

14 Legal Duties of Athletic Coaches and Administrators

Fourteen Legal Duties of Athletic Personnel

DUTY TO PLAN

Have a yearly plan, keep it, and follow it
Prevent or reduce injury and loss by developing responsive strategies in:
Coaching competence Medical screening
Appropriate activities that consider age, maturity, and environmental conditions
Injury response
Warnings to athletes and their families
Child advocacy in cases of alcohol and other drug abuse or family neglect or abuse

DUTY TO SUPERVISE

A coach must be:
Physically present
Provide competent instruction
Structure practices that are appropriate for the age and maturity of players
Prevent foreseeable injuries and respond to injury or trauma in an approved manner
This duty requires supervisors to ensure that facilities are locked and that students are denied access when a competent staff member cannot be physically present to supervise
A coach must also supervise the condition, safe usage, maintenance and upkeep of equipment and facilities

DUTY TO ASSESS AN ATHLETE'S READINESS FOR PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

Coaches are required to assess the health and physical or maturational readiness skills and physical condition of athletes
Athletes must be medically screened in accordance with WIAA and FPSD regulations before participating in tryouts, practice, or competition
Injured athletes who require the services of a physician may not return to practice or competition without written permission of the Athletic Trainer

DUTY TO MAINTAIN SAFE PLAYING CONDITIONS

Coaches are considered trained professionals who possess a higher level of knowledge and skill that permits them to identify foreseeable causes of injury inherent in defective equipment or hazardous environments
Weather conditions must be considered and athletes should not be subjected to intense or prolonged conditioning during periods of extreme heat and humidity
A plan for monitoring and responding to dangerous weather conditions is necessary

DUTY TO PROVIDE PROPER EQUIPMENT

Coaches must ensure that athletes are properly equipped with clean, durable and safe equipment
Protective equipment must carry a NOCSAE (National Operating Commission on Safety in Athletic Equipment) certification and must be checked for proper fit and wearing
Athletes must wear protective equipment any time they are exposed to the full rigors of contact in practice or competition

DUTY TO INSTRUCT PROPERLY

Athletic practices must be characterized by instruction that accounts for a logical sequence of fundamentals that lead to an enhanced progression of player knowledge, skill and capability
Instruction must demonstrate appropriate and safe technique and must include warning about unsafe technique and prohibited practices

DUTY TO MATCH ATHLETES DURING PRACTICE

Athletes in practices should be matched with consideration for:

Maturity

Skill

Age

Size

Speed

DUTY TO CONDITION PROPERLY

Practices must account for a progression of cardiovascular and musculoskeletal conditioning regiments that prepare athletes sequentially for more challenging practices and competitive activities
Consideration must be given to weather, maturational and readiness factors

DUTY TO WARN

Coaches are required to warn parents and athletes of unsafe practices specific to a sport and the potential for injury or death

A generic warning, signed by both athletes and parents is included in the physical packet but sport specific warnings should be included at the parent meetings for specific sports

DUTY TO ENSURE ATHLETES ARE COVERED BY INSURANCE

Athletes must be cleared through the athletic office prior to participation and should not be allowed to participate without this clearance

DUTY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY CARE

Coaches are expected to be able to administer approved, prioritized, standard first aid procedures in response to a range of traumatic injuries

DUTY TO DEVELOP/FOLLOW AN EMERGENCY CARE PLAN

Plans must be in place to:

Manage uninjured team members while emergency care is being administered to an injured athlete

Ensure access to a stocked first aid kit, spine board and other emergency response equipment

Access to a telephone and ensure a timely call to EMS

Expedite rapid access by EMS to the injured athlete by stationing coaches or team members at driveways, parking lots, entry doors and remote hallways

DUTY TO PROVIDE PROPER TRANSPORTATION

District transportation should be utilized as much as possible for travel to athletic events

Ensure that all athletes are on the bus before it departs from an away contest

Coaches must have district type 2 driver forms to drive athletes

DUTY TO SELECT, TRAIN AND SUPERVISE COACHES

Athletic administrators will be expected to ensure coaches are capable of providing safe conditions and activities as outlined in the preceding list of 13 duties