**DUTIES OF COACHES AND LEAGUES TO PREVENT ATHLETE INJURY**

INTRODUCTION

Sports injury prevention refers to taking risk management approach to your operations in order to prevent possible injuries. Coaches and leagues have a duty of care to their athletes and should be their profound concern to ensure that they never lack basics on how to prevent injuries. Coaches and leagues have a duty of care to protect athletes from injury during practice or play. This duty of care is based on the principle of negligence, which is the failure to exercise reasonable care to avoid causing harm to another person.

Both coaches and leagues have their duty towards athletes and they must always fulfill them. The coaches duties are three in precise according to my research the first being, providing proper instructions and supervision where they must teach athletes the proper techniques for their sports and supervise them keenly during practices and games. This includes teaching them how to warm up in an appropriate and presentable manner as well as ways of avoiding possible injuries during plays. Coaches should possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to teach athletes proper techniques and skills. Training programs also should be tailored to the physical abilities and developmental stages of the athletes

There is also maintenance of safe environment where in this case the coaches must ensure that the practicing field is in good condition regularly and that all necessary safety equipment is available.

Finally the coaches ought to monitor the athletes for signs of injury in that there is need for their vigilance in this matter such as swelling of athletes parts of the body or noticeable decreased performance. By this act of checking on athletes the coach can take possible action and therefore prevent latter In the event of an injury coaches should have the necessary first aid knowledge and take immediate steps to prevent further harm. They should communicate effectively with athletes, parents, and medical professionals to ensure proper diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation.

The leagues also have duties that can prevent athlete injury. Leagues should develop comprehensive guidelines and policies relating to athletes safety, covering areas such as equipment standards, concussion protocols and injury reporting. These guidelines should be communicated effectively to coaches athletes and parents to ensure compliance.

They also help in providing training for coaches and other athletic staff on how to prevent and respond to injuries. Leeks should offer training programs and workshops for coaches to enhance their knowledge of injury prevention, first aid and emergency response. Athletes and parents should also be educated on injury prevention strategies recognizing the signs of injuries and the importance of reporting them promptly.

The leagues last and important duty in this matter is Prioritizing athlete safety in this case leagues should make at least safety a top priority, ensuring that safety measures are in place and enforced at all levels of play. Regular inspections of facilities, equipment and coaching practice should be conducted to maintain safety standards. In cases where safety concerns arise leagues should take immediate action to address and rectify the issue.

**DUTY OF CARE AND NEGLIGENCE**

The duty of care is a legal concept that describes the obligation that one person owes to another to avoid causing them harm.

COACHES’ CIVIL LIABILITY

In any sport, coaches frequently have the closest bond with players and the most direct authority over them. Athletes continue to get frequent coaching from their coaches after the competition is over. Because of the unique nature of the coach-athlete interaction, coaches have a greater responsibility to protect athletes from known risks of damage. In basic terms , when players enroll in a certain sport class , the coach must do more than simply instruct the athletes in the necessary abilities for that activity ; the coach must also constantly monitor the students and keep them safe from known threats. Due to the monitory and other advantages that coaches obtain from the athletes involvement in sporting events, it may be said that the obligation due to athletes is increased.

Coaches frequently find themselves as defendants in lawsuits brought about by such players due to the strong relationship between the coach and the athlete as well as the obligations that are given to the athlete. When an unforeseen occurrence occurs on the field of play in sports the coach’s actions or inactions may be criticized or held personally accountable for the breach of duty of care.

However, it should be noted that just because the injuries were within the coach’s authority does not automatically make the coach liable . According to Department of Culture ,Media and Sport (2002) ,the principle of carelessness typically serves as the foundation for civil accountability. The most prevalent reason given for lawsuits filed by plaintiff athletes accusing the coach of being responsible for injuries sustained during practice is negligence. The player must demonstrate that the coach’s behavior was negligent using a balance of probabilities. According to (speiser1985) the definition of negligence is the failure to exercise the level of care that was required under the conditions at the time of the alleged act or mistake. In instance of carelessness , the following elements must be present in order for the liability to be established:

1. A legally recognized duty of care on the part of the coach
2. A breach of this duty by the coach
3. Athlete injuries or damages and
4. Proximate cause between the coach’s negligence and the resulting injury.

**Valid cases highlighting the importance of athlete safety**

Kelly v. McCarrick(2004), At 13 year old softball player sued her coach, the opposing teams coach the parishes the diocese and the euthanization for negligence after she fractured her ankle when an opposing player slid into her at second base. The court granted summary judgment for the defendants finding that the plaintiff assumed the inherent risk of injury in playing softball and that the defendants did not bridge the their duty of care failing to provide adequate supervision instruction or equipment.

In Mann v. Nutmeg Sports Media, llc (2012), A high school football player sued his coach, the league, and a media company for negligence after I sustained A concussion during a game that was broadcast live on the Internet. The plaintiff alleged that the defendants failed to follow proper concussion protocols and pressured him to return to play despite his seems symptoms. The court denied the defendant’s motion to dismiss, finding that the plaintiff stated a plausible claim for negligence based on the duty of care that the defendants owed to him as an athlete.

In Kahn v. East Side Union High school District (2003), a 14 year old Water polo player sued her coach and school district for negligence after she suffered a severe eye injury when she was hit by a ball thrown by her teammate during practice . The court held that the coach and the school district owed a duty of care to the plaintiff, but that they did not breach the duty by failing to warn her of the risk of injury or to provide protective eyewear. The court also held that the plaintiff assumed the inherent risk of injury in playing water polo.

High school football player in California :

In a tragic accident, a high school football player in California suffered a severe head injury during a game. Despite being visibly shaken and disoriented, the player was allowed to continue playing without proper medical evaluation. Hours later, he collapsed and was rushed to the hospital, where he tragically passed away this case underscores the critical need for coaches in leagues to prioritize athlete safety and ensure prompt medical attention for potential head injuries.

High school student in Texas:

Another devastating incident occurred when a high school student collapsed during a football game in Texas. Despite displaying signs of distress, the student was not promptly removed from the game. Tragically, he later succumbed to an undiagnosed heart condition. This case highlights the importance of coaches and leagues having protocols in place to identify and respond to medical emergencies ensuring the well-being of athletes.

Professional athletes concussions :

Numerous cases in professional sports have shed light on the long term consequences of repeated head injuries. Chronic traumatic encephalopathy, degenerative brain disease, has been linked to concussions testing by athletes in contact sports such as football and boxing. Coaches and leagues must be vigilant in implementing protocols that prioritize athlete safety, including appropriate concussion management and return to play guidelines.

**Conclusion**

Athlete safety should always be the primary concern for coaches and leagues. The duties of coaches in preventing athlete injury and compass providing proper instruction and training, ensuring safe facilities and equipment, and taking immediate steps to prevent further injury. Similarly, leagues must establish guidelines and policies, provide training for coaches and actively monitor compliance. Valid cases, such as the high school football player in California and the high school student in Texas, These cases serve as reminders of the importance of creating a safe environment for athletes at a level of sports participation.

By fulfilling their duties and obligations, coaches and lakes can significantly reduce the risk of injuries, protect the physical and emotional well-being of athletes and promote a culture of safety within the sports community. Together, they can create an environment that allows athletes to reach their full potential while minimizing the risk of harm. Ultimately the collective efforts of courses leagues and governing bodies are essential in fostering a safe and secure environment for athletes to thrive.