

Spring Sports: Things to remember!

With the spring sports season in full swing across the state, the safety of athletes and spectators is an area of concern for everyone. School districts and community colleges strive to protect each student athlete and spectator from possible injury while they are engaging in or watching an athletic event. PACE has compiled a list of best practices that you can add to your current policies and practices to help limit the exposure for injury due to the sporting activities. These best practices may not stop an injury from happening but will help limit the damages as a result of one.



Coaches need to follow the policies and procedures of your school district or community college and the rules and regulations of the OSAA. Coaches also are expected to:

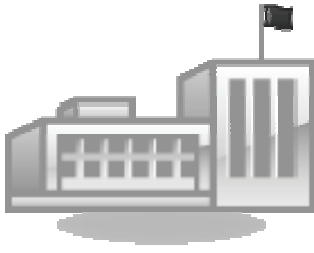


- Provide a safe training and event environment.
- Plan the activities appropriately.
- Evaluate athletes for injury and ability.
- Provide adequate equipment.
- Warn athletes of the risks to the sport.
- Instruct athletes on proper use of equipment and safe procedures for the activity.
- Know your school district or community college's emergency procedures and first aid.
- Supervise the activities at all times. *This can be the number one reason for injuries to happen and one of your biggest liabilities!*

The **student athletes** also have some responsibility to make sure safe practices are being followed. Students are expected to:

- Wear all equipment that is issued by the coach and advise the coach of any problems with the equipment.
- Advise the coach of any illness or injury that has occurred.
- Warm-up before participating in any activity.
- Be aware of any hazards in the locker room or activity area that could injure or harm another student or spectator. Notify the coach immediately of the hazard.
- Know the activity area you are participating in, be alert for any physical hazards and recognize the safety rules for that area (i.e., players warming up and throwing baseballs or softballs, batting practice, restricted areas for javelin, discus, shot put and pole vault, and swinging of golf clubs or tennis racquets).





The **school district** or **community college** has a duty to provide students with a safe environment to participate in athletic activities. Proactive loss control measures can reduce your exposure. The following items can be used to evaluate your athletic program and facilities:

- Create and enforce a policy that states the duty to provide a safe environment for students.
- Inspect the facility before use. Check facilities regularly to maintain a safe and proper playing environment.
- Test all equipment before use. Repair or replace damaged equipment. Implement an equipment maintenance program that includes inspection and repair procedures.
- Implement a complete training program for all student athletes. This should include conditioning, nutrition, exercise and drills to prepare an athlete for the sport in which they are competing.
- Provide adequate supervision for all activities. This is mandatory. *Supervision is one of the key components to student safety during athletic activities and one of the top issues cited in a liability claim.*
- Establish a medical procedure for coaches and student athletes. Coaches shall have sufficient first aid training. Require physical examinations for all participants as a condition of registration.
- Have meetings prior to the start of the athletic season to explain the season and what is expected of the participants. If the students are minors, include their parents or legal guardians in this meeting.
- Require participants to sign a consent form. Have parents or legal guardians sign the consent form for any students who are minors.
- Implement a standard injury report process for coaches and students that will be utilized in all athletic programs. These reports can help to determine trends with specific coaches, pieces of equipment, or activities.

The above items should be used as guidelines to be added to your current athletic program procedures.

Call PACE to assist you with any specific questions about your current athletic program or to help you formulate a risk management program that will benefit your school district or community college. At your request, PACE loss control consultants will visit you onsite to assess weight rooms, athletic fields and other athletic facilities for liability concerns relating to student and spectator exposures.



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