

Taranaki sports get together to keep the emphasis in kids' sport on having fun

Helen Harvey09:00, Jul 29 2020



ANDY JACKSON/STUFF

Taranaki's sporting codes in conjunction with Sport Taranaki are joining together to spread the same message of Good Sports to those standing on the sidelines, from left Cole Brown (rugby), Rebecca Scott (TSSSA), Grant Coward (Sport Taranaki), Brent Youngson (Football), Guy Honor (Sport Taranaki), Denise Hill (Hockey), Marina Healey (Sport Taranaki), Olly Jowsey (athletics), Krystyna Beardman (Skate sports), Alan Jackson (rugby league).

Local reporting is vital to a thriving and connected community. Help us keep telling Taranaki's stories by making a contribution.

Yellow and Black banners and boards will soon appear at kids' sports games around the mountain to encourage people to be good sports on the field and on the sidelines.

Taranaki sporting codes have joined together to try to curb bad behaviour by putting emphasis on having fun rather than winning at all costs.

Parents, coaches and administrators all had an important role to play, and the Good Sports initiative was about helping to make that happen, Sport Taranaki Community Engagement Advisor Marina Healey said.

“Everyone had witnessed negative sporting behaviour over time which can ruin experiences for kids and this is what a Good Sports approach can combat.”

But the commitment made in Taranaki by Central Football, Taranaki Hockey, SkateSport Taranaki, Taranaki Rugby, the Taranaki Secondary School Sports Association, Athletics Taranaki and Taranaki Rugby League was much more than that, Healey said.

“It was also a commitment to providing a balanced approach to the provision of youth sport. It is the way the supporters and codes champion positive messages that will make the difference to keep sporting experiences positive for kids.”



ANDY JACKSON/STUFF

Alan Jackson from Taranaki Rugby League and Taranaki Rugby’s Cole Brown have joined the Good Sports initiative to encourage emphasis on having fun on the sports field.

Taranaki Hockey chief executive Denise Hill said three years ago they started training children to do umpire games and it’s changed the culture at primary school hockey.

“The parents, with having the kids umpiring, are appreciative of them doing it and are much softer and encouraging.”

Operations manager for Central Football Taranaki Brent Youngson said most of football's issues were with the youth, high schools and clubs, who "get real competitive".

"It's about sending a message of keeping it fun. Shouting from the sidelines isn't really what's needed."

The problem is parents and the kids on the field.

"If they're playing top level youth they have a bit of fire in their belly. It's supposed to be fun at that age. The Good Sports message is all about making fun the priority and it's not about winning at all costs."

Operations manager for Taranaki Rugby Cole Brown said a lot of sporting codes had the same issues.

"There have been a few approaches tried by individual codes over the years, and what is cool about this approach is everyone is going to try the same thing and be really consistent. And it generates a conversation."

Sport Taranaki deputy chairman Grant Coward said Good Sports was a great initiative and will make people more aware.

"But that doesn't always change people's behaviour."