

Colorado Youth Soccer
