

# Cashing in on scandal

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Savvy sport sponsors should seek opportunity in scandal

(PhysOrg.com) -- Scandals in sport are unavoidable and managers and sponsors should start looking for marketing opportunities in bad behaviour, according to a new study.

James Connor and Jason Mazanov, from the School of Business at UNSW@ADFA, analysed a series of scandals in the National Rugby League (NRL) competition as part of their research paper, *The inevitability of scandal: Lessons for sponsors and administrators*.

“In 2009 the NRL experienced one of the worst seasons on record for player, coach, club and official poor behaviour. However, they did not lose any sponsors,” Dr Connor said.

Strategies to mitigate scandal, especially “panacea” options such as education, only offer short-term reprieve and can end up further

damaging a sport when another scandal occurs, the authors argue. Instead, more consideration should be given to the strategy of “embracement”.

“The problem should be re-framed not as ‘prevention’ of [bad behaviour](#) but as management of the likelihood of scandal and control for the consequences,” said Dr Connor.

“Savvy sponsors should take advantage of the possibilities scandals can offer, especially around brand image - where ‘tough’ or ‘rebellious’ might be brand attributes they seek - or around the possibility of their product ‘fixing’ or ameliorating a [scandal](#).”

Dr Connor is a former Tom Brock Scholar for research into rugby league (a grant awarded by the Australian Society for [Sports](#) History).

The paper is published in the [International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship](#).

Provided by University of New South Wales

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