

Dear Clubs,

We would like to take this opportunity to clarify several aspects of the new Behaviour Management Plan and reinforce why it has been implemented.

First and foremost, this plan has **not** been introduced to “slow down umpire abuse.” It has been implemented **to stop umpire abuse**. We are operating under a **zero-tolerance expectation** across the league.

As all clubs are well aware, attracting and retaining quality people is becoming increasingly difficult. **Umpires are an interquel part of our league**. We simply cannot expect people to give up their time week after week if they are abused every match by players, coaches, or supporters. Quite simply: **why would anyone continue to umpire if they are subjected to abuse every game?**

If we want umpires to stay—and new umpires to join—**we all have a role to play** in making the HFL a competition where umpires want to be involved.

Coaches and Captains (Double Points – A & B Grade)

For **A Grade and B Grade**, **double points apply only to head coaches and captains**. Assistant coaches and vice-captains are not included in this category.

This decision is deliberate. Head coaches and captains are **role models within every club**, especially for junior players watching from the boundary and moving through the pathways. We expect these leaders to **set the standard** and **demonstrate by example** that umpire abuse is unacceptable.

Player Behaviour – Expectations

We are expecting the **biggest improvement** in player behaviour.

Players **do not need to speak to umpires** unless it is done respectfully. Questioning, commenting, or reacting to decisions—whether directly or indirectly—will not be tolerated.

Minor backchat includes (but is not limited to):

- Sarcastic comments
- Speaking back in a dismissive or argumentative tone
- Questioning decisions in an argumentative manner

Again, umpires are important, and **we cannot play without them.**

Points and Penalties (Standalone)

All penalties are **standalone.**

For example:

- Reaching **150 points** results in a **\$1,000 fine**
- Reaching **200 points** results in a **\$1,000 fine and** a mandatory meeting with **HFL and SANFL officials**

Each threshold triggers its own consequence.

Additionally:

- **One premiership win deducted is equal to two premiership points**, applied across **every grade**. This will be changed on the document to show this.
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Men's and Women's Points Allocation

We are going to **split Behaviour Points between Men's and Women's competitions**, with **C Grade remaining within the Men's allocation.**

This means:

- Men's behaviour points accumulate against the Men's competition only
- Women's behaviour points accumulate separately against the Women's competition

This approach ensures accountability within each competition and prevents larger clubs from being at a disadvantage due to overall numbers.

Supporter Behaviour

Any **supporter behaviour report** that reaches the HFL will be **investigated with the club involved before any points are assigned.**

This process is designed to:

- Educate clubs on what occurred
- Involve clubs directly in resolving issues
- Avoid points being issued without explanation or understanding

It is about **education and accountability**, not punishment for the sake of it.

Historical Rating – Rolling Three-Year Average

The historical behaviour rating operates similarly to the APPS allocation, using a **rolling three-year average.**

For example:

- **Year 1:** Club receives 100 points
→ Start of Year 2: **33 points and it's divided by 3**
- **Year 2:** Club receives another 100 points (total 133)
→ Start of Year 3: **44 points as it's divided by 3**

- **Year 3:** Club has a strong year and receives only 50 points (total 94)
→ Start of Year 4: **31 points as it's dived by 3**

Every season thereafter, the starting score is the **average of the previous three seasons**. This rewards sustained improvement while still holding clubs accountable for consistent behaviour standards.

Finally, we acknowledge that **this system is new to all of us**. We understand there will be a learning curve, and we are committed to **working collaboratively with clubs and umpires** as the season progresses to refine the process and achieve the **best possible outcome for everyone involved**.

This plan is about protecting our umpires, setting clear expectations, and ensuring the HFL remains a competition built on **respect, leadership, and accountability**.

We appreciate your cooperation and expect all clubs to communicate these expectations clearly to players, coaches, officials, and supporters.