

Youth Sports Safety

*A Report on the State of
Youth Sports Injury Prevention
for Children Ages 14 & Under*

A Community Huddle

Prepared for



Prepared by



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Background: Convening the Thought Leaders

On June 7, 2019, the National Council of Youth Sports, the CoachSafely Foundation and the City of Birmingham convened a working group of thought leaders in the areas of sports administration and sports medicine to participate in a panel discussion open to the public at the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. The goals of the working group:

- To address the role of youth coaches in mitigating the CDC-defined youth sports injury epidemic in compliance with the State of Alabama's 2018-496 Coach Safely Law.
- To advance the proposition that training coaches of athletes aged 14 and under will mitigate the epidemic of youth sports injuries.
- To provide a multi-disciplinary review of the State of Alabama's Coach Safely Law as a national standard.

The working group's members have distinguished themselves by their practical experience and hands-on involvement in administering programs designed to encourage safe and healthy participation in a variety of sports programs at various age levels and stages of development. The members of the working group:

- Professional – **Izell Reese**, National Football League FLAG Football.
- Collegiate – **Dr. Jimmy Robinson**, University of Alabama.
- High School – **Alvin Briggs**, Alabama High School Athletic Association.
- Recreation Sports – **Natalie Norman**, Alabama Recreation and Parks Association.
- Pediatric Sports Medicine – **Drew Ferguson**, Children's of Alabama.
- Working Sports Parents - **Margaret White**, Alabama Power.
- National Youth Sports Governing Bodies – **Wayne Moss**, National Council of Youth Sports.
- National Sports Policy – **Jon Solomon**, Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program.

**Travel issues prevented Mr. Solomon from attending the conference in person. He provided his written remarks for inclusion in this report.*

The members of the working group made individual 3-to-5-minute presentations, which were transcribed for summary editorial review and edited for brevity and clarity by **Kevin Scarbinsky**, a longtime sports journalist and current CoachSafely Foundation consultant. He was assisted in compiling this report by CoachSafely Foundation Founder and Chairman **Jack Crowe** and CEO **Kanti Sunkavalli**. The working group began the presentations with four common acknowledgements as references:

1. The CDC acknowledges that 50% of youth sports injuries are preventable.
2. The Aspen Institute “Project Play” report acknowledges that training coaches and emphasizing prevention is a mitigating factor in reversing the current counterproductive trends in youth sports.
3. The 2018 Safe Sports Act passed by Congress acknowledges that the physical, emotional and sexual safety of athletes aged 14 and under from abuse is a national concern and subject to legislative oversight.
4. The 2018 Coach Safely Law, Alabama Law 2018-496, acknowledges that all common youth sports have a “high risk” of injury.



Introduction: Defining the Youth Sports Injury Epidemic

Dr. James R. Andrews | Medical Director | CoachSafely Foundation

According to the CDC, we currently have an epidemic occurring in youth sports, which is why we are going to concentrate on prevention. I began tracking youth sports injuries in the year 2000 at the Andrews Sports Medicine Orthopaedic Center in Birmingham, Alabama. I continued this method of tracking at the Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine in Pensacola, Florida, which opened in 2007. In both practice locations, my exam rooms were being filled by kids between the ages of 13 and 15, and I said, “My goodness! What is happening to my practice? I didn’t know I was a pediatric orthopedic surgeon!”

Something was indeed happening, and through the years we have continued tracking these injury rates. Data now shows a tenfold increase in youth sports injuries since the year 2000.

I would like to clarify that these are not just minor injuries. Our youth are experiencing what we call adult sports injuries, which previously were only treated in college and professional athletes. They are now occurring in the younger population, like the shoulder injury sustained by a 13-year-old baseball player I treated this week.

