

What is Safe Sport?

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Safe sport
Safeguarding
Harassment and Abuse
Non-Accidental Violence
Child Protection
Gender-based violence

Safe from harassment and abuse in sport
Guarding athletes' rights



...everyone in sport, [has] the responsibility to foster a safe, respectful culture so that athletes can thrive without harassment, abuse or violence.

FIG Policy & Procedures for
safeguarding and protecting
participants in gymnastics, 2018



Harassment and abuse in sport occurs

- In every sport
- At all levels of participation: from grassroots to elite
- Worldwide
- By men and women
- By persons in position of power
- Between peers: boys and girls; men and women

Why?

- Hierarchical systems, autocratic authority, powerful coaches
- Frequency of isolation, travel, competition between peers
- Performance based reward system, zero-sum game
- Historically and culturally discriminative



The coach's role

- Professional conduct: scope of practice and professional development
- Relationship with athletes
- Relationship with consultants and professionals
- Relationship within the profession
- Confidentiality and communication





Dimensions of protection in sport

- Protecting the athlete from others
- Protecting the athlete from oneself
- Protecting oneself from the athlete or others
- Protecting one's profession

Celia Brackenridge
Ostrich or Eagle? Protection and professionalism
in sport science and coaching, 2010

Bystanders as enablers

“Passive attitudes/non-intervention, denial or silence by people in positions of power in sport creates the impression for victims that such behaviours are legally and socially acceptable”

*Kirby SL 2000
Brackenridge. Routledge, 2001
Fasting 2007*



What does a safe environment look like in gymnastics?



Safeguarding principles

- Welfare of the gymnast is paramount
- Acknowledge and recognise power imbalance
- Safeguarding is everyone's business
- You can't un-know what you know
- Recognise that the picture can look confusing
- Reduce the challenges by working together
- Culture eats strategy for breakfast!



“It is not a rocket science: treat people with the respect you would expect to be treated.”

