Module 3 Risk Management Plan Challenge

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St. Michael’s University High School in Wisconsin recently hired a new Varsity Head Coach for their girl’s basketball program. One of the first things for Coach Grzesiak to do is to assess any potential risks in the girl’s program and develop a risk management plan. This plan can also be used on the boy’s basketball side as well.

The following risks are grouped according to Martens (2004) Coaches’ Nine Legal Duties (p. 470-487).

Duty 2: Provide Proper instruction.

Risk – Assistant coach or another playing teaching a skill.

The potential for injury would be classified as moderate with a medium frequency. The treatment would be the head coach providing specific supervision at all times during practice.

Risk – Injury prevention.

This risk would be classified as moderate with a medium frequency. The treatment would be for the head coach to engage his players in dynamic stretching prior to the start of practice. Also, to make sure the athletes are adequately hydrated and properly equipped to play i.e. all jewelry removed. This risk could also fall under Duty 7.

Duty 3: Warn of inherent risks.

Risk – Taking a charge or teaching a player how to take a charge.

This risk would be classified as moderate from an injury standpoint with a medium frequency. It may also lead to a moderate financial impact if a player becomes injured. The treatment would be for the head coach to explain to his players that basketball is a contact sport, and there is the potential to be injured. Also, by teaching players how to fall properly when taking a charge may lessen the risk. The teaching aspect would also fall under Duty 8: supervising the activity closely.

Duty 4: Provide a safe physical environment.

Risk – Spectators too close to the court and overcrowding during home games.

This risk would be classified as moderate for both injuries to a player or fan, as well as, moderate from a financial standpoint. The frequency of occurrence would be medium considering St. Michael’s plays ten home games. The treatment would be two-fold. First, in order to move the bleachers back from the court would require a massive investment in purchasing new bleachers and re-designing the gym. A short-term solution would be to pad the first row of bleachers and not allow spectators to sit in that row. Second, make sure the gym supervisor and police liaison present for home games monitors the number of people allowed into the gym in order to protect against overcrowding.

Risk – Uneven court surface i.e. pole vault pit cover on the playing surface.

This risk would be moderate in both injury and financially with a high frequency. The treatment would be to make sure the cover accurately fits at all times and is secure. The responsibility would fall under both the head coach and the Athletic Director to continuously monitor the court surface.

Risk – Unpadded wall under the baskets and unpadded scorer’s table.

This risk would be classified as catastrophic from both an injury and financial standpoint with a low frequency. Treatment would be to make sure the padding under the basket is in good shape and firmly secured to the wall, so risk of a substantial injury is minimized. The same would hold true for the scorer’s table. The responsibility would be both the head coach and Athletic Director.

Risk – Spectator injured on the bleachers.

This risk would be moderate in both injury and financially with a medium frequency. Treatment to minimize this would be for the custodial staff and the building services department to regularly inspect the bleachers for any abnormalities and correct the problem immediately or rope off that section so spectators do not sit there.

Risk – Dividing curtain for practice not properly working.

The risk and frequency would both be classified as moderate. The treatment would be for both the head coach and custodial staff to make sure the curtain is properly functioning before practice. If it is not, either cancel practice or only have one team at a time practice to minimize the chance of flying or rolling basketballs going from one side to the other and potentially injuring players.

Risk – Gym floor re-finished at the start of the season.

The risk would be classified as moderate for injuries and high for frequency. Treatment would be for the head coach to instruct his players to wear old, not new, gym shoes for the first couple of weeks of practice. The main reason is the combination of a new floor, and new shoes will increase friction, thus opening up the door to injuries.

Risk – Hazing and or bullying.

Both the risk and frequency would be moderate. Treatment would be education by the head coach on the pitfalls of hazing or bullying. Plus, hazing is against the law in the state of Wisconsin. Another option would be to have a written policy in place and distribute it to all players. See attached sample document in appendix.

Risk – Locker room conduct and supervision.

Both the risk and the frequency would be moderate. With male coaches and a female team, extra attention needs to be made when entering the locker room to talk to the team. Treatment would be as simple as making an announcement prior to the coaching staff entering or hiring a female assistant coach. In addition, a policy should be written describing the rules in the locker room and distributed to all players. See attached sample document in appendix.

