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Q: How can Athletics Directors or Executive Directors of open amateur sports programs help control unnecessary violence in sport?

A: The real challenge is to ask what can each of us do to clearly integrate for our coaches and student-athletes the notions of aggression, competition and respect for our opponents. Can we explain the difference between making a clean block or crisp tackle and initiating body contact with the intent to maim? Can we remove hate language and the denigration of any group from the locker room (and classroom, and hallways) and make it clear that both are unacceptable? Change occurs one person at a time with one small act at a time. Which of the following can you do?

1. Establish an annual program or workshop for athletes and coaches at which the issues of diversity, hate and violence are addressed.
2. Embrace diversity and anti-violence training in the workplace for all staff members, event security and event staff.
3. Use an advertising page in the athletic event program to educate spectators about sportsmanship, being sure to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable aggression on the playing field (sell to a sponsor).
4. Refuse to advertise in or produce print or electronic media that celebrates violence, objectifies any class or group or salutes any team or individual who does not demonstrate respect for the person of others.
5. Proactively address the distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable physical contact and aggression in coaches' meetings and meetings with players.
6. Require staff training in handling issues of violence and expressions of hate on and off the field of play.
7. Teach your athletes how to object to violent or insulting language on the part of any coach, teammate or opponent, including slurs against women, homosexuals or hate language in any form. Teach your coaches, student-athletes and your employees about the importance of speaking out against wrongs of action and language in a non-aggressive and appropriate manner.
8. Support stiff penalties and removal from play for any player who attempts to intentionally injure another and suspension or termination of coaches who advocate such play.

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Topics

Ethics

Gender Race and Other Issues

Leadership

Risk Management

Staff Building / Diversity

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