

Coaches – Important People Protecting Our Players

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



USYOUTHSOCCER.ORG

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



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 komodomeia.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.**

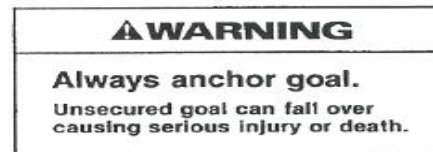
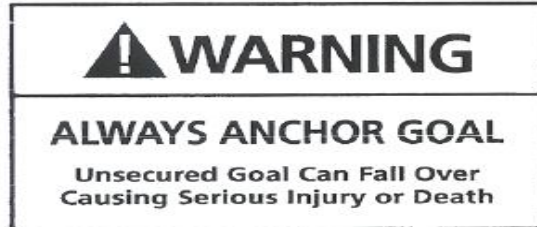


Recommendations to Protect Against Goal Post Injuries

- **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



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!