Duty 5: Provide adequate and proper equipment.

Risk – Unwashed practice jerseys.

The risk and frequency are both low. Not only do unwashed practice jerseys smell, but also over time there is the possibility of acquiring a skin irritation or worse an infection. Treatment would be for the head coach to stress the importance of weekly washing and education on hygiene through handouts. As a last resort, if the players are not washing them, the coach can collect them and wash them in the school’s laundry room.

Duty 8: Supervise the activity closely.

Risk – Overnight travel and hotel stays.

The risk would be critical from a financial side; however the frequency is low. The only time this would be an issue is if the team advanced to the state championship. High school players in a hotel need specific supervision. Treatment would include a list of rules and expectations for both players and chaperones, presented by the head coach and the Athletic Director. See the sample document in appendix.

Duty 9: Provide appropriate emergency assistance.

Risk – Not reporting an injury to a player.

This risk would be classified as moderate with a medium frequency. It is imperative that the coach reports all injuries that occur on school property to the trainer, parents, etc. Treatment may involve an accident report form.

Risk – Gunman or hostage situation.

The risk would be catastrophic; however the frequency would be low. This would fall under the Athletic Director’s responsibility to develop a plan for all sports home venues i.e. basketball, football, soccer, etc. Treatment would be to employ a program such as Sportevac, which is a computer based model of an evacuation plan for a gym or stadium. It would also require training for the appropriate people who supervise home games at St. Michael’s.

Below are four risks that do not fit any of the Nine Legal Duties of Coaches, but still need to be addressed.

Risk – Private transportation of players after an away game.

This would be classified as moderate; however the frequency is high. Many times the freshman and sophomore players will not stay to watch the Varsity game for various reasons. They arrived at the game via the team bus but may have to go home with their parents. So the liability issue comes into play. The treatment would be a signed waiver by the parents to transfer responsibility from the school back to them. This form would be distributed by the head coach to all parents prior to the start of the season.

Risk – One on one conversation with a player.

The risk would be low but has the potential to escalate to high, and the frequency would be moderate. If a coach talks to a player privately, there is the potential for the discussion to be misconstrued or twisted by the athlete. The treatment would be to always have another coach present when talking to a player privately so it does not turn into a he said, she said situation.

Risk – Cutting a player after tryouts.

The risk would be low but again it may increase, and the frequency would also be low. If a player is cut and not happy with the decision, something like race may be brought up. Therefore, it is imperative for the head coach to keep accurate evaluation forms in order to justify his decision and show it was strictly a matter of ability.

Risk – Social media and players.

This risk would be classified as moderate with a high frequency. Nowadays everyone has a cell phone and is on social media. At times, players may feel the urge to post disparaging comments if they are unhappy with the coach (playing time) or school. Anything of that nature may cast a negative light on St. Michael’s, or it’s coaching staff. Treatment would be for the head coach and Athletic Director to educate all players so they do not post or text something they might regret.

In conclusion, after the risk management plan is developed, the next steps would be implementation and management. The implementation process would involve any and all people involved in the activity. For example, the custodial staff, trainer, Athletic Director, gym supervisors and police liaison would all need to have communication with the head coach to discuss the risks he has uncovered and the prescribed treatments. For managing the plan, a committee would be formed that includes the head coach, Athletic Director, principal, and the school district superintendent. They would meet monthly to review the current risk treatments and revise if necessary. The hope would be for all sports to have their own individual risk management plan and attempt to minimize any and all risks at St. Michael’s.

References

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Appendix

HAZING

Hazing or "forced activity" means any activity, which is a condition of initiation or admission into or affiliation with an organization, regardless of a student's willingness to participate in the activity. Hazing also includes any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off-campus, that produces mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. This includes any action that endangers the health or well-being of an individual, is personally degrading, has an adverse effect on the academic performance of the student, or which violates any federal, state or local statute or University policy. Individual or group consent to hazing activity in no way validates the activity or excludes those perpetuating it from being charged with a crime. Hazing is a process that involves harassment, with or without consent. Hazing can occur within any group. Hazing results include but are not limited to, excessive physical fatigue, embarrassment, humiliation, and mental or physical injury. It is the responsibility of victims, participants or witnesses of a potential hazing incident to report the activity.

