

A MESSAGE TO COACHES: THINK SAFETY

The purpose of this article is to help coaches understand their responsibility of the safety of their players. Safety should be part of every coach's orientation. Accidents just don't happen but are a result of circumstances that in most cases can be prevented. Accidents are caused either by exposure to unsafe conditions, or by performing an unsafe act or lack of supervision.

If you want to prevent accidents, leadership has to get the ball rolling. Accidents will not stop happening, but good judgment must be emphasized. Three basic principles that can help prevent accidents: create and maintain interests, fact-finding, and good supervision.

Create and Maintain Interest

The athletic director should set the example by creating safety awareness. Before the season starts, look for possible hazards. Emphasizing safety should be part of the staff training. Discuss safety frequently with coaches and players.

Fact Finding

Whenever an accident occurs, it requires investigation. The thing to remember is to get all the facts about the accident. This forms the basis for action that will prevent this accident from happening again. Every accident is different and each one should be investigated and judged separately. The most important factor is to determine how to prevent a similar accident from happening again.

Good Supervision

Accidents will not stop happening if you just tell your players to "be careful". The right approach to safety is the constructive approach. Safety and good supervision cannot be separated. We must be proactive and not reactive.

Fact-Finding

Staff members must know the causes of accidents and how to prevent them. Whenever an accident or near-accident occurs, it requires investigation. The thing to

remember is to get all the facts about the accident. This forms the basis for action that will prevent this accident from happening again. It is also important to have documentation for your insurance company. A member of the supervisory or administrative team should investigate. Every accident is different and each one should be investigated and judged separately. Don't jump to conclusions. The most important factor is to determine how to prevent a similar accident from happening again.