

# Things Coaches Can Do To Help Protect Themselves From Accusations of Inappropriate Conduct

Based on information from Pullen and Bollinger Insurance Companies.

## Goal Safety

1. **DO NOT** start a soccer event if the fields and nets are unsafe, if the used or unused goals are not anchored properly and/or if the goals are not labeled with safety stickers.
2. **DO NOT** allow any player to carry, move, transport goals, climb and/or hang on goals.
3. **DO NOT** use homemade goals.
4. **DO** buy your goals from reputable manufacturers with liability insurance.
5. **DO** check the goals, nets, and fields for safety and ensure that the used and unused goals are properly anchored according to the goal manufacturer's instructions.
6. **DO** make sure that the goals are labeled with safety stickers with warnings that state "Never hang or climb goals!" and "Unanchored goals may cause death or serious injury!"
7. **DO** document unsafe field and goal conditions to your club administrator.
8. **DO** advise parents about goal safety and that they should never allow their children to climb and/or hang on goals and nets.
9. **DO** try to give your goals to the municipality, school, etc. where they are located.

## Risk Management

1. **DO NOT** make or accept personal emails, texts, calls or other communication to and from players. All communication should include the parents.
2. **DO NOT** give your personal phone number or email to players. Emails should be group/team emails and include the parents.
3. **DO NOT** "friend" a player or allow a player to "friend" you.
4. **DO NOT** use profanity, drink alcoholic beverages and/or smoke in the presence of players.
5. **DO NOT** be alone with players.
6. **DO NOT** touch a player.
7. **DO NOT** give extravagant gifts or show favoritism.
8. **DO NOT** demean, negatively label or ridicule a child.
9. **DO NOT** show particular or intense interest in one or several children.
10. **DO NOT** tell "secrets" that are not to be shared with parents or adults.
11. **DO NOT** disclose intimate or personal feelings to a player.
12. **DO NOT** respond in kind to seductive behavior.
13. **DO NOT** make excessive physical contact with one player.
14. **DO NOT** flirt, banter, tease, and/or date players.
15. **DO NOT** make repeated comments about the attractiveness of a child.
16. **DO NOT** post on public sites photographs of children with names listed, practice schedules, and anything that can identify individual players.

17. **DO** submit a background check.
18. **DO** keep professional barriers in place.
19. **DO** use broadcast texts to the entire team and parents and/or use a texting service such as **Rainout Line**.
20. **DO** communicate with parents.
21. **DO** allow at least one parent to be involved in the team organization.
22. **DO** allow parents to speak up when they have concerns regarding non- soccer issues.
23. **DO** establish and follow strict written guidelines for team travel. Have them signed by the parents and players.
24. **DO** document unusual situations and report your concerns to your club administrator.

## **Medical & Safety Concerns**

1. **DO NOT** allow a player who is complaining about or recovering from an injury/illness and/or who is injured/ill to return to play before you receive a written release from the player's medical doctor. **When in doubt, sit them out!**
2. **DO** get a licensed sports fitness professional to instruct and supervise fitness, speed, weight, agility and all other physical training. Due to the risk of serious back injury, **DO NOT** do fitness exercises that involve carrying another person or using a heavy and/or unstable weight.
3. **DO** summon medical assistance for an injured or ill player.
4. **DO** study the FIFA 11+ Injury Prevention Program to learn proper warm-up exercises.
5. **DO** take injuries to the head, neck and back seriously. **DO NOT** allow a player who has sustained a head, neck or back injury to return to play before the player has been evaluated and you receive a written release from a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy who specializes in concussion treatment and management.
6. **DO** take the Centers for Disease Control Concussion Awareness test and learn the symptoms of concussion.
7. **DO** review and use the Illinois Youth Soccer Concussion Notification Form.
8. **DO** remove all players from fields to safety at the first warning/sign of approaching severe weather.
9. **DO** learn the signs of bullying and take actions to prevent bullying.
10. **DO** review Illinois Youth Soccer's Kindness Campaign and implement your own Kindness Campaign.