**Wisconsin Statute 948.51:**

Wisconsin Statute 948.51 prohibits any form of hazing. The statute says:

948.51 Hazing. (1) In this section "forced activity,” means any activity, which is a condition of initiation or admission into or affiliation with an organization, regardless of a student's willingness to participate in the activity. (2) No person may intentionally or recklessly engage in acts, which endanger the physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating in connection with a school, college or university. Under those circumstances, prohibited acts may include any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, forced confinement or any other forced activity which endangers the physical health or safety of the student. (3) Whoever violates sub. (2) is guilty of: (a) A Class A misdemeanor if the act results in or is likely to result in bodily harm to another. (b) A Class E felony if the act results in great bodily harm or death to another.

**Is it Hazing?**

"Hazing" refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. (taken from StopHazing.org)

Additionally, hazing may be reflected in any act that is required of new members in order for them to gain admittance to an organization that is not required of the current membership.

**Locker Rooms**

Each school district shall observe measures intended to protect the privacy rights of individuals using school locker rooms. The coach is expected to provide locker room supervision. If the coach is a different gender, the coach should make arrangements for another same gender staff to assist with supervision.

Locker rooms are provided for the use of physical education student’s, athletes and other activity groups and individuals authorized by the building principal or by District policy. No one will be permitted to enter into the locker room or remain in the locker room to interview or seek information from an individual in the locker room at any time. Such interviews may take place outside of the locker room consistent with applicable District policies and/or school rules.

No cameras, video recorders or other devices that can be used to record or transfer images may be used in the locker room at any time.

No person may use a cell phone to capture, record or transfer a representation of a nude or partially nude person in the locker room or to take any other photo or video image of a person in the locker room.

Students and staff violating this policy shall be subject to school disciplinary action and possible legal referral, if applicable. Other persons, violating the policy may be subject to penalties outlined in state law. The building principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for enforcing this policy.

**ST. MICHAEL’S EXPECTATIONS OF OVERNIGHT ADVISORS/CHAPERONES**

*The following are some basic guidelines for any advisor, coach or chaperone when planning and*

*accompanying students on overnight field trips. It is imperative that these expectations also be communicated to the students.*

1. Review School District procedure #352 (Extended Out Of Town Field Trips).

2. Prepare and submit a written prospectus/itinerary to building Principal, Athletic/Activities Director or Superintendent for approval. Prospectus/itinerary must be submitted for approval at least 10 days prior to trip.

3. Once approved, distribute itinerary to all parents/guardians. Itinerary needs to contain basic information such as list of advisors/chaperones, financial arrangements, number of participants, destination, travel

and lodging plans, list of behavior and discipline rules, health and safety precautions, liability/release

**statements and insurance coverage information.**

4. Remind students all Athletic Code/School Handbook rules, policies and expectations apply during the trip.

5. Enforce all school, athletic and district rules/policies.

6. Advisors/Chaperones must have a copy of the "Authorization to Administer Prescription Drugs" form with them at all times.

7. No student should be left unsupervised unless reasonable and prudent arrangements have been taken such as being with a parent or guardian. Advisors/chaperones are expected to be in the general vicinity of their students at all times. Advisors/chaperones should periodically check in with students when at

venues where it is not feasible to keep all students together or within visual contact.

8. Students must always be in groups of two or more.

9. Advisors/chaperones must have student cell phone numbers.

10. Advisors/chaperones must communicate their cell phone numbers with students.

11. In the hotel there should be advisors/chaperones in close proximity to where students are staying.

12. A curfew needs to be established and communicated to the students by the advisors/chaperones.

13. No members of the opposite sex are allowed in the student's rooms without an advisor/chaperone present.

14. Students are not allowed to leave the hotel without prior permission from an advisor/chaperone.

15. A final bed check must take place at a set curfew time determined by the advisor/chaperone at which time the students are to be reminded of the following rules/expectations.

• students are not allowed to leave their rooms after curfew without advisor/chaperone approval.

• Reasonable arrangements will be made by chaperones to monitor student compliance with curfew and associated rules and policies.

Destination\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group:

Name of Advisor(s):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1 *have read and understand the expectations and responsibilities of serving as the advisor/chaperone for the·*

*above mentioned overnight field trip.*

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_