

# Safe Coaching



Board of Directors NSW Basketball Association

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As an ongoing part of Basketball NSW's education process, the following document has been compiled by the Board incorporating the basics outlined in 'Guidelines For Safe Coaching' issued by Basketball Australia and information from other agencies.

Basketball NSW has issued Codes of Behaviour as they relate to coaches as well as a document on Coaches' etiquette. In line with recent litigation and the introduction of State Government legislation relating to children and young persons, the following is issued as further assistance in understanding the total role involved in coaching.

Issues such as sexual harassment have become increasingly recognised as a matter for concern within our sport. They have become major issues which all coaches have to understand, to ensure that their practices do not contravene acceptable community standards. There have been separate guidelines issued on physical contact, sexual harassment and child protection. Coaches should acquaint themselves with these guidelines.

Coaches have legal obligations based on the common law and the duty of care principle. Coaches have to ensure that they are adequately protected if an athlete should ever make a claim against them.

Coaches, are duty bound to take reasonable care of the people under their supervision. The elements which have to be taken into account to mount a successful claim for negligence are:

- 1 A duty of care was owed to the claimant;
- 2 There was a breach of that duty of care; and
- 3 The injury/damage occurred as a result of that breach.

Coaches need to notify their insurer as soon as they become aware that a claim has been lodged or they are served with the appropriate court papers.

To assist in minimising the chances of an action or the effect of an injury, coaches should consider the following:

- 1 Be registered with Basketball NSW;

- 2 Ensure that your NCAS accreditation is up to date;
- 3 Be aware of any venue problems that might affect your game and communicate these to the officials and venue personnel;
- 4 Be prepared – have your training and season schedules documented;
- 5 Always give clear and concise instructions that are not ambiguous and understood by all;
- 6 Be aware of the playing conditions and ensure athletes, warm up, recover and have the appropriate amount of fluid to suit the playing conditions;
- 7 Pay attention to the task at hand, don't be distracted;
- 8 Ensure that all injuries are reported on the appropriate form and that the injury is reported in the player's home association's injury book;
- 9 Be able to direct players and parents to the appropriate place to get information regarding Basketball NSW's insurance cover;
- 10 Always be open to broadening your knowledge base by subscribing to coaching publications/courses offered by Basketball Australia, Basketball NSW, Australian Sports Commission and the relevant state government bodies, eg; The Department of Sport and Recreation; and
- 11 Visit the interactive 'Play By The Rules' website, [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au), which has been developed by the South Australian Government, with input from relevant NSW State Government departments which offers guidelines, suggestions and case studies on coaching issues. Basketball NSW fully supports the underlying philosophy and supports The Department of Sport and Recreation in developing not only the above website but also publications to be issued shortly on child protection issues.

It is a feature of today's litigious society that we all have to be aware of the consequences of our actions. If reckless or negligent we can expose ourselves to a legal liability that may not be supported by insurance agencies. Whilst your services are heartfelt by the organisations that you support, these services must be offered in a manner that reduces the risk not only to yourself but also to the sporting organisation you represent.