

Category: Coaching Research Abstract

Stream: 7-Coaching ethics/Integrity

Title: Using Sport Taekwondo as a Model: The coach's role in ending sexual harassment and abuse in the context of a multilevel plan to create and sustain a safe environment for athletes

Author Bio: Amanda Rosbarsky-Miller, Master in Taekwondo and a recent graduate with a BA in Gender and Sexuality Studies, is early in her career as a researcher, but has nearly two decades of experience as a Taekwondo coach, athlete, and parent to two athletes. Currently as a candidate for her Master's in Business, Amanda is energized to use her knowledge of sport, and skill as a researcher to create cultural shifts which will best support athletes to reach their highest human potential.

Abstract

This paper offers a review of the literature regarding the coach's role in ending sexual harassment and abuse in sport, and seeks to apply it to sport taekwondo in the USA. Sporting organizations worldwide, including the American NGB for Taekwondo, USA Taekwondo, have been rocked by sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse scandals at a higher rate than normal since the metoo movement began to lift the veil of shame in which victims had largely been enshrouded. As the world's eyes have been opened to the prevalence of athlete abuses, the time is ripe to mobilize cultural shift within sports organizations to more holistically support the attendance to the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of athletes through multilevel efforts to lessen athlete sexual abuses. The education and empowerment of organization leadership and athletes are both integral to the overall success of ending sexual abuses and harassments in sport, but proactive shift will most significantly be driven at the level of coach. Mobilizing change at the coach level will most deeply affect revision because coaches are most often the perpetrators of abuses, and through education can become enlightened and empowered to maintain a focus on protecting the welfare of athletes. Exploitation of individuals who occupy a less powerful position in interpersonal relationships such as the coach-athlete relationship mark a central contributing factor to the prevalence of athlete abuses that exist in sport today. The interpersonal power of a coach is amplified in the world of sport taekwondo where the coach has clout above that of similarly positioned coaches in other sports because of the hierarchical structure of the rank and belt system in taekwondo.

In conjunction with athlete empowerment, and leadership support, coach-level action has the largest potential to shift abuse-supporting culture and make concrete positive change to benefit athletes and their well-being.

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