



Purple Armband Games

Information Sheet: Purple Armband Games

What is the meaning of purple armbands?

In sport, armbands are a symbol of grief and respect. Purple is the colour for women's rights. By donning a purple armband, the wearer:

- Makes a statement of respect for women;
- Acknowledges the grief caused by sexual assault;
- Stands against gender violence and abuse.

What are Purple Armband Games?

Purple Armband Games are sports fixtures where teams wear purple armbands while they play. Coaches, game officials, club representatives, volunteers and supporters may also wear the purple armbands.

What do Purple Armband Games aim to achieve?

Purple Armband Games aim to make it socially acceptable for the silent majority of men and women to speak out against violent and abusive behaviours towards women.

A recent Melbourne University study *of four male sporting clubs found that players with potentially abusive attitudes towards women were more likely to assume that everyone else in their club had similar attitudes. This was despite these players' attitudes being in the minority.

Purple Armband Games are an opportunity for sports communities to challenge such attitudes in a non-violent way. Peer influences play a significant role in the attitudes and behaviours considered acceptable within a group. The strength of the purple armbands lies in people, as groups, choosing to wear them.

"Our local Council brought the purple armband idea to our club's attention and actively supported our participation. We have about 100 teams from Under 6 to Over 35. Teams from Under 13 up wore the purple armbands and we had great feedback from players in the senior teams and parents of junior players. Everyone understood what it was about and agreed that together we had made an important statement about community standards and personal responsibility."

*Ricky Onsman
Player
Balmain & Districts Soccer Club*

Why should sport play this role?

Sport has a tremendous influence upon men's and youth culture. Young men and women play sport, watch sport and participate in sports culture socially.

While young women are the group at highest risk of being sexually assaulted, most perpetrators of sexual assault are men.

Sport provides an avenue for promoting safe and respectful behaviours amongst men and young people.

"Basketball is a sport played by men and women at all levels. They often play together or at tournaments at the same time, leading to a lot of level-par interaction. The ABA Men's and Women's Leagues wore the purple armbands to raise the issue of violence against women, not as an issue that necessarily affects basketball, but as one we hoped to prevent and raise the awareness of."

*Rachel Wolters
Media Officer
Australian Basketball Association*

Who have worn the purple armbands?

The QLD and NSW Women's State of Origin teams, Brisbane Broncos and Manly Sea Eagles first wore the purple armbands at Suncorp Stadium on 24 July 2004.

Since then, over 500 teams, spanning Rugby League, Australian Football, Soccer, Rugby, Netball, Basketball, Baseball and Hockey have also worn the symbol.

This has included the South Sydney Rabbitohs, St George Illawarra Dragons, Sydney Roosters, New Zealand Warriors, QLD Firebirds, AIS Darters and Hyundai A-League. It has also included many state representative sides (including the NT Mosquitos featuring nine Wallabies players), community competitions such as the *NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout* and grassroots teams from inner city Sydney through to Gove in Arnhem Land. Coaches, game officials and spectators have also worn the purple armbands.

"Being rugby league players and women, we felt it was vital to show leadership on this issue. Personally, I found it empowering to show such strong solidarity behind a message that is sadly needed in society. The purple armbands work because you don't ask people to come and hear about the topic. You provide it in an environment that they are comfortable in and to people who may not receive it any other way."

*Katrina Fanning
Captain
NSW Women's State of Origin Team, 2004*

* *Masculine behaviour and social networks in team structures, An AFL Research and Development Project for 2005, Final Report*

"The purple armbands were an opportunity for us to stand side by side with women in our game and send a message of respect."

*Michael Monaghan,
Captain
Manly Sea Eagles, 2004*

What's involved for sports clubs in hosting Purple Armband Games?

Sports communities are encouraged to own their *Purple Armband Games*, while participating at a level that best suits their time and resources.

Last year, many clubs initiated their own activities to promote understanding of the purple armbands. For example, some clubs:

- made loud speaker announcements at games;
- placed explanations in competition programs;
- published stories in club newsletters;
- issued local press releases; and/or
- posted purple armband banners on their club's web-site.

This year, clubs that wish to continue such activities will find support at a new Purple Armband Game (PAG) website, where template announcements, explanations and stories, as well as electronic banners, are available for download.

A highlight of the PAG web-site is an on-line Photo Gallery and Team List chronicling the growth of *Purple Armband Games*. Participants are invited to send in digital photos to publish on-line.

The PAG website also includes:

- information about sexual assault and preventing violence against women;
- opportunities for feedback and ideas sharing; and
- links to useful web-sites and on-line resources.

It is recommended that clubs obtain the consent of participants to wearing the purple armbands before the day of the game (e.g. at training the week before). Promotional material to assist in this regard will also be available. Clubs may also wish to invite visiting teams to participate.

www.purplearmband.org will come on-line in June.

When do clubs host their Purple Armband Games?

Sports communities are encouraged to host their *Purple Armband Games* as follows:

Winter sports: during the month of July
Summer sports: during the *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women*:
25 November (*International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women*) - 10 December (*International Human Rights Day*)

However, *Purple Armband Games* may also be hosted at other times throughout the year.

Where does the purple armband symbol come from?

Purple armbands are the campaign symbol of Football Fans Against Sexual Assault (FFASA), an Australia-wide, on-line group of over 1100 fans and community members aimed at sexual assault and gender violence prevention in and through sport.

FFASA is responsible for the development of the *Purple Armband Game* concept. However, the increased number of purple armband games each year is achieved through *Purple Armband Convenors*, such as sports associations, councils, sexual assault referral agencies and other organisations, coordinating participation with their local sports communities.

PA Convenors are central to the growth of *Purple Armband Games*. More purple armbands equals more communities getting behind the prevention message.

For more information about becoming a *Purple Armband Convenor*, e-mail ffasa@tpg.com.au.

What is the future of Purple Armband Games?

This year, FFASA will develop a Purple Armband Games Strategic Plan. Input is invited from PAG convenors, participants and other interested persons. For more information or to become a FFASA Member, e-mail ffasa@tpg.com.au or visit www.ffasa.org

"The Hyundai A-League clubs and the players know they have a responsibility as role models to support worthy campaigns such as this. We hope that our support will help grow its awareness."

*Matt Carroll
Head of Operations
Football Federation of Australia*

Sexual assault and violence against women:

The more we stand up to it, the sooner we get rid of it.

**For more information:
e-mail ffasa@tpg.com.au
or visit
www.ffasa.org
or www.purplearmband.org
(on-line in June)**