
TO THE SPORT CLUB: The following educational document was designed for distribution to athletes by a sports club or program for the purpose of (1) emphasizing to all athletes that the club considers athlete safety a top priority, (2) educating athletes about issues of coach and other sport leader conduct, (3) providing information about the Club's Athlete Welfare Advocates. It should be customized with information on how to contact the Club's Athlete Welfare Advocates (see last page). Parents are also given a copy of this document and should be asked to review it with their child. The AWA should also have a private meeting (no coaches or staff) with all athletes to distribute and review this document, introduce the AWA to the athletes, invite them to contact the AWA if they have any concerns, and to answer athlete questions about prohibited behaviors or other concerns.

WHAT EVERY ATHLETE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PERSONAL SAFETY
Because everyone associated with our club cares about your safety and well-being!

It is important that an athlete “respect” their coaches, teammates, staff and volunteers, but sometimes, they may act in ways that can be harmful and hurtful to young athletes.

It is important for every athlete to understand what is **unacceptable** behavior and when to reach out to an adult to ask for help and guidance.

Everyone needs to help to make sure our Club is a safe and positive environment free of sexual abuse, bullying and harassment.

An adult has volunteered to be our Club's **Athlete Welfare Advocate (AWA)**.

What does the AWA do?

- The AWA is available to any athlete who is concerned about the conduct of coaches, staff, volunteers or other athletes and wants to talk about what to do.
- Any conversation you have with the Athlete Welfare Advocate (AWA) will be **confidential** – **the AWA will not tell your parents or the person you are worried about unless you give the AWA permission to do so OR there is a danger that harm would occur to others or you.**
- **The AWA is there to talk to others adults or athletes for you. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO CONFRONT A COACH OR ANOTHER ATHLETE WHO MAY BE CAUSING YOU CONCERN.**
- If you need to talk about a situation and get it straight in your head before even thinking about making a complaint, the AWA can help you think about it.

When should I contact the AWA?

- Whenever something happens that **doesn't feel right** to “you,” it is important that you speak up and talk to your AWA. See the list below.
- The AWA understands that sometimes athletes are worried that if they complain about a situation with a coach or an adult, the coach will no longer like you or give you good instruction.

Or, you may think your teammates will get mad at you. **Don't be afraid to speak up! Our Club requires respectful conduct.**

- **Prohibited behavior – please tell the AWA if any of the following happens to you:**

No Bullying, Emotional or Verbal Abuse Allowed!

- When an adult or another athlete who is bigger, stronger or older tries to make you do something wrong, makes you feel worthless or makes fun of you in order to embarrass you or make you feel bad
- When someone yells at you, calls you names or swears at you
- When someone pushes, shoves, punches, pinches or hurts you in any way
- When someone tries to make you feel like you are a bad person
- When someone repeatedly attempts to control your personal or social life

No Sexual Abuse!

- Sexual contact, sexual attention, and any other behavior with sexual overtones that make you uncomfortable and you do not want to have happen
- Sex jokes, sexual cartoons or photos
- If someone touches you inappropriately, tries to pinch, fondle or kiss you
- Someone talking to you about sex, asking you to have sex, asking you to touch them or kiss them
- Someone talks about your body or your dress or calls you “hot”
- Emails, text messages or uses social media to talk about sex or suggest sexual things or send sexual photos
- If anyone tries to hurt you sexually or forces you to touch them

No Hazing, Initiation Rituals, or Physical Punishment!

- No team is allowed to have an initiation ritual or make you think that you have to do something embarrassing to be accepted on the team
- Activities that ARE NOT ALLOWED:
 - pressuring you to drink alcohol, take drugs, or eat or drink something you don't want to
 - giving you any substance for the purpose of improving performance
 - making you shave of any part of the body or take off clothes or show body parts
 - making you dress up and look silly
 - forcing you to do 100 sit-ups or run laps or do hard physical activity as punishment
 - asking you to perform a physical activity that is clearly beyond your ability and may cause injury

No Romantic or Dating Relationships with Coaches!

- Your coach must treat every athlete equally and should not be spending time alone with any athlete
- The coach is your teacher and romantic relationships are NOT OK

Physical Contact!

- **A coach must always ask for permission prior to any touching of an athlete. The following situations are generally accepted unless “you” the athlete feels uncomfortable:**
 - when the coaches asks for permission to put a body part in a correct mechanical position or correct physical form;
 - a “high five” or pat on the head or back when congratulating an athlete for a good performance;
 - “spotting” or any protective coaching intended to reduce the risk of practicing or performing a skill that may cause harm with “spotting” techniques explained to the athletes beforehand;
- In general, if a coach or anyone else touching you makes you feel uncomfortable for any reason, it is okay for you to ask the person to stop and such physical contact must stop immediately no matter what the reason. **IF IT FEELS WRONG, IT IS WRONG!**

If you are unsure about any situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, please call either of the Club’s Athlete Welfare Advocates to help you through the situation. A confidential meeting will be arranged away from the Club.

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