



SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Sexual Misconduct

What you need to know to protect athletes

Sport can teach lessons that reach beyond the field of play, but its ability to do so depends on maintaining the bonds of trust, mentorship and mutual respect among teammates. These elements are undermined when sexual misconduct occurs in sport settings. Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adult staff in positions of authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and being informed.

Definition

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Last, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

Notes

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult; and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of Sexual Misconduct

Touching offenses

- Fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
- Genital contact
- Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants

Non-touching offenses

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior
- A coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- A coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- A coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- Exposing athletes to pornographic material

- Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., “sexting”)
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- Sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature



Exception

These guidelines do not apply to a preexisting relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct

It's critical for clubs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of sexual misconduct to the proper officials and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

By working together, we can create safe conditions for sport and protect athletes.