**2SER - Dob in a racist (5 June 2024)**

**Transcript**

**Chris Calthorpe**

indigenous rounds for both the AFL and the NRL, one may be led to believe that racism from sporting spectators is on the decline. However, an Australian-first study has found disturbingly high levels of racism amongst the crowds of our biggest sporting codes.

Joining us to discuss the findings of the report is Associate Professor of Sport Management at UTS, Daryl Adair. Good morning, Daryl, how are you?

**Daryl Adair**

G'day Chris, I'm fine thanks.

**Chris Calthorpe**

Thank you so much for coming on the show.

In your report, you found incredibly high levels of spectator racism with up to 50% of fans of the AFL witnessing it amongst crowds. Did these findings come as a shock to you?

**Daryl Adair**

Not really a shock, and just to explain to your listeners what that, what the numbers actually mean, what we did is we surveyed or managed to secure 2,000 respondents to a survey about fan racism at the AFL, the NRL and the A-League men.

**Daryl Adair**

And what we were trying to particularly deduce was what white identified, self-identified white fans thought. In other words, did they observe racism? And if so, how did they account for it? And in all three of those codes, the last two years in particular has been much higher than in the past.

**Daryl Adair**

So just to give you an illustration, in the A-League ten years ago, the fans who responded said only 5% had witnessed racism. That's now up to 55% today. So the trend is really high. And one of the things we wanted to understand, of course, is how did these respondents account for it?

**Daryl Adair**

And so, there's a whole range of reasons associated with that that I'm happy to talk to you with.

**Chris Calthorpe**

So, do you believe that this rise in reports of racism comes from increased racist behaviour or increased spectators identifying what is racist?

**Daryl Adair**

Yeah, that's a question that we, we actually don't have an answer for. But I think there's a greater awareness of the importance of recognizing, and in principle reporting, racism, and in fact, the various sports have now got mechanisms to assist spectators to do that.

**Daryl Adair**

And in our survey, most of the fans indicated that they were aware that there are hotlines that you can utilize. So, in other words, there's a text number that comes on the scoreboard and says, look, if you hear anything inappropriate, it might be sexism, it might be homophobia, it might be racism; text this number, someone from security will come and observe.

**Daryl Adair**

They won't require you to do anything, but they will act on your behalf. Now, what surprised us was that, even though there was a significant volume of awareness, and also people having witnessed racist behavior, only a tiny proportion had actually taken the next step to call security.

**Daryl Adair**

So only, so let's say, in the last two years, in the AFL, there was a 30% of incidents viewed by our respondents, only 3% reported, and it was even worse in the NRL 2%, and in the A League 1%. So, we've got to disconnect between people actually witnessing, and then being an active bystander to do something about it.

**Daryl Adair**

So, in essence, I think they're sort of giving a free kick to racists, unfortunately.

**Chris Calthorpe**

Yeah. And so if there is this level of complacency that makes fans believe it's okay to vocalize these harmful attitudes, where would you say responsibility lies to turn around this trend or get rid of that complacency?

**Daryl Adair**

That's a great question. I think there's a tradition in Australian society that you don’t dob people in. But that also means turning a blind eye because there should be consequences for unseemly behaviour like this.

**Daryl Adair**

Basically, if you're being racist towards somebody else, whether they're an African migrant, whether they're indigenous Pacific Islander, it doesn't matter. You're basically saying you don't belong, or if you're part of our society, you're actually second rate.

**Daryl Adair**

You are not as good as me. So if I berate you, then what I'm doing is I'm somehow perversely elevating myself and diminishing you. So, given that realisation, I think it's incumbent upon the sport organisations to do a better job of encouraging their fans and their members to dob in a racist.

**Daryl Adair**

I mean, it is not unAustralian to dob in a racist for goodness sake. This should be something that we're actually proud to do because you don't want these creeps at a sport event. And it's even worse online.

**Daryl Adair**

I mean, as you probably are aware, people are completely anonymous online and can say pretty much whatever they like these days, which is another level of hatred that has permeated our society, regrettably.

**Chris Calthorpe**

Yeah. Well, thank you so much for joining us. Your report is disappointing to say the least, but it's very nice to hear from your, your insights on how we could possibly change in the future. So, thank you so much for joining us on the show.

**Daryl Adair**

My pleasure, Chris.

**Chris Calthorpe**

That was Daryl Adair from UTS discussing his recent report on the rising levels of spectator racism amongst Australia's leading sporting codes.