

*Slide #1 – These coaches and admins are who we are.*

Presenter: Without out recreational soccer, there wouldn't be regional teams or competitive teams. These are the coaches and administrators who get youngsters involved in soccer and teach them to love the game. And, very simply, if it wasn't for TOPS soccer, US Youth wouldn't be the game for ALL kids.

*Slide #2 – Creating a culture of safety.*

Presenter: It is important that as Risk Managers we recognize the need to help everyone involved in recreational and TOPS soccer to create a culture of safety – where goals are secured, where we know everyone working with the players has been through the KidSafe program and where everyone – including the parents know how to work together to create a culture of safety.

*Slide #3: Risk Management for Tops & Rec:*

- *Dealing with more “Dads” & “Moms”*
  - May not have Risk training*
  - May not have as firm a boundary between coach and players*
  - Need to make sure they know basic rules of safety*

Presenter: US Youth coaching education is doing an excellent job of including Risk Management in their coaching courses. But, the Moms and Dads who agree to step up and take a team may not have taken a course. As Risk Managers, you need to make sure they are educated.

*Slide #4: Risk Management for Tops & Rec:*

- *Dealing with involved parents*
  - May lead to being less cautious*
  - Not familiar with soccer safety considerations*
  - May not recognize unacceptable behavior*

Presenter: One of the great things about recreational and TOPS is that the parents are there! But, again, these aren't experienced parents who know that their boys shouldn't climb the net to swing on the goal. They also may be playing with a neighborhood team and that may give them a false sense of security so that they are dropping off the player early or less vigilant in general. They also aren't educated to know what boundaries a coach should follow. They need your help.

*Slide #5: Risk Management for Tops & Rec:*

- *Dealing with great kids*
  - TOPS players require special attention & consideration*
  - May need to “build” practices more slowly*
  - Don't know what to expect*

Presenter: Again, these kids – like their coaches and parents – don't know what to expect, how things should be – it creates vulnerability. They also may need to build endurance physically. Of course, the TOPS players have very special considerations.

*Slide #6: When everyone knows... We will have created a culture of safety.*

Presenter: That's our job – to try to let everyone know.

*Slide #7: Education Must Include:*

- *The coaches – they are your leaders.*
- *The parents – they are your eyes and ears.*
- *The players – they can say “no” when they know!*

*Slide #8: Educate about Goal Safety:*

- *Coaches need to check to see goals are anchored before every practice. They should never use players to move goals.*
- *Parents need to reinforce this – don't let any child climb or play on goals.*
- *Players need to know the risk. A falling goal can seriously injure or kill.*

Presenter: Goals can kill. We need everyone to cooperate on this issue.

*Slide #9: Educate about Proper Behavior:*

- *Coaches should never be alone with a player.*
- *Parents should not expect coaches to be babysitters. They should NOT leave their children alone with a coach.*
- *Players should know it is their right to be treated with respect – and that's how they should treat others.*

Presenter: We think that everyone knows the simple rules – like a coach not being alone with a player, but they don't or they think their situation is different – that's why everyone needs to know.

*Slide #10: Educate about The Risk:*

- *The fixated, seductive pedophile*
- *May be fixated on age, type. Creates relationships. Manipulative.*
- *The molester*
- *The nightmare. May watch and wait. May look for unsupervised children.*
- *The sexual exploiter*
- *Preys on older players. May make sexual behavior part of team culture.*

Presenter: Pedophiles are drawn to places where there are children. All youth sports – including soccer – are such a place. Make everyone aware of the types of pedophiles and their red flags. The fixated pedophile may look for a particular age or type. He is patient and builds a relationship – often, including the parents. Red flags include a coach who refused to change age groups or singles out a player for special attention. The molester is the nightmare we read about in the news for snatching a child. Because we are at parks and playgrounds, we need to be on alert. Look for strangers – be aware of who is around the area. The sexual exploiter crosses the boundaries to take advantage of a player. Red flags could include personal communications such as text messaging or instant messages, excessive touching and excessive attention to a single player.

*Slide #11: Educate about The Risk:*

- *Coaches must protect players through their actions and their knowledge.*
- *Parents need to know and recognize danger signs.*
- *Players must be encouraged to listen to their inner voice and be empowered to leave an uncomfortable situation.*

Presenter: No matter how many background checks we run – we need coaches, parents and the players to be on-board to reduce the risk of abuse.

*Slide #12: Educate about The TOPS:*

- *Disabled children are 3.8 times more likely to be abused. Never let a disabled child be alone. Work in groups!*
- *Give manual/physical support only when necessary. Support should be from gender/age appropriate helper.*
- *Make sure volunteers/coaches/administrators understand disabled children may on occasion act inappropriately and how to react appropriately!*
- *Give every safety consideration!*

Presenter: Our job must protect our TOPS players. The fact that many of them have care givers who provide personal care may make them more vulnerable for abuse. We often have “buddies” working with TOPS – talk to them – along with the adults who volunteer. Make sure they know that physical support should only be given by a person who is gender and age appropriate. Have someone knowledgeable demonstrate how to provide physical support. Everyone needs to be aware that disabled children may act inappropriately – for example, they may hug or touch. Be sure the volunteers know how to turn these into positive actions --for example, a high five instead of a hug. It is also vital that the playing surface be very carefully inspected for any hazards.

*Slide #13: Education – One Tough Job:*

- *Coaches may be the most reachable – your leagues and clubs communicate with them. Give them something to talk about*
- *Parents are want to learn – use websites, newsletters, annual meetings and the coaches! Ask them to share information.*
- *Reach out to players and ask all adults to include them in safety messages.*

Presenter: This is where your job gets so hard. How do you talk to everyone. Here are some suggestions.

Presenter: Here are the things I think I would want to say if I could talk to all the coaches, players and parents. What would you want to say? (The presenter can either go through the slides – or simply show the first point and ask for comments from the audience and click other points up as they are given from audience – or if they aren't included, come back and present. These slides were created to encourage audience participation.)

*Slide #14: What do YOU want to say?*

- *Coaches*  
—*Practice goal safety.*

- Never be alone with a player.*
- Plan for an emergency.*

*Slide #15: What do YOU want to say?*

- *Players*
  - Trust your instincts – if it doesn't feel right, leave.*
  - Remember to always have a “buddy”.*
  - Respect the game & everyone involved in it.*

*Slide #16: What do YOU want to say?*

- *Parents*
  - Have an open dialogue with your children – let them know you respect & believe them.*
  - Help your coach be safe. Be there, but don't interfere.*
  - Be aware of the people around your children.*

*Slide #17: Presenter: Here's a way of reminding coaches. What you're seeing is the text from a card available on the Region IV website. It can be cut, folded and laminated and is the size of a player card. You can change the message to what you want to say, but by putting it on the card ring, you've created a way of reminding the coach of safety considerations. We want to educate!*

*Slide #18: When everyone knows... We will have created a culture of safety.*

*Presenter: Thank you for coming and remember – if everyone knows, we win!*