I would like to share two national initiatives that should bring some clarity and focus for everyone. There was a national questionnaire distributed by Johnson & Johnson and Safe Kids International. They wanted to learn the culture of youth sports and have it documented through a national questionnaire. They knew that 1.24 million youth sports injuries were seen in the emergency room in only one year. From these injuries, occurring in adolescents 19 years of age and younger, 37 percent were sustained in the age group of 13 to 15. Of course, 90 percent of athletes said they had been injured in youth sports, with the No. 1 injury being overuse injuries.

The questionnaire also showed that 54 percent of athletes said they had played injured. Fifty-four percent! These kids were asked why, and I bet you could guess what the answers were. No. 1 was, “I was needed and couldn’t let my team down.” No. 2: “I didn’t want to be benched.” They were afraid if they didn’t play, the coach would bench them and they could lose their spot to another player.

Another reason we hear all the time is, “It was an important game.” This was stated by an 8-year-old.

Something that is extremely important and hits home today is that fewer than half of the coaches responding to this national questionnaire stated they had received certification on how to prevent and recognize sports injuries. As equally important, 80 percent of the parents responded that they would want their child’s coach to be certified in injury prevention. There is presently a big void, and that is what we are here to discuss today.

By the way, more than 53 percent of the coaches stated they had felt pressure from a parent or a player to put an injured athlete back into the game. Even the parents are pushing them back in.

Let me share with you a story to help bring this home. I was covering a high school football game a few years ago, and there was a sophomore player who sustained a concussion. He was completely knocked out; however, we recognized that, thank goodness, and brought him over to the sideline to perform the routine test.

Obviously, the decision was made to remove him from the game. At this moment, I suddenly heard people hitting the fence behind me and screaming, “Why is our son not in the game? Why are you keeping our son out of the game?”

To help settle things down, I went over to discuss my decision with the people who turned out to be this young player’s parents. Guess what profession both parents were in? I bet you can’t guess.

Both of them were neurologists. So that is what we have to deal with.

The epidemic is here, and it continues to rise. I would like to say that our motto for this meeting would be, “What could I do if I became we?”



Narrative: Presenting a Working Parent's View

Margaret White | Director of Public Relations | Alabama Power

I'm humbled to be asked to speak as a parent of young athletes. My day job is director of public relations, but my most important work is as a wife to my husband, John, and as a mother to 9-year-old Lydia and 7-year-old Luke. I love sports like any good Alabamian. Of course I picked my team long before kindergarten - War Eagle! - and spent every season active at play and on teams.

The first love of my life was basketball, and as I neared my senior year of high school in Huntsville, nothing was more important to me. I played and practiced every chance I could get. I ran cross country just to get in shape, and I do not love running. But just as the season began, I dislocated my shoulder in practice.

I didn't tell my coach right away. I remember thinking something was wrong but the season was about to start and my team needed me and nothing was going to get in my way. After practice, we popped it back in, and I was sure I would be fine. Well, I wasn't.

A week or two later, during a Thanksgiving tournament game, I ripped it to shreds, and popping it back in was not a solution. I went to an orthopedic doctor, and he gave me news I didn't want to hear. He told me I was finished with basketball, and if I continued, I could risk lifelong damage. Well, I was headstrong. I was 17. I thought I knew a lot, and I didn't really care about the rest of my life. I cared about my senior year.

My doctor was gracious enough to recommend a second opinion with this guy in Birmingham, who just a few months earlier had repaired Bo Jackson's hip. I have no idea how we got in, but a couple of weeks later, Dr. James Andrews walked into an exam room and the first thing he said was, "Let's try to find a way for you to safely finish your basketball season."

I'm sure my mom asked all the right follow-up questions, but all I heard was, "You can play, you have to wear this harness, and if you get hurt again, even just a little bit, you're done." And so I played, and Dr. Andrews successfully repaired my shoulder later that spring.

I tell my story because it was the best possible outcome in spite of myself. It takes a whole system of support for young athletes to keep them safe. It's not just engaged parents, but it's knowledgeable coaches, it's doctors, it's community leaders. Certainly not just the desires of stubborn, shortsighted young athletes.

