

Subject: Complaint: repeated and ongoing foul language and bullying at SST

From: Bart W van Assen <bart@auditor.id>

Date: 5/8/17, 2:00 PM

To: Adam Marra <adam_m@sekolahbogorraya.com>, Henny Anggraeni <henny_a@sekolahbogorraya.com>

Dear Mr Adam Marra and Mrs Henny Anggraeni,

It is my honest opinion that the passive stance on, and systematic denial of, the foul language and bullying at SST facilitates and exacerbates these issues among its members. Hence, on 26 April 2017 I announced in the SST U10 Whatsapp group that Mark will leave SST at the end of the season, with detailed reasons and supporting evidence. (I have included this announcement below to provide you with some context.)

On April 3rd, SST released an open letter (attached). Its statements about "posted in SST groups" and "winning at all cost" (more on this below) clearly refer to my announcement and my concerns raised earlier. I note that the statement contains an abundance of false claims and that SST still does not own up to the improper behavior by SST members. The following actual examples serve to refute most – if not all – claims made in SST's letter:

1. *"SST never tolerates and has never tolerated improper words"* (page 1, point 1)

As you are already made aware, during a recent meeting with SST's committee an adult member made references to physical harm to an SST player "after the national exams". SST's chairman and other members of the committee neither intervened as this threat was made, nor formally condemned it afterwards. De facto, SST has 'tolerated' a threat that classifies as 'improper words' from a member. This very threat was for me the point of no return for considering SST a suitable environment for my, or any other, child.

2. *"the first thing that we do is to remind the relevant player through his coach"* (page 1, point 1)

In practice, improper behavior is not acted upon through the coaches. They simply neither have the directive, nor the proficiency to do so. The coaches' directive is to obtain medals in the relevant soccer leagues. (This point was recently verbally confirmed by the head coach, Pak Arif, and is a major frustration to him.) Their low proficiency in English further limits the role coaches can play in foul language and bullying.

In all cases I'm aware of, improper behavior by SST players was addressed by either a team coordinator or the school representatives (Mrs Felice or Mr Bryan). This leads to serious problems when they are not around. For example, Mark was left to sulk – due to a bruised wrist – for the full duration of a Wednesday training session (more than ninety minutes!) without medical attention or support from the U10 coach.

3. *"he will be prohibited from participating in several training sessions / matches in order for him to know / learn about his mistake"* (page 1, point 1)

During the 2016–2017 season, several U10 players were identified as repeat offenders of bullying and foul language. Yet none of them have been prohibited from participating in training/matches. I doubt that any of these cases – for example the "FBI" profanity – have been formally documented and reported to SBR. How then, may I ask, does SST ensure that repeat offenders are identified and suspended from training/matches?

As you may remember, Mark has been suspended twice for improper behavior – not by SST but by the principle – with the full support of us. Yet, somehow these rules

do not apply for the "top" players in U10.

4. *"the focus is indeed to enhance the skills of SBR students in playing soccer"* (page 1, point 1)

For SST to focus on enhancing the soccer skills of SBR students, it should maintain a formal curriculum and maintain records on how players score/rank against this curriculum. I am fairly confident that such curriculum/records do not exist (yet). Similarly, the coaches' directive (see point 1) leaves little or no incentive for a coach to engage with the less gifted players.

During the few training sessions I have observed in detail, the actions of the U10 coach never went beyond ordering players around, and never touched upon the technical or strategic skills of individual players. The simple fact that for the whole 2016–2017 season no coach taught Mark how to properly kick the ball pretty much sums up how SST does focus on enhancing soccer skills: not.

5. *"it is SBR who has the main responsibility in providing moral guidance to SBR students (in this case SST players)"* (page 1, point 1)

This is the very statement that decided for me to raise this formal complaint against the SST committee. It is a obvious true-ism that any school club must abide by the school rules. However, no parent – let alone one that wants to oversee a school club – can shirk the inherent responsibility of owning all issues that occur in the club. At no instance can a club claim improper behavior as the responsibility of the school!

6. *"Impolite, improper and offensive writing and talking (either in social media or any other media or occasions) are very bad examples for our children"* (page 2, point 2)

I fully agree with this statement. Therefor – also keeping in mind point 1 above – I have suggested (and still suggest) that SST should take a pro-active stance on improper behavior by its players (and committee members). This suggestion is not made to place blame with individuals in SST but to jointly own up for a problem that is facilitated and exacerbated by the club!

7. *"for the other teams, the target was to be the champion"* (page 3, point 4a)

As I was one of the parents and then a committee member involved in that decision, I can safely say that that is a blatant lie! It was jointly decided (in November 2016?) that U10 would enroll 2 teams, an A-team for the championship and a B-team for the experience. Yet at the next SST meet it became clear that someone had decided – based on severely flawed reasoning – to enroll all U10 players in a single team. This flawed decision, severe disrespect for other opinions, led to serious friction within the committee. This was the very reason I stepped down as member of the club's committee early this year!

8. *"it is then determined by rotating the players"* (page 3, point 4b)

Yet, somehow Hamzah – a dedicated player who needs that extra bit of moral support – was the only player not "selected" by the coach for the first 4–5 matches. Hamzah lost his self-confidence after the second time he was not selected (and the sole player at that) and then used various obvious excuses not to join practice. Neither the coach nor the coordinator cared enough to take action, and only after my angry message to SST's chairman – during which I referred to 'winning at all cost' to shock – was corrective action taken.

9. *"to give the opportunity for the players with less skill to remain developing themselves"* (page 3, point 4b)

Following the choice of a single team (see point 7 above) I repeatedly suggested to

organize personalized training for those kids that were not selected for a match, through constructive practice targets (running, kicking, agility, etc). These suggestions were systematically ignored by SST committee. (Again, severe disrespect!)

