

APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES for COACHING FEMALE ATHLETES

Safe Environment

Appropriate Practice

The coach plans for, develops, and maintains a positive environment that allows athletes to feel safe (physically and emotionally), supported, and unafraid to make mistakes.

Bullying, taunting, and inappropriate athlete remarks and behaviors are dealt with immediately and firmly. These remarks are not tolerated.

The coach discusses hazing practices and clearly states disapproval of those practices. Hazing practices are not tolerated.

The coach addresses alcohol and drug use/abuse issues through an ongoing education and awareness program.

The coach is sensitive of using gender degrading statements.

Inappropriate Practice

The coach makes embarrassing or degrading comments in front of others, causing the athlete to feel humiliated.

Verbal or non-verbal behavior that is hurtful to other athletes is overlooked and ignored.

Hazing is overlooked and ignored.

The coach overlooks alcohol and drug use/abuse issues.

The coach tells the team to stop “playing like girls,” “acting like girls,” or “whining like girls.”

Planning

Appropriate Practice

The coach plans practices using effective time management and proper development of skills and sequence of drills.

The coach plans for the emotional growth and development of the female athlete by including emotional training exercises to deal with setbacks, failure and other emotional situations.

Inappropriate Practice

Inappropriate planning leads to ineffective practices that include waiting time and limited skill practice time.

The coach does not address the emotional development of female athletes or denies that these situations are important to address.

Training

Appropriate Practice

The coach understands that female physiological processes are different from male physiological processes. The coach trains girls and women with injury prevention in mind.

Female athletes are educated on the female athlete triad and are encouraged to eat and maintain a healthy weight.

The coach understands the importance of strength training for female athletes. This training includes proper skills and drills along with a developmentally appropriate approach that is progressive, seasonal and visionary.

The coach understands that importance of training for mental toughness.

Inappropriate Practice

Inappropriate training is the likely cause of many injuries (ACL and shoulder injuries in particular).

Athletes are pressured to reach unrealistic body weight goals that can cause amenorrhea as well as eating disorders.

An inappropriate strength training program is used; an outdated training program is used, or no program is used at all.

Athletes are not given the mental tools to think on the field or court for themselves.

Alternatives to Exercise as Punishment

Appropriate Practice

The coach promotes exercise for its contribution to a healthy lifestyle. Athletes are encouraged to participate in regular physical activity and exercise outside of the athletic setting for enjoyment, skill development, and health reasons. Coaches use appropriate methods of behavior management to discipline athletes such as working on the skills that mistakes occurred in instead of exercise penalties.

Inappropriate Practice

Activities and exercises are used to penalize athletes for mistakes made during practices and games (e.g. run laps, steps, pushups).

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Equity

Appropriate Practice

Female athletes receive equal opportunities for participation.

Female athletes have access to quality uniforms and equipment.

Female athletes are provided opportunities to practice during appropriate time slots.

Female athletes are provided opportunities to play during prime time slots.

Female athletes have access to equitable facilities for both dressing and team meetings (i.e., locker rooms) and during game time (i.e., use of the “main gym”).

Female athletes have access to proper medical services and athletic trainers throughout the year.

Female athletes receive coaching from coaches with the proper background and preparation.

Inappropriate Practice

Male athletes are provided more participation opportunities than female athletes.

Male athletes are provided better uniforms and equipment than those of female athletes. Also, female teams receiving the hand-me-down uniforms from the boys teams.

Female sport teams always practice after or around the schedules of male sport teams.

Female sport teams always play in the early game on the same night as male sport teams.

Female sport teams use smaller and/or less adequate facilities than those of male sport teams and are not given the opportunity to compete in the same facility as male sport teams.

Female teams receive limited medical services during the season and athletic trainers are only available on game days.

Male coaches are forced to coach a female team even though they do not have the background or preparation in that sport.

Professional Growth

Appropriate Practice

The coach continually seeks new information to stay current. (e.g., reads journals, attends coaching clinics, workshops, etc.). Coaches are required to complete CEU's during the year to maintain coaching certification.

The coach is given the opportunity by school administration to participate in coaching workshops, state AHPERD conferences, etc.

All coaches (including assistant and volunteer) should receive specific training on effective coaching techniques for coaching female athletes that include proper training and development as well as effective communication skills.

Inappropriate Practice

The coach does not remain current or up-to-date on coaching techniques, strategies and conditioning female athletes.

School administrators do not provide opportunities for coaches to obtain professional development at the state and local levels.

Coaches are not required to receive specific training on coaching female athletes.