



SPORT | Issue No. 18 | Parramatta Crisis

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The Supreme Court of New South Wales has handed down its decision and the five Parramatta officials are gone! There are still some avenues of appeal available to them.

The NRL has proposed penalties on Parramatta including competition points deducted, prize money withdrawn, Directors and officials banned and a massive fine. Initially the NRL had said that until the Directors resign the Parramatta club could not earn any more points. That position seems to have been changed. The Club has the opportunity to put forward its submission on the matter by the end of the week.

Some commentators have said that the Parramatta club were really stupid and allowed themselves to be caught. To tape record meetings discussing the cheating does appear stupid. The suggestion being that others cheat and that you need to cheat to compete.

Salary cap rorting is just institutional cheating in Australian sport.

It seems surprising to me that when we talk about salary cap breaches the word cheating is not readily used. When we talk about taking performance enhancing drugs, we talk about drug cheats, so why don't we talk about salary cap cheats.

What does it say about Australian professional sport when we have had a history of teams breaching salary caps?

One of the interesting things is that no one seems to be shocked when there is another salary cap scandal. Is this just another example of professional sport being a dirty game and we are naïve to expect the participants to play within the rules and not use all of the measures available to them, legal or illegal to succeed? Is this just Essendon in a very different form, but doing the same thing, breaking the rules to pursue success?

Remarkably there are tape recordings of board meetings discussing the "arrangements".

It seems that Sport needs to find a way to get ahead of the cheating. You have to feel for Sports who have to act as the NRL have done in this case, after the event to impose penalties. Todd Greenberg is being applauded for his strong stance.

This is cheating on an organised and substantial level. The question is, what can the NRL or AFL or other Sports do to prevent teams cheating?

The regularity of salary cap breaches, says something about the integrity and fairness of some of Australia's favourite sports. Sports are doing their best but they need to find a way to fix the problem. The sporting public should be entitled to trust the integrity of their favourite Sport.

P.S. At the time of writing my recent article on Olympic selection appeals a marathon runner was appealing his non selection. It was reported recently by SBS that appeal was unsuccessful!



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