

Legal Corner

LEGAL CORNER

If you need legal advice pertaining to your coaching activities, including contract review or other disputes, the CAC will connect you with a lawyer and pay for your initial 1-hour consultation. Email procoach@coach.ca.

True Law
Legal Services

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The work of a coach is never easy. Keeping current with the sport at various levels of competition, applying the ever-changing science of athlete development, understanding and implementing Safe Sport protocols all mean that the professional coach is always under pressure.

With all that going on, it may be easy to forget that taking on the responsibility of working with athletes in any sport brings risk. Coaches can and have been held legally responsible for bodily injury claims suffered by athletes in their charge. Abuse allegations brought by athletes are increasing every year around the globe and no one is immune.

As the public continues to raise their expectations for success in sport, coaches are increasingly exposed and need to take care of themselves.

A good first step is education. Take courses, read, and speak with other coaches and your coaching association about best practices for dealings with athletes, parents, colleagues, and other representatives of your sport. Know your sport's policies, guidelines, and procedures related to coaching responsibilities and those of other participants in the sport. In this way, you may avoid situations that can lead to a potential claim against you. If a claim is made against you, having read the policies and guidelines, you will know what to expect and next steps and this will reduce some of the anxiety.

Professional / accredited coaches can purchase Commercial General Liability insurance that specifically covers bodily injury and property damage claims that can be brought against them in their work. There are affordable programs in the market that are tailored for coaches and some will cover the unique attributes of Abuse allegations. Considering the alternative of no insurance and paying legal bills out of pocket when something goes wrong, insurance is a smart risk management tool.

You have worked very hard to get where you are in your sporting field and as a coach, your priorities are your athletes. A claim against you can result in suspension or worse, a ban. Make sure you spend some time protecting yourself.

This article contains general information only, based on the laws of Ontario and is not intended to provide a legal opinion or advice. Readers should consult a lawyer with respect to the application of the information contained above to their particular circumstances. Readers may also contact True Law at info@truelaw.legal with any questions.