

Coaches – Important People Protecting Our Players

***US YOUTH SOCCER
RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE***



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Whether you are a professional coach or Mom or Dad coaching for the first time – you have tremendous influence. You are the face of your Club and a teacher and role model for your players and their parents.



Practical Safety Recommendations For Coaches and Their Players



Coaches Need to Be Aware

**We need to recognize the
coach who provides fun
environments and practices
good Risk Management.**



Know the Risk



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FACT:

- **1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.**
- **50% are abused by someone outside the family that they know and trust.**



The Pedophile

The fixated, seductive sexual offender

- **Seeks opportunities for access to children. Strong preference for a certain age/type.**
- **Has tremendous aptitude for identifying children's needs & vulnerabilities**
- **Is highly manipulative and seductive**
- **Takes time to win trust of parents and child and form "special" relationships.**



**Sports success
can open the door for
this predator.**

**By offering success,
they take advantage of the
needs & desires of both
parents & players!**



FACT:

- **The pedophile child molester commits an average of 281 acts with 150 partners.**
- **In Texas, a convicted child molester told police he molested 240 children before getting caught.**



The Molester

The abductor, sexual psychopath

- **This is the nightmare we read about in the news. They are our worry because parks, sports fields and playgrounds are places where they can strike.**
- **Seeks vulnerable, exposed, unsupervised and easily manipulated children – often the very young**
- **May be become fixated or obsessed with a child – generally from a distance**



The Seducer

The sexual harasser, sexual exploiter

- **Preys on older adolescents & young adults**
- **Makes sexual behavior, sexual advances part of their teams culture**
- **Players may feel that coach's benefits such as playing time are based on their relationship with the coach**
- **Allows an illegal relationship to develop with a minor**



Coaches are the Club's eyes and ears.

- **Be aware – notice strangers.**
- **Listen to your players.**
- **Be willing to take any concerns to your Club, League or State Association.**
- **Set an example. Follow guidelines; create a safe environment.**



Coaches have the most to lose.

- **Coaches are vulnerable.**
- **Even a false accusation can cost them their livelihood and their reputation.**
- **Keeping barriers in place and always using good Risk Management practices protects the coach. It may even stop an illegal relationship from ever developing.**



Good Practice Recommendations

- **No coach should be alone one-on-one with a player unless in full sight of other adults.**
 - **This protects the player and the coach.**
- **Activities should be team activities – not individual or small group activities.**
- **Coaches should include parents and/or assistants in all practices, games, team activities and travel.**



Good Practice Recommendations

- **Promote professional communications**
 - **Texting lowers the barriers; it's the way youth communicate with each other**
 - **Texting gives the coaches cell phone number to everyone who receives the text**
 - **Texts are easily misconstrued and you cannot control the text that comes back to you**
 - **Text as a broadcast – include parents!**



Good Practice Recommendations

- **Be wary of emails and cell calls**
 - **Don't contact players for personal reasons**
 - **If emailing, copy the parents**
 - **Consider commercial communication services for team management and notification**
 - **Don't accept personal calls/emails from players**



Social Networking

- **A social network is a social structure made of nodes -- generally individuals or organizations that are tied by subjects such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, kinship, dislike, conflict or trade.**
- **"Soccer" could be a subject tying a network together.**



Social Networking

- Some familiar social networking sites:



Icons courtesy of komodomedia.com

Social Networking

- **These are places where anyone can:**
 - **Chat**
 - **Share photos**
 - **Blog**
 - **Post profiles**
- **Once posted, information can be saved.
Posts can be traced.**



Social Networking

- **Coaches should not “friend” a player. This gives the player access to the coach’s personal life and vice versa**
- **Talk to your players and their parents about social networks. Provide resources that explain the dangers.**
- **Internetsafetyrules.org says “Online predators know the ropes of their trade well and look for opportunities to strike their unsuspecting targets.”**



Social Networking

- **Don't let a social site create a "trail" by tagging photos, using real names or giving details of practice or game sites**
- **The use of social sites should be discouraged for team communications**
- **At a minimum, use private sites such as Path or set your permissions to restrict access to your page to known members of your group**



Social Networking

- **Use search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing to search for your name, your team name, your club, etc. from time to time to see if content is being posted**
- **Remember – posted information is easily copied, easily shared, can be reposted to other sites and can be misconstrued**



Social Networking



Found by searching “u13 girls soccer” on Facebook. Posted on a site that appears to be for and maintained by team parents.

Plan for an emergency.

- **A first aid kit should be available.**
- **Have a cell phone or know where the closest phone is available.**
- **Call 911 if there is any questions about the severity of an injury**
- **Identify who will attend to the injured player and who will supervise other players during the emergency.**



Coaches – Practicing Goal Safety



Falling Goal Post Injure and Kill

- **In the 16 years between 1979 and 2000, there were 21 deaths caused by falling goals.**
- **Between 1989 and 1993 – in just 4 years – 120 injuries from soccer goals were seen in emergency rooms.**



Recommendations to Protect Against Goal Post Injuries

- **Never ask a player to move a goal.**
—Only trained adults should move a goal.
- **Check goals before every practice and game or designate a team parent/assistant to make the check.**
- **If a goal is questionable, practice somewhere else or make sure it is fixed prior to taking the field.**

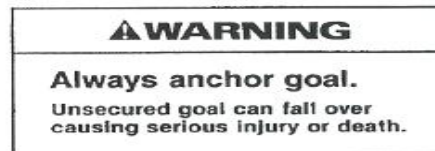
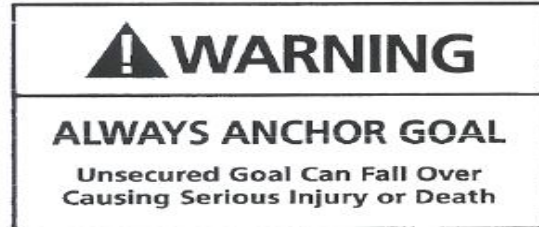


Recommendations to Protect Against Goal Post Injuries

- **Put warning labels on all goals.**
—Available from achoredforsafety.org
- **Take down nets when not in use.**
- **Reduce potential liability by using a known manufacturer, giving goals to city/school or chaining goals together or to a fence when not in use.**



Sample Manufacturer Warning Labels



Coaches – Practicing Travel Safety



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Know the Dangers of 15 Passenger Vans

- **Federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for school related transport of high school aged and younger students.**
- **Loading the van moves the center of gravity back, increasing the risk of rollovers.**
- **Between 1990-2002, there were 1,576 fatal crashes involving 15-passenger vans. 42% were single vehicle crashes.**
- **Most youth sport insurance policies do NOT cover 15 passenger vans.**



Practice 15-Pasenger Van Safety

- **Replace them with 2 mini-vans!**
- **If used, make sure you have an experienced driver who understands the rollover risk.**
- **Seat belts! Of those killed, 87% were not wearing seat belts.**
- **Maintain proper tire inflation & tread.**
- **Do not load luggage on the roof – this greatly increases the rollover risk.**



More Travel Considerations

- **If parents are carpooling, know about insurance! Most youth policies do NOT cover liability for a driver in their own car.**
- **Consider renting and buying the additional rental coverage or have parents check with their own insurance agency.**
- **Make sure you know who is responsible for each player**
- **In a hotel, make sure there is adequate supervision of players.**



Be the Best!

- **Maintain a professional relationship with the youth you coach**
- **Show respect for your players and ask the same in return.**
- **Set a GREAT example.**

This doesn't mean you shouldn't be a concerned, friendly advocate for your players. And, remember, have fun!

