



## SPORT | Issue No. 22 | *Are we all sick of footballers behaving badly?*

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I have read an opinion piece by Brent Tait sharing his thoughts on issues surrounding player behaviour a couple of weeks ago.

He starts off by saying *“We have young men in our game who are going to make mistakes. Sometimes we have to be a little bit more understanding of what is going on and the issues some of them are dealing with.”* And even whilst he says *“instead of pointing the finger at young players we need to try and help them with their behaviour off the field”*, he can't help himself by stating the obvious *“However, there is a flip side to the situation and there are some behavioural standards we all have to uphold”*.

Over the last few years when players have behaved badly, we hear that whilst they have behaved badly, their welfare is of the utmost importance. I'm sorry but I just don't agree with that. Generally *“their welfare is of the utmost importance”* is code for *“but they are a good player and we need to keep them”*.

Brent Tait was a fantastic Rugby League player and he seems like a thoroughly decent human being. We all, sort of, get where he is coming from; but it is his final sentence that I agree with most. That is *“there are some behavioural standards that we all have to uphold”*.

My view is, having failed to achieve acceptable standards, employees need to be fired. Footballers need to be fired. Where employees (be they footballers or not) have personal struggles, it is of course incumbent upon their employers to be supportive of them and help them however they can. Whilst we continue to make excuses for unacceptable behaviour and employers continue to tolerate this and give offenders another chance, standards will not change and behaviour will not improve.

The other problem which exists is if a player is a good player and if he is sacked by one club, there is a queue of other clubs ready and willing to reemploy him.

As I have said before, until such time as the teams start adopting standards and imposing those standards on their employees, nothing will change and indeed what we

are seeing is the deterioration in the standards of behaviour.

Whilst we understand sport is different, as an employer you will ultimately get the behaviour from your employees that you demand. Whilst they continue to make excuses, the employers are not demanding high standards but are accepting lower ones, albeit surrounded with statements of good intent and statements that the player's wellbeing is of paramount importance.

Trent Robinson, Sydney Roosters Coach, jumped on the band wagon for the need to protect the players by somehow making it illegal to sell photos or footage of players behaving badly. He said:

*“The NRL need to step in and they need to make it public that you are not allowed to sell these on and we will go after the individuals that do this and that is protecting the players.”*

Why? What law is that and what Country does he live in? Famous people, politicians and celebrities have been subjected to this level of scrutiny for years. For them the paparazzi are everywhere. Why should footballers be protected differently from the rest of the population?



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