

Left on the Table

What are sports advertisers leaving on the table?

Outdated brand suitability settings could be restricting your access to valuable sports audiences.

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Being a sports fan doesn't end at the final siren. Supporters follow every match report and injury update. Yet brand suitability settings can still block advertising in credible, professional sports journalism, simply because an article contains a word on an exclusion list. Our latest category analysis examines how ordinary sporting coverage can trigger incorrect advertising exclusions, potentially restricting reach, attention and overall campaign effectiveness.

9.8m
Australians read sports news each month

31%
of all sports articles containing block list words

BLOCKED
ordinary words like game, round, cheating and scandal are blocked

3 IN 4
marketers describe keyword filters as blunt or overly simplistic

Sporting stories. Ordinary words. Advertisers blocked.
These are top-performing Australian news stories, suitable for advertising but flagged as "unsafe" by keyword filters.



Rugby League
2026 NRL Preliminary Final
Cleary puts contract talks on hold as he focuses on recovery from horror injury



Soccer
2026 World Cup
Heartbreak for Socceroos in penalty blunder



AFL
2026 Grand Final
Brisbane Lions star Lachie Neale to fight for chance to play in AFL grand final after tribunal date set

Why it matters for sports advertisers, and what you can do.

1. **KNOW**
Ask what is being blocked, and review block lists.

2. **MODERNISE**
The aim is not removing genuine safeguards. It's to make them more precise and proportionate to actual risk.

3. **GOVERN**
Consider not just where to avoid, but where media investment drives commercial and societal value. **News isn't the risk. Misapplied blocking is.**

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Get a brand suitability audit and reach more of the right audience while making your advertising budget work harder.

FIND OUT MORE

Source: ThinkNewsBrands Category data analysis, Oct '26'Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, Jul 25 – Jun 26