As a parent, I want my children to participate in sports, and I've loved cheering them on as they've played basketball, soccer, gymnastics and more. I know the benefits of sports. My kids probably won't go pro, but they'll build self-confidence, their self-esteem, learn discipline, teamwork, how to celebrate victories together and how to lose. They're likely to have better grades, and they're less likely to have risky behavior.

But fear of injury is a real concern. It's heightened by media coverage and just in general a greater awareness that we all have. I have concerns with coaches with competencies not only in skill development but in how they can prevent injuries themselves.

Today I'm really proud that my state legislators passed the Coach Safely Law, which I hope becomes the national standard to mitigate youth sports injuries. I'm confident the leaders here today have the vision and commitment to build a youth sports ecosystem that provides opportunities for participation as well as prevents and recognizes injuries.

I know my children are in good hands. They have educated and involved parents. They have access to the best healthcare. They have a community and a state that's paying attention and ready for action. But the safety of all of our children just doesn't rest on a parent, a coach, a trainer or a doctor. It takes all of us, and I'm proud that Alabama is leading the way.



Engagement: Addressing a troubling trend in participation

Wayne Moss | Executive Director | National Council of Youth Sports

Some 70 percent of young people stop participating in sports by age 13. There are a variety of reasons for that. One of those reasons includes coaches who are not properly trained. We find that there are only about 30 percent of coaches that get any kind of training in anything, let alone the safety protocols which are so important. And so kids are dropping out of sport, and we know that sport provides significant benefits.

It's clear the physical benefits sports provides. But there are social, emotional, cognitive benefits that are there. We know that kids in sport do better academically, are less likely to engage in risky behavior and girls are less likely to become pregnant. So it's important for us to continue to build the number of young people involved in sport and to keep young people who are in sport engaged. This effort is significant in that respect.

Jon Solomon | Editorial Director | Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program

It's an honor to be communicating again with the city of Birmingham. I lived here for 10 years. My two sons were both born here and started playing sports here, so I know how important the youth sports scene is in this community – for better and for worse. When we lived here, my oldest son, Daniel, declared he was retiring from baseball at age 6. It was heartbreaking. He quit as the result of a way-too-competitive T-Ball league that taught improper tactics and applied pressure on kids.

I was an assistant coach on this team. Although I raised concerns to the head coach, I blame myself for Daniel retiring. I didn't do a good enough job giving my son – and his teammates – a better early experience in sports. He's 12 now and has rarely played sports since.

Izell Reese | Incoming Executive Director | NFL FLAG Football

I like to tell people I'm just an old country boy from Dothan, Alabama, but sport has done things for me beyond my wildest belief. I walked on at UAB and was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys. That is a Cinderella story so I've always wondered: What's my path? What's the reason why certain things happen?

A lot of it was sport. When I step on the field with sport, coaches taught me how to play the game and believed in me. I felt invincible. It taught me courage and things that have propelled me now off the field. So the things that we learn from sport and the things it instills in us, that's what drives me to get more youth to participate in any capacity.

Dr. Jimmy Robinson | Medical Director | University of Alabama Athletics

When Dr. Andrews discussed an epidemic of youth injuries, I'm more concerned about another epidemic, and that's youth obesity. Thirty percent of our children today classify as obese children. That is horrendous. Less than 50 percent of our children today meet the criteria of athletic participation or fitness participation of 60 minutes a day. Less than 50 percent.

With the increase in the rise of esports as an accepted method of sports participation, which I disagree with, we're going to see an increase in that rise, I'm afraid. Athletes are going to say, "I can sit at home on my couch and play this video game and have just as much fun as being out there and possibly getting hurt." Well, if we take out the possibility of getting hurt, maybe we'll have more participation.

