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### [Q: Why does sexual or other abuse of athletes often go unreported?](#)

A: There are many reasons why sexual or other abuse of athletes goes unreported:

- Athlete acceptance of an abusive sport culture where physical punishment and yelling is commonplace and even supported by parents who have been convinced that sport is an effective "toughening" activity that is good for their children
- Lack of education of student-athletes and parents so they understand the nature of sexual abuse and harassment and the fact that such conduct is unethical or criminal
- Athlete embarrassment
- Fear on the part of the athlete that they will be blamed, for either inviting the abuse or not stopping it
- Lack of physical evidence to prove the athlete was abused
- The athlete's perception that there's no one he or she can trust to receive a complaint and act in her or his best interest instead of the interest of the athletics program
- Young or immature athletes want the attention and approval of their coaches and often do not understand the sophisticated cultivation of the victim practice by child abusers.
- Parent denial of the occurrence
- Lack of effective reporting and investigatory mechanisms – the athletics program not making clear that misconduct should be reported and to whom
- Conflict of interest – coaches asked to judge or report their colleagues would rather protect the reputation of their programs and friends than the safety of the athletes they are serving.
- Quid pro quo sexual harassment -when the athlete thinks if he/she does not submit to sexual demands, he/she will get less attention, less instruction, not get a starting position or playing time
- When the athlete is the target of bullying or sexual harassment by his or her athlete teammates, victims don't report misconduct because they fear rejection from their friends.

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[Ethics](#)

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