

Child Protection Discussion Starter “Inexperienced Coach”

This case study is designed to promote discussion about child protection, and the approach that your club, its members, administrators and volunteers take towards creating a child safe environment. Read the case study, then consider the questions that follow. You should perform this activity in a group.



What would your club do?

A rugby club is desperate for coaches. One father, who has never played rugby before, reluctantly agrees to coach. The club give him a half day workshop on the rules and tactics of the game, and they provide him with links to a variety of websites with training drills and other rugby coaching information. The boys are quick to recognise that the coach is out of his depth, and very soon he loses their

respect. The coaching sessions descend into ‘muck up’ sessions, and the team starts losing their games as a result. In an effort to pull the team into line, the coach decides to ‘make an example’ of one of the boys and forces him to run around the pitch five times whilst holding hand weights. The boy starts this, but refuses to finish. The coach pushes the boy (to the amusement of the other boys) to make him run, and one of the weights falls and breaks the boy’s toe. The boy’s parents complain, and the club ‘sacks’ the coach. The coach’s son withdraws from the team, and they are not seen around the club again.

Discussion points

- Who is responsible for this situation? The coach? The boys? The club?
- Would a whole club approach make any difference?
- What might have been done to avoid this situation?
- How might the club have better supported the boys and the coach?
- Would this happen at your club?
- Do you have procedures in place that would prevent this?