



European Powerlifting Federation

Safety Knowledge for Coaches to be a safe Coach.

All coaches should have an in-depth knowledge of the sport, including the inherent dangers. You should know and apply the rules of the sport. More and more injuries occur during foul play, and coaches must not condone this. Coaches should ensure that your lifters stick to the rules and take as few risks as possible.

Insurance

Insurance is essential both for coaches and lifters. Coach's insurance policy should cover both public liability and personal accidents. Before you start coaching ensure a current public liability insurance policy is in place.

Equipment

Not all clubs are purpose designed for our sport so it the coaches responsibility to take action to prevent accidents. The following should be basic standards.

- Make sure the surface of the lifting platform is flat and non-slip, recommend the use of carpet
- Make sure the platforms or safely spaced out
- Make sure all the equipment to be used is in good working order, remember damaged or faulty equipment can cause injury or worse

Communication with emergency services

Communication with the emergency services is vital; in order to reach medical or paramedical aid there must be a telephone. Coaches should not coach in a club where no telephone or mobile is available. There must also be a list of relevant numbers available including the nearest casualty department (which may not be the nearest hospital)

A First Aid box must be readily to hand. Ideally it should contain most of the following items.

- Pain- relieving spray and pain killer
- Strapping and bandaging
- Cleansing agents and dressings
- Miscellaneous, safety pins, scissors, eye bath,
- First Aid Manual

Injury in sport

Every coach is responsible for each lifter in his or her charge, but no matter what safety precautions are taken accidents will happen, you must be ready to deal with them.

As a guideline you should realize dealing with sports injuries is a highly specialized business. You are not necessarily qualified to diagnose and treat injury, if in any doubt you do nothing until the qualified personnel arrive. Always keep calm, and if necessary prevent others no matter how well meaning from attempting to make the person comfortable.

This is not to suggest that as a coach you should ignore all requests for help from your lifters. You should recognize that pain is a symptom and as such should always be treated seriously; hasty ill-considered action is not for the best.

Warm-up and cool-down

Warm-up and cool-down have already been covered, they are very important in the prevention of injury. You may have heard the saying prevention is better than cure.

Hygiene

Personal hygiene may be a difficult problem for the coach to tackle, but sport presents an ideal opportunity for you to remind lifters of the importance of this factor.

- Clothes must be clean, and should be washed after every session.
- They must shower after every session, if showers are not available; you should remind lifters to bath or shower at home.

Health and Medical Monitoring

In some countries the sports medical authorities carry out screening programmes to filter out those subjects who are medically unsuited for the sport of their choice, so you should be aware that such people will present themselves from time to time. It is your responsibility as coach to use your best judgment to decide if, and to what extent, such an individual should be accepted. All would be lifters should be asked about their medical history and any current treatment. If in any doubt ask the lifter to provide his or her medical history.

You should also monitor the day-to-day health problems of your lifters, and judge if a lifter is sufficiently unwell to indicate that training is not advisable. This involves injury as well as illness. Do not let a lifter train or compete when suffering from an injury, as this could result in major injury which will keep him or her out of training or competition for a long time. There are also developmental factors, e.g. growth spurts, which will place added stress on young lifters.

You should get to know the full medical history of your lifter particularly when this includes conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, or asthma. If lifters are taking any medication, you should know what it is, and where necessary you should refer to the medical authorities for advice on dealing with such lifter.

Fatigue and Stress

Both training and competition impose physical stress on the lifter which can result in fatigue. Remember too, that it is not only physical stress which causes fatigue and injury. Mental stress causes muscular tension which results in increased risk of soft-tissue injury. This situation is particularly relevant when dealing with youngsters. The stress of training and competition may be increased by the pressures placed on the young lifter by school and parents. Parental support is vital for young lifters, but good understanding and communication between parents and coach is essential for this support to be helpful rather than negative. There must be a mutual understanding and acceptance of the roles of parent and coach, and clear lines of demarcation established. The parent should not be allowed to take over, dictate or undermine training. On the other hand, while looking after the young lifter you should realize where your responsibility ends, and in no way encroach on the areas of parental responsibility.

Finally

You should keep your own medical records, noting your lifters illnesses and injuries, and looking for trends in these which might point to underlying factors, whether physical or psychological.