



Screening and selecting coaches and officials

It is very important that clubs adopt policies about the selection processes for their coaches and officials to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all concerned. In particular when children are involved, clubs need to ensure the coaches and officials that they are selecting are 'fit and proper' persons to be involved with children.

How can a club be sure?

Coaches and officials can be either:

- selected
- appointed
- nominated
- volunteered.

No matter how they arrive at your club, there still needs to be a process in place to find the most suitable person.

- identify the requirements of each team in regards to coaches and officials
- find out who is interested and available from within the club
- action recruitment strategies if numbers are still required
- meet with interested applicants to determine their suitability for the task and to inform them about the club
- provide a job description or summary of the job role required
- collect relevant data and personal details about the applicants including information on experience, accreditation, skills and availability
- discuss various issues related to coaching/officiating philosophy, training, codes of conduct, club support required training
- determine suitability of applicant by seeking referee checks and/or other working with children checks as specified by state child protection legislation
- advise applicant of outcome of decision
- if successful provide welcome letter, introductory handbook, appoint club mentor and arrange commencement procedures
- if unsuccessful thank them and provide feedback, as well as documenting your decision to be filed in club records

Remember - just because a person volunteers to take on a role as a coach or official doesn't mean that the club has to accept them. The club might consider offering them another role within the club to which they may be more suited. Try not to lose any person who is keen to offer their services but always continue to monitor their involvement.

Clubs are now required to abide by various pieces of state legislation regarding just who is involved in various roles at the club. Clubs should be aware of the following:

State Child Protection Legislation - A series of legislation has been introduced or is being developed in various states and territories to protect children from abuse. The new (or revised) legislation broadens and strengthens the checking process of those who want to work with children, including police checks in some states.



Mandatory reporting of child abuse - Legislation which specifies who is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. The people mandated to report varies across the different states and territories.

Clubs might also want to develop policies or provide training to their members regarding ethical conduct in sport. The following are initiatives that clubs can access:

Harassment free Sport - The Harassment-free Sport Strategy is the Australian Sports Commission's key initiative to address harassment and abuse issues. The Strategy comprises a range of components, including membership protection strategies, to assist sporting organisations to create safe and harassment free environments in sport.

Play by the Rules website - this website provides online training and additional information about harassment, discrimination and abuse in sport.

Case study

As a way of keeping its coaches and officials up to date with current policies and regulations regarding safe and supportive environments for its clubs, the regional basketball association has added all the member clubs, their coaches and officials to their email contact list. Each month the association development manager does an internet search and follow up with the State Department of Sport on any new policies or regulations that have been introduced regarding junior sport issues as they impact upon the selection and screening of volunteers. Once any new policy is identified this is then distributed to all on the email contact list as well as a link being provided through the association's website.

The Association has then been able to inform club delegates of their responsibilities in these matters and where relevant, the Association has conducted workshops for all clubs.