

Female fans encourage predatory sex among soccer players

Some of the female fans have blamed a section of such women for encouraging predatory instincts among footballers, according to a study.

The research, part of a larger study of female football fans in Australia and New Zealand, led by Peter Mewett and Kim Toffoletti from Deakin University's Faculty of Arts, looked at female fans perspective about players' sexual misconduct.

'By looking at how women themselves speak about sexual misconduct by sportsmen such as Australian Football League (AFL) players, we gain insights into how the wider community understand this behaviour,' Toffoletti explained.

'There is a clear distinction between consensual sex, rape and assault, but while our interviewees universally condemned sexual violence, some reasoned if violence did occur it was the result of the women's activities and that they shouldn't put themselves in that position,' he said, according to a release of Deakin University.

'There is a perception that certain women hang around trying to pick up football players, imposing on the players' freedom and making it difficult for them to say no. Indeed some interviewees thought some footballers were targeted because of their celebrity status.'

Dr Toffoletti said: 'Footballers were perceived as sexually forward and confident with women, frequently making suggestive advances and expecting casual sex.'

'A number of reasons were put forward to explain this behaviour, namely that elite footballers believed they were entitled to women and could do whatever they liked. Alcohol and team bonding was seen as cultivating this behaviour,' she said.

'There was also a view that such behaviour was part of the man's biological make up. In other words, it is beyond their control, so what do you expect them to do?

'Team pressure was also seen as an influence. It would be viewed as abnormal for a footballer to decline the advances of a woman who was seriously throwing herself at him. He would be perceived as weak, possibly homosexual.'

'Despite the AFL's explicit and vocal condemnation of violence against women in the media, the code of conduct that gives the AFL power to sanction the players is yet to be fully tested,' the study noted.

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