Alvin Briggs | Assoc. Executive Director | Alabama High School Athletic Association

One thing that hurts us in terms of the obesity epidemic is we have lost the value of physical education in our schools, not only in high school but in our elementary schools and our junior high schools. There is one year of high school physical education that is needed. That's what our educators think, and that's wrong.

Drew Ferguson | Director of Sports Medicine | Children's of Alabama

When you think about it, as has been mentioned, you've got an epidemic in obesity and in diabetes, and we're talking in the 14-and-under age group. These two things are certainly preventable, but this day and time, with this age group, a lot of them are not active. They're on these (cell phones) and playing computer games. So we've got to get them moving and we've got to get them active and we've got to make it safer.

Key Question: Who's Coaching the Coaches

Wayne Moss | Executive Director | National Council of Youth Sports

Young people deserve and have the right to participate in a safe environment. They've got the right to participate in an organization that has safety protocols, and parents have the right to know that when they drop their kids off somewhere, that while those kids are in the care of that organization, that they're going to be good.

Jon Solomon | Editorial Director | Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program

Unfortunately, less than four in 10 youth coaches nationally are trained in key areas – CPR/first aid, general safety and injury prevention, effective motivational techniques, sports skills and tactics, physical conditioning and concussion management. In 2017, lacrosse had the highest percentage of trained coaches in these areas; soccer ranked at the bottom, including only 25% of coaches who were trained in concussion management.

Part of the problem nationally with coach training is, while it's well-intentioned, it's being done piecemeal. We don't want coaches trained many different ways and going through multiple courses on different topics. That becomes unwieldy for volunteer coaches. I was pleased to see the CoachSafely course includes some training about how to coach child athletes, including mental and emotional health. At Project Play, we believe we need to be training coaches in a holistic manner beyond just preventing injury.

Alvin Briggs | Assoc. Executive Director | Alabama High School Athletic Association

Alabama is rural by nature. South of Birmingham, our schools are so rural that some counties only have one EMT for the entire county. You have some counties that have three or four football games or three or four basketball games or baseball games going on at one time, and it's hard for them to have somebody there for protection.

So imagine if we have that problem in middle school and high school what it is in our communities all over the state. It's not only the fact that our coaches aren't taught, but we don't have emergency personnel in some of those counties and cities that could be there for those programs. A lot of our youth programs don't have anybody there for medical attention.

Dr. Jimmy Robinson | Medical Director | University of Alabama Athletics

When you look at coaches that are coaching these youth sports athletes, in one survey only 60 percent of the coaches had ever been trained in either CPR or AED usage. That needs to be a hundred percent. As far as other first-aid measures, down as low as 10 percent of coaches had been trained.

We think about concussions all the time and while it's mandatory for coaches to get concussion training at the high school level even, it's not at the youth sports level. And there are other conditions that we have to think about. For instance, heat illness.

We live in a state that's wrought with heat problems throughout the summertime when our athletes are out there participating. And do you know it's still taught in first-aid classes and even on the CDC website to put ice in the axilla and the groin area to cool down an athlete, which is absolutely the wrong way to do it. It's still taught that way. We've got to get that information out, but youth coaches don't even know to do that.

Natalie Norman | Executive Director | Alabama Recreation and Parks Association

We have a wide variety of coaches with a wide variety of backgrounds. What this law allows us to have, within that wide variety, is a consistency, a consistency in training, a consistency in knowing how to prevent injury and how to recognize injury when it happens. It allows us to develop and implement best practices through ARPA.

We want to meet the coaches where they are. We want to go to them. We want to grow and sustain the engagement that our coaches have in the training. As we grow and sustain the training of coaches, we're going to grow and sustain the engagement of the youth in our sports activities.



Activation: Implementing the Coach Safely Law

The CoachSafely Foundation has partnered with the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, which has 900 members in 92 of the state's largest cities, representing the majority of the state's population. Under the terms of the joint venture, the CoachSafely Foundation delivers its training course to state agencies at no direct cost exclusively through the network of the ARPA membership. Original funding has been provided through major charitable gifts.

