**ABC News Radio 27 May 2024**

[Sarah Dingle - ABC Radio National](https://www.abc.net.au/listen/radionational/dingle2c-sarah/4431890)

**Sarah Dingle**

In sport, it's an all too common headline, even in 2024, there are still racist remarks being shouted from the stands. Now someone's quantified what's happening. A new study suggests spectator racism is on the rise amongst Australia's major male-dominated sporting codes.

Here to tell us more is Daryl Adair. He's an Associate Professor of Sports Management at the University of Technology, Sydney. Daryl Adair, welcome.

**Daryl Adair**

Hello.

**Sarah Dingle**

So racism from fans has been a problem for a long time. All you have to do is think of Nicky Winmar, that was decades ago when he lifted the jersey to point to his skin.

An incredible moment, but it seems like not much has changed. What does your research tell us?

**Daryl Adair**

Yeah, so the organisations that run sports have obviously taken steps since the era of Winmar, Michael Long and so on, to give spectators the opportunity to identify and report racist behaviour when they see it. And our research indicates that the volume of racist incidents that has been observed by white fans has indeed increased over recent years.

But concurrently, even though they're aware that they have these reporting mechanisms, they tend not to report them. Very few have taken the next step. So they observe, but they don't report, so they're giving a free kick to racism.

**Sarah Dingle**

Why don't they report? Did your research look at that?

**Daryl Adair**

Well, we asked them if they reported and whether they knew what the reporting mechanisms were. What we'd like to do now with the findings is go back and try to ascertain why is there this mismatch between people, many of whom told us in the comments on the survey that we provided, that they were really unhappy with some of the behaviours they've seen, whether it's migrants from a non-English speaking background, whether it's Indigenous, whether it's Pasifika players.

They were very uncomfortable with it, but only around two to three per cent actually reported, despite the fact, for example, that in the past two years, 30 per cent of the AFL, 40 per cent of the NRL and 50 per cent of the A-League had incidents that were observed by survey respondents, which were over 2,000 people.

So there are some penalties for fans who behave this way. What are they and are they enforced?

**Daryl Adair**

Yeah, they've become much more significant. So, for instance, an A-League fan with the Western Sydney Wanderers during the finals performed a Nazi salute and he got a two-year ban.

But more generally, there are racist incidents towards Indigenous players like Latrell Mitchell in the NRL, and of course, historically, Adam Goodes. The sports have actually got much more serious about the penalties and they can go for several years, right up to life bans for people who either repeat offenders or really have no interest in changing their behaviour. So there is a penalty regime.

What we're lacking at this point is, I guess, a more consistent mechanism by which people are prepared to put up their hand. And I think the sports can encourage people to identify and just send a text. That's all you need to do when you're at a sporting arena. Just send a text to security. They can come and quietly observe. They can record the kind of behaviour and then they can make their own judgments and report it.

So the individual reporting doesn't need to feel some sort of recrimination. It's obviously racism is a problem for everyone, but do you think the clubs could be doing more here, encouraging people to call this kind of behaviour out? I think the clubs can really reach out to their members and fans in a more concerted way.

But the sober reality is within any organisation in Australia, there are those that are unsympathetic to that message and in fact revel in the opportunity to either go on social media anonymously or in a large sport crowd and try and be anonymous and vent their spleen against people who, for whatever reason, they dislike for simply being who they are, which is a migrant, whether it's an Aboriginal person or a Pacific Islander.

**Sarah Dingle**

Daryl Adair, thank you very much for joining us.

**Daryl Adair**

My pleasure.