Establishing a Position on Employee Athletic Participation

Oftentimes, athletic participation may be a requirement of one’s job responsibilities. Such involvement may be used for many things: to build relationships, instill self-esteem, encourage group participation, improve individual or team athletic skills, etc. However, recreational participation or coaching is very different from competitive participation. The latter can easily result in injury to not only staff but also, very likely, to the students which you serve.

Establishing a policy of what is acceptable vs. what is not will help staff (and students) know their boundaries. Consider the following:

- Staff should take a non-aggressive or coaching role.
- Staff should always refrain from physical contact with other participants.
- Warm-up exercises should be done before such activities.
- Participation should remain recreational – more that of a facilitator.
- Staff should not kick/throw balls with any more than moderate force.
- Staff should not jump or run over other staff or participants during activities.
- Dangerous obstacles (trees, equipment, etc.) should be avoided.

Suggested Guidelines for Specific Sports

Basketball:
- Staff should only play the guard position.
- Staff should not play under the basket.
- Staff should not dive after balls. Feet should remain on the floor.
- Staff should remain one arm’s length distance from others.
- Staff should not drive to the basket or fast break.

Football:
- Absolutely no tackle football will be allowed. All blocking should be passive.
- Only flag or two-hand touch type games will be allowed.
- Staff positions should remain passive, i.e.; quarterback or officiating.

Softball:
- Staff should never block base paths, throw with excessive force or dive for the ball.
- Staff should only bat when hitting practice balls to field players.
- Staff should remain in passive roles, i.e.; pitching, coaching bases or umpiring.

Volleyball:
- Staff should maintain their positions, never spiking or diving for the ball and only hitting with moderate force.

Wrestling:
- Staff should never actively participate in wrestling to demonstrate holds or techniques.
- Staff should use a senior or experienced team member to demonstrate holds and techniques to others while “talking” them through the process.

Any established written rules should have an employee signoff as to having received, read, and understood with intent to comply.
Memorandum

Date:

To: All Coaches

From:

Re: Worker’s Compensation Issues Relating to Coaches

It has been requested by our Worker’s Compensation Insurance Carrier that the (BLANK) School District put in place written guidelines that address work related injuries which are caused by participating in sports activities. It is the District’s position to keep all coaches safe at all times while working with and teaching our students. Therefore, the District is establishing guidelines, which limits participation of coaches to instruction only:

- Participation should not include playing of games and/or actual physical contact at full speed.
- Activities should be limited to instruction only and at a controlled speed.

The intent of this guideline is to protect our coaching staff. It is the expectation of the District that each coach continues to use his/her professional judgment when working with students.

Should you have any questions, please contact (BLANK) at XXX-XXX-XXXX.