Drew Ferguson | Director of Sports Medicine | Children's of Alabama

Parents wouldn't let their kids go to a pool without a lifeguard. They shouldn't allow their kids to be coached without the training for the parents who are the coaches. It's a no-brainer. So we've got a challenge ahead of us in terms of delivery, both online and with the ones that don't have that capability, of going to the rec centers and getting them trained.

We turned the corner in terms of understanding what was needed technologically in terms of delivering the course, and we are also in the process of updating our videos and updating our website because it's seasonal. We got the baseball coaches trained, but the next wave is going to be youth football in August that we're getting prepared for. So word is going to get out again, and we're so happy to be partnering with the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, with Natalie (Norman) and her group that truly understand and share in our mission to educate.

Natalie Norman | Executive Director | Alabama Parks and Recreation Association

This is new. Even though it rolled out in January, it's fairly new. It's in its infancy. The bigger cities, our member cities, they are certainly aware of the law, but there are towns and smaller communities, they probably haven't even heard of it. They don't know it's in effect. They don't know it's been passed. We're taking that responsibility on to see that they know it's there. They can't do anything about it if they're not informed. That's one of our jobs, to inform our communities and get them engaged and get our coaches trained so we're investing in the safety of our youth.

When it first came up with the coaches, we had a little pushback. "Well, you know, I'm certified in this and I've got this and I've got that and why do we need to go through something else?" As soon as it sinks in that this is not about them, primarily, it's about the kids, about making the environment for the kids as safe as we possibly can, as soon as they realize that, a lightbulb goes off and they say, "OK. What do we need to do?"

We have approximately 10,000 coaches that have been through the training currently. We estimate that as we move forward, we're looking at a number of approximately 60,000 for our recreational community coaches.

When this really takes off in the state of Alabama and everybody knows what they're doing, that's the number we're going to hit. We're talking about all sports. That sounds like a big number, but when you break it down and you're talking about all sports and all coaches, 60,000 is going to be an easy number to reach for our 14-and-under group.

Izell Reese | Incoming Executive Director | NFL FLAG Football

When you think about youth sports, in everything that I touch, everyone has to go through a background check. It's a norm. It's a standard. This (law), to me, makes sense to be a norm and a standard because what are we talking about. What's more important when you talk about youth in sports than health and safety?

It's just as important as a background check. So to me, this is a standard, and I will say this on the record, that as I look to take over NFL Flag Football, I will follow this law. Any coach that's a part of NFL Flag, that's from 3-year-olds to 17-year-olds, will be required to go through this. Because it's needed.



Consensus: Advancing the Law as a National Standard

Alvin Briggs | Assoc. Executive Director | Alabama High School Athletic Association

We serve over 10,000 coaches in the state of Alabama that are part of coaching and teaching at the high school and middle school level, and before they can step on the field, thanks to Dr. Jimmy Robinson and Drew Ferguson and our Medical Advisory Board, they have to pass seven courses. They have to be part of the training. They have to have a background check. They have to be board-approved. You just don't walk out there and become a coach.

So we do recognize that is a very important part of our youth level, and we do want to be a part of that. We want to do whatever we can to help engage because those are our feeder kids. Those are our kids that are going to be a part of our middle school and high school programs. If they're not taught right, if they're not led right, then what do we have when they get to our programs? That's why we want to be here and we want to be a part of this team.

Dr. Jimmy Robinson | Medical Director | University of Alabama Athletics

We know that up to 85 percent of parents are worried about their children getting hurt in participation in sport. A program like Coach Safely should hopefully reduce that number by ensuring that the participants are being taken care of by people who are well-trained in the prevention and recognition of injuries and illnesses that may affect their children.

This is not an Alabama thing. This is a national thing. I am looking forward to seeing this spread to every state in the country as quickly as possible with legislation passed. Neighboring states have legislation on the table now for this exact same thing, and the more we get behind that, the more this can become a national trend and we can ensure the health and safety of our future generations.