I can safely say that SST training has had little or no impact on Mark's soccer skills, and he achieved most improvements through SBR's extra-curricular soccer on Friday and BEEFA training on Sunday morning. The denigrating statement about SBR's Friday soccer being 'for fun' should thus raise serious eyebrows with the school.

10. *"the coach has the prerogative right and holds the final decision, and the coach shall choose the players in accordance with the team's needs"* (page 3, point 4b) Indeed, and that is the exact reason why I rejected the (verbal) offer by SST's chairman – made after my 'winning at all cost' message (see point 8) – for Mark to be "selected" as team member for the next 4 matches. However, this very example means that either the offer wasn't genuine (yet more disrespect?) or that the SST's claim is simply false. Neither option places SST in a good light.

11. *"For children / parents who aim at playing soccer for fun, they can do so during the soccer extracurricular at SBR every Friday"* (page 4, point 4c) This statement clearly shows that SST's committee has its eyes wide shut for its impact (rather the lack thereof) on the technical and strategic skills of its players. I also wonder if this (to me) denigrating statement is supported by SBR? And if so, does SBR support that SST's soccer training is indeed "better" than SBR's?

12. "Let's give the right example to our children" (page 4, end of table)

So let me endorse this statement and double down on it: setting the right example means pursuing facts rather than presenting fiction, and take responsibility for issues occurring at SST rather than blame SBR!

13. "Yours sincerely, SST Committee" (page 4, bottom)

I note that the letter does not contain a single name – or signature – of SST's committee members. Having a clear understanding who supports this letter is of utmost importance for any further steps. For instance, I earlier assumed that the parent making the threats discussed under point 1 was (new) member of the committee. It appears that this is not so, which raises the question what role this parent played in the meeting and why SST tolerated the threat made by him?

In conclusion, there is a serious gap between the theory presented by SST and the practice on the field. And despite nearly a full season of clear evidence concerning foul language and bullying by its members at SST, it is once again unable or unwilling to take a pro-active stance in addressing these issues. It appears to carry over that responsibility solely to SBR. Clearly, SST fails to act like a responsible adult and should be treated like a child/student of SBR.

I thus refer to SBR's Student-Parent Handbook, 2016-2017, which identifies 'intimidation, harassment, threats, or extortion by two or more students acting as a group' as a level 3 offense. (There is a strong argument to treat SST as a repeat offender and its actions as Level 4 Offenses.) Hence, the suspension and/or expulsion of SST should be the key consideration for disciplinary actions by SBR.

With the above in mind, I consider SST's statement that they "strongly suggest that such issues be resolved together with SBR" a childish response that must be challenged. Thus, I herewith raise a formal complaint with SBR concerning repeated and ongoing foul language and bullying at SST. I request SBR to take the lead in decisive, immediate corrective actions with regards to

these issues at the club! As my complaint concerns top level offenses at SBR, I request formal confirmation of my complaint at your earliest convenience and regular updates on deadlines set and results achieved in addressed the complaint.

Sincerely yours,

Bart W van Assen

Announcement in the U10 Whatsapp group (26 April 2017)

Kepada seluruh orangtua SST U10,

Saya mohon maaf sebelumnya atas bahasa sangat kasar yang saya terpaksa membuka dibawah ini !

Awal tahun ini saya telah mundur sebagai pengurus SST, karena ketiadaan respek dalam tim pengurus, isu bullying dan bahasa kasar di SST. Namun bullying dan bahasa kasar tetap berulang, termasuk: 'fuck you mark', 'answer me you dick', 'there is no such words as= 1. F** 2. Sh* 3. Bi** 4. A* 5. As** 6. Di*' dan singkatan "khusus" seperti FBI (fuck bitch idiot). Ternyata 'SST' sudah menjadi singkatan "khusus", dan salah satu anak SST telah menyatakan bahwa 'there is just no time on things like being a gentleman'.

Saat isu ini sekali lagi diserahkan kepada pengurus SST, mereka menolak (kembali lagi) untuk bertindak. Alasannya isu ini adalah tanggungjawab SBR dan bukan SST. Maupun pengurus SST diam saja saat – di depan mereka – salah satu orangtua mengancam anak SST dengan bahaya fisik. Hasil budaya ini adalah rasisme dan ancaman fisik oleh anak SST: 'Stab anies in the organs between his legs'.

IMHO, orang yang tidak mengkoreksi bahasa kasar dan bullying oleh anak/klub diri-sendiri gagal sebagai orangtua, apalagi sebagai pengurus klub sekolah. Saya telah memutuskan untuk 'make time on things like being a gentleman' bersama Mark. Dan, pada akhir musim latihan ini Mark akan keluar dari SST.

Saya dan istri saya mohon maaf atas kesalahan kami saat aktif di dalam SST. Dan saya merasa sangat bersalah, apabila tidak menganjurkan anda untuk segera cek dan kros-cek social media anak anda – apalagi saat ada 'mood change' di anak anda – agar mereka tidak menjadi korban berikut bullying di SST.

Salak manis,

Bart W van Assen

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Bart W van Assen | Compliance Coach & Auditor
Sempur Kaler Blok XII # 10, Bogor 16153, Indonesia
[+62 813 11442202](tel:+6281311442202) | bart@auditor.id | bwvanassen@gmail.com
Skype: [kfdutchman](https://www.skype.com/people/kfdutchman) | Contacts: [vCard](#)



*This email was composed using two thumbs and a touch-screen;
all typos are blamed on the left one!*

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— Attachments: —

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