

Inappropriate Adult Behaviour at Youth Sporting Events

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- On 5Jul00, the 42 yro father of a youth hockey player was watching a practice from the stands. He became enraged by body checking in what was supposed to be a non-contact scrimmage. A quarrel with the coach developed into a fight leaving the 40yro coach dead.

Martial Arts Tournament

- Youth Sport
- Time keeper and Ring Referee both senior black belts with many years of experience
- Time keeper repeatedly called but referee did not respond
- Time keeper threw his clipboard into the ring
- Ring Ref began strangling him

What is Inappropriate Behaviour?

- Interfering with the game
- Overemphasizing the importance of winning
- Experiencing the game vicariously through the child
- Unnecessarily loud and aggressive
- Verbal, emotional, or physical abuse of players, coaches, or officials

What is the Extent of the Problem?

- Officials attacked
- Players attacked

What is the Impact of the Problem?

- On youth sport
- On youth

Impact on Youth Sport

- Some objectives of youth sport:
 - Working with others
 - Learn about sharing
 - Accepting good and bad decisions/outcomes
 - Accepting responsibility
 - Training for improvement
 - Setting goals

Source: Australian Sports
Commission Website

Impact on Youth Sport

- Violent outbursts model lack of self-discipline, disrespect for authority, and poor sportsmanship.
- Inappropriate behaviour erodes the ability of sport to serve as a positive influence on character development, and it may actually teach behaviours that are the opposite of the intended behavioural goals.

Impact on Youth

- Teach bad behaviour
- Turn them off to sport
- Damage self-confidence and self-esteem

Who are the Perpetrators?

- Sep2004, USA: Counselor specializing in anger management charged with releasing releasing his two pitbulls on other residents riding out hurricane Ivan in the office building where they worked. A man and a woman were treated for injuries.

Who are the Perpetrators

- Oakland, Ca. Sep2004: In response to sledging, a professional baseball player throws a chair into a group of spectators breaking a woman's nose.

Who are the Perpetrators?

- 25Jul2004 – Johannesburg: A South African soccer referee pulled a gun and shot dead a coach who questioned one of his rulings. The coach died on the field while the ref fled the scene. Reports said there was an altercation and the referee felt threatened when angry team members from the opposing side approached him.

Who are the Perpetrators?

- Youth sport vs Elite sports
- Basketball ref attacked by District Attorney for bad call
- Former AFL player & under 8 footy umpire
- Mother attacks ref during 8yro 's soccer match
- Students spray paint official' s home and dog
- Wrestling coach breaks parents nose after match between 6yro's
- Ref s jaw broken by assistant coach of the Hollywood Police Athletic League baseball team
- Coach jailed for choking 15yro umpire during a game of t-ball with 5-6 year old players

What Causes the Problem?

- Strongest predictor of inappropriate behaviour is the psychological connection
- Aspects of the sports event:
 - unpopular decisions
 - player violence

What Causes Violent Behaviour?

- Vicarious participation
- Parents viewing performance as direct reflection on them
- Viewing youth sport as miniature version of professional sport

What Causes Violent Behaviour?

- Pro sport demands more "action" (violence)
- Effects of adoption of protective equipment
 - Increased numbers of injuries (false sense of security?)
 - Boxing
 - Rugby
- Impact of on-field violence
 - Agitation/stimulation of fans

What Causes Violent Behaviour?

- The responsibility for the violence doesn't necessarily reside completely within the skins of the perpetrators, but it could
- Violent past/history
- Intermittent Explosive Disorder

What Can Be Done to Stop Inappropriate Adult Behaviour?

- Compulsory meeting between parents and coaches to discuss:
 - Philosophy
 - Expectations
 - Desired environment
 - Contracting
 - Displaying contract in players home

What Can Be Done to Stop Inappropriate Adult Behaviour?

- Methods of constructive involvement
 - sideline monitors
- Compulsory sportsmanship classes for parents
- Compulsory meeting between parents and coaches to discuss:
 - expectations, philosophy
 - desired environment

Parents Code of Behaviour

- Remember that children participate in sport for their enjoyment, not yours
- Do not force children to participate
- Focus on effort instead of winning
- Encourage non-violent fair play
- Never ridicule child for making a mistake
- Support removal of verbal and physical abuse
- Respect decisions of officials

Source: AIS Codes of Behaviour,
www.activeaustralia.org/adults/codes

Kids Soccer Club Inc.

1. Policy on handling poor calls by the Umpire:

Only the coach will make comments to the Umpire

Other Ideas

- Parent of the Game Awards
- Abuse free zones
- Silent Days

What Can Be Done to Stop Inappropriate Adult Behaviour?

- Training/discussion of emotions that will emerge during physically tough games and how to deal with them
- Compulsory sportsmanship classes for parents
- Methods of constructive involvement
 - sideline monitors

What Can be Done to Stop Inappropriate Adult Behaviour?

- Attitude toward winning
- Manage action and minimize excessive player violence
- Attitude of coaches and officials
- Proximity of spectators to players

Summary of What Coach Can Do

- Understand the needs of parents and players
- Understand, articulate and get concurrence on the objectives and philosophy of the sporting activity from all parties: players, parents, and spectators
- Solicit parental assistance to maintain a healthy environment
- Manage the action on the field
- Monitor personal behaviour

Desired Benefits of Youth Sport

- Acquisition of prosocial attitudes & behaviours
 - respect for authority
 - cooperation
 - self-discipline
 - risk-taking
 - ability to tolerate frustration & delay gratification

Impact of Coaches

- Structure of competitive situations
- Goal priorities (achievement orientation)
- Attitudes & values transmitted
- Behaviours demonstrated

Coaches Training

- Fairly well versed in technical aspects of the sport
- Rarely have training in creating a healthy psychological environment
- Habits passed down from their coaches probably have no empirical basis

Desirable Coaching Behaviour

- Goal: psychological development and health of the child
 - high level of positive reinforcement
 - performance & effort
 - mistake-contingent encouragement & technical instruction
 - emphasize fun and personal improvement over winning

Desirable Coaching Behaviour

- The art of persuasion
- The psychology of coaching as a form of human interaction where coaches attempt to influence athletes.
- Develop behaviours to improve the quality of the interaction

Coaches Awareness

- “Coaches tend to be blissfully unaware of their observed behaviour”

Coach Effectiveness Training (CET)

- Multimethod assessment for problem evaluation, awareness raising, and evaluation
- Evidenced based
- To train coaches to provide a positive and supportive environment for young athletes
- Multimethod evaluation

CET

- Education on the importance of coaching style
- Awareness raising:
 - observation, behavioural feedback, athletes perspective, selfmonitoring
- Education on effective communication, gaining respect, and relating effectively to parents

CET

- Credibility & persuasiveness
 - expertise, trustworthiness
 - similarity: dress, language, experience
- Modeling
- Role playing

Increasing Desired Coaching Behaviours

- Encourage coaches to solicit behaviour feedback
- Self-monitoring
- Continuing education

The End