Natalie Norman | Executive Director | Alabama Parks and Recreation Association

We as Parks and Rec professionals, we don't look at the law, we don't look at the safety of our kids, our users and our participants, with indifference. We want to lead, and we want to be difference-makers as we move forward, and that's what we're going to be with Coach Safely.

Izell Reese | Incoming Executive Director | NFL FLAG Football

This law was something that was needed. I don't know a lot about politics, and I'm sure a lot of laws are passed or not passed on a year-to-year basis, but I would think this was an easy box to check, not one that would sit on that desk for a long period of time. Because we're talking about our future, our youth, and we're talking about their health and safety and their need to participate in sports from a health standpoint.

We can be figureheads and talking heads all day long, but if there's not action, it's just words. If it doesn't go beyond these walls, it's just words. So now, we know the old phrase, it takes a village. I'm going to use a sports analogy. It takes a team, in this case. I'm on the team. I believe in this, and you have my full support. Anything I can do to advance this effort not only in Alabama but on a national scale and engage with the NBA, the NFL or any other sports entity that I touch, I will do because it is something that is needed, something that I personally truly believe in.

Drew Ferguson | Director of Sports Medicine | Children's of Alabama

We're happy that Izell (Reese) is going to be leading the charge for NFL Flag Football, and we're happy that Wayne (Moss) is here with his shared vision of safety nationally. It's the perfect storm of us partnering and coming together to take it to every state in the country. We're very happy that Alabama's the first state to pass a law to take the lead. We're going to roll up our sleeves up and go to work.

Wayne Moss | Executive Director | National Council of Youth Sports

When I found out what you all are doing here, I was floored. I was blown away. I acknowledge the work that you all are doing in respect to keeping young people safe. I don't think the people outside of these doors really know what's going on. I don't think they get that something miraculous has happened here.

There will be a day that we look back and we'll see that youth sports safety training, which is required by law, started in Alabama. I stand with you all shoulder to shoulder in making that happen.



Recommendations: Putting Words into Action

1. This report is a call to action, based on the definition of the “High Risk” to public health defined in the Coach Safely Law (2018-496), for organizations that sponsor youth sports to have a policy that mandates coaches complete a course in youth sports injury recognition and prevention as a matter of liability risk management.
2. Policy standards for this risk-mitigating course are that it be evidence-based and peer-reviewed and that it be comprehensive to include the injury recognition and prevention categories defined in the Coach Safely Law (2018-496): (1) Emergency preparedness, planning and rehearsal for traumatic injuries; (2) Concussions and head trauma; (3) Heat and extreme weather-related injury familiarization; (4) Physical conditioning and training equipment usage; and (5) Heart defects and abnormalities leading to sudden cardiac death. In addition, the Coach Safely course includes (6) Overuse injuries and (7) Emotional health of the Child-Athlete.
3. As a matter of policy, the ubiquitous delivery of a mandated course requires that it be both cost-effective and Internet-based and that the successful completion of the course be reported both to the sports organization and to the public.
4. Other policy requirements would include renewal of course requirements and any qualified exemptions.
5. This report is being presented to the National Council of Youth Sports as well as legislative leaders at the local, state and national levels to assist in the effort to have Alabama's Coach Safely Law serve as a model for adoption and implementation in states throughout the nation.



Alabama's Coach Safely Law

AL Code 2018-496

THIS SECTION WAS ASSIGNED BY THE CODE COMMISSIONER IN THE 2018 REGULAR SESSION, EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION OF RULES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH. THIS IS IN THE CURRENT CODE OF ALABAMA-ACT 2018-496.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Coach Safely Act.

(Act 2018-496, §1.)

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- (1) ASSOCIATION. Any organization that administers or conducts high risk youth athletics activities on property owned, leased, managed, or maintained by the state, an agent of the state, or a political subdivision of the state.
- (2) ATHLETICS PERSONNEL. Athletic directors and other individuals actively involved in organizing, training, or coaching sports activities for individuals age 14 and under.
- (3) COACH. Any individual, whether paid, unpaid, volunteer, or interim, who has been approved by the association to organize, train, or supervise a youth athlete or team of youth athletes. If an individual approved by the association is unavailable, the term may include an individual selected by a youth athlete or a team of youth athletes who has not been approved by the association.
- (4) HIGH RISK YOUTH ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES. Any organized sport in which there is a significant possibility for a youth athlete to sustain a serious physical injury, including, but not limited to, the sports of football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, soccer, ice or field hockey, cheerleading, and lacrosse.
- (5) YOUTH ATHLETE. Individuals age 14 and under participating in an organized sport.

(Act 2018-496, §2.)

Alabama's Coach Safely Law

AL Code 2018-496

(a) Any youth athletics association that sponsors or conducts sports training or high risk youth athletic activities for children age 14 years and younger shall require all coaches and athletics personnel to complete an online or residence course approved by the Department of Public Health, if available at no cost, which provides information and awareness of actions and measures that may be used to decrease the likelihood that a youth athlete will sustain a serious injury while engaged or participating in a high risk youth athletic activity.

(b) Any youth injury mitigation and information course required to be taken by a coach or athletics personnel under this section, at a minimum, shall provide information on the following subjects:

- (1) Emergency preparedness, planning, and rehearsal for traumatic injuries.
- (2) Concussions and head trauma.
- (3) Heat and extreme weather related injury familiarization.
- (4) Physical conditioning and training equipment usage.
- (5) Heart defects and abnormalities leading to sudden cardiac death.

(c) Any individual required to take an injury mitigating course under this section shall complete the course within 30 days of becoming actively engaged in, or serving as, athletics personnel or coach for the association.

(d) Any youth athletic association that conducts high risk youth athletic activities or events that requires coaches and athletics personnel to complete an injury mitigating course under this section shall maintain a record of individual course completion for as long as that individual serves as athletic personnel or coach for the association.

(e) The course requirement under this section shall be an annual requirement to be completed not later than the anniversary of the date on which the individual became actively engaged in serving as athletic personnel or coach for the associati

Alabama's Coach Safely Law AL Code 2018-496

(f) All licensed and certified athletic trainers, doctors, nurses, first responders, and health care professionals with acute traumatic life support training shall be exempt from the course requirement under this section.

(g) This chapter may not be construed to eliminate the involvement of athletic trainers at youth athletic events.

(h) This chapter shall not be construed to impose any additional liability upon political subdivisions of this state.

(i) Athletics personnel and coaches shall be entitled to a defense from liability for any injury sustained by a youth athlete as a result of participation in a high risk youth athletic activity upon establishing that they completed the injury mitigation and information course described in Section 3(a) and that they reasonably conformed their conduct to the safety techniques and methods identified in such injury mitigation and information course.

(j) The Department of Public Health shall within 180 days of enactment of this chapter adopt rules, not inconsistent with this chapter, for purposes of implementing, enforcing, and administering this chapter.

(Act 2018-496, §3.)



Acknowledgements

The CoachSafely Foundation thanks the City of Birmingham for sponsoring this inaugural Community Huddle, the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame for hosting the event, the Alabama NewsCenter for livestreaming the presentation and Full Moon BBQ for providing everyone with a delicious lunch.

We are grateful to the members of our working group for their participation, their thought leadership and their dedication to the collaboration necessary to setting a new national standard for youth sports injury recognition and prevention.

The organizations they represent provide valuable resources to youth sports coaches, parents, administrators and other influential figures in the lives of young athletes. We encourage these stakeholders to visit their websites to help acquire the knowledge they need to keep our children active, healthy and safe.





Dr. James R. Andrews



Margaret White



Wayne B. Moss



Dr. Jimmie Robinson

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