such time as the fees have been paid.

**MELBOURNE EAST BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION  
JUNIOR DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS  
BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

**ASSOCIATION SUSPENSION LOADINGS**

If a spectator is reported to the BV Tribunal from a match/venue following the abuse of an official, and that is subsequently found guilty, the Association will automatically add a loading to the penalty of 25% loading should the official be a minor (Under 18).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**SCOREBENCH OFFICIALS**

Parents/Spectators taking on the role of "scorer" at a match are considered an official of the game and are expected to act accordingly. Scorers must:

- (a) Be diligent in fulfilling scoring duties;
- (b) Report any score bench discrepancies to the referees immediately;
- (c) Act in an unbiased manner;
- (d) Do not cheer for either team or abuse the referees; and
- (e) Refrain from cheating.

If a team is concerned with the competency of a scorebench official supplied by the other team, the Coach may request the referee or referee/venue supervisor investigate whether the person should be replaced. The referee or referee/venue supervisor's decision is final. The scorebench official can only be replaced by a person from the opposing team.