



Coaching 101 - Risk Management in Sport

Risk management is about taking steps to identify, measure and control risks. This involves spending time thinking about potentially risky situations, deciding which situations might pose serious risks, and determining what steps to take to minimize those risks. The common ingredient in all these tasks are common sense.

There are 4 strategies for controlling risks, all of which are important to coaches:

- **Retain the risk:** The risk is minor and is inherent in the sport activity, and the coach is willing to accept the consequences. As the coach therefore, you do nothing about the risk. In sport this is often a legitimate risk-management strategy.
- **Reduce the risk:** The risk is moderately significant and you take measures to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or minimize the consequences if the risk occurs. You, as the coach, can do this by planning carefully, supervising your bowlers appropriately and educating your bowlers.
- **Transfer the risk:** The risk is significant and is transferred to others through contracts, including waivers and insurance.
- **Avoid the risks:** The risk is severe and you, as the coach, decide to avoid anything that may cause that risk.

A word of caution: There is no template, formula, or checklist for managing risk. The law expects coaches to provide a safe environment for your bowlers, but what that means for your conduct will vary with circumstances, including bowlers age and skill level and the environment where the activity takes place.

Coaches personal risk-management plan

An informed and prudent coach protects themselves by implementing a personal risk-management plan. Your plan will help you in two ways. First it promotes a safe program and helps prevent injuries from occurring. Second it helps protect you from liability claims when an injury cannot be prevented.

You, as a coach, can and should practice your own personal risk management by following this 10-point plan:

- be familiar with and adhere to applicable standards, both written and unwritten, as well as internal policies and rules governing the bowling centre, C5PBA rules and programs;
- monitor your bowlers fitness and skill levels and teach new skills in a progressive fashion suitable to their age and skills – never leave young bowlers unsupervised;
- if you do not have access to medical personnel or a qualified trainer, keep adequate first aid supplies on hand, ideally you should be trained in first aid;
- develop an Emergency Action Plan for the bowling centre where you regularly hold your practices or tournaments and, always carry with you, emergency contact numbers and athlete medical profiles;
- inspect the bowling centre and equipment before every practice and tournament - take steps to ensure any deficiencies are corrected immediately, or adjust your activity accordingly to avoid risk;
- work with the Proprietor and either your NSO/PSO to develop and use appropriately worded assumption of risk agreements in your programs - where appropriate, develop and use agreements waiving liability, that are suitable for adult bowlers;
- you should be covered by the liability insurance policy of your employer if you are paid for

your coaching services or by the liability insurance policy of your organization if you are a volunteer coach - if you are not covered obtain your own insurance;

- don't be afraid to stop or withdraw from any activity that poses unreasonable risk - this includes stopping your practice or removing your team or your bowlers from a tournament;
- trust your common sense and intuition;
- actively pursue your own training, professional development and coaching certification.

When parents drop their children off for practice or a tournament, there is an expectation that their children will return home in the same condition as when they dropped them off. The great thing is that, although we all know that there are inherent risks in sport and kids may get hurt, we all share the same goal of protecting the well-being of our bowlers. Let's take an in-depth look at some of your responsibilities:

Properly planned activities:

- it is important to incorporate the following into your practice:
 - warm-up to increase heart rate and to reduce the risk of muscle sprains
 - a cool down which will ensure gradual reduction of the activity;
- training methods that are consistent with the LTAD model for bowling

Provide appropriate supervision:

- there are two types of supervision - general which is the oversight of all areas of the practice and specific which is the oversight of specific skills being performed;
- supervise all the bowlers in all activities including warm-up, main part, cool down, travelling to and from tournament, and proper eating;
- act quickly and decisively to correct unsafe conditions;
- insist that your bowlers use appropriate training techniques;
- be alert to changing conditions;
- develop and follow medical emergency response procedures;
- it is your responsibility to set the standard of behaviour for your team;
- as a coach you must show respect for your bowlers, officials, parents and to all other coaches;
- review NCCP Code of Conduct.

Provide proper instruction:

- when introducing a skill, ensure you have the bowler's attention and name the skill being taught and explain the skill in detail;
- demonstrate the skill properly to avoid injury or risk;
- explain the skill, break it down to more manageable parts;
- pay attention to your bowlers when they are practising a skill;
- offer positive and corrective feedback.

Provide adequate and proper equipment:

- inspect the lanes prior to a practice to ensure they are not sticky or have water on them that can cause an injury;
- if a bowler does not have their own bowling shoes make sure the rentals are in good condition with proper sliders.

Risk Assessment Form for bowlers

	Risk prior to measures	Who may be harmed	Precautions	Any further actions	Risk rating
1	Tripping or falling on the approach	bowler	Visual check of bowler's clothes for frayed bottoms	Check clothing to make sure they are safe	low
2	Bowlers colliding with each other	bowlers	Ensure that bowlers remain on their own lanes	Use designated lanes	low
3	Sticking on the approach	bowler	Visual check of the lanes	Make sure the approach is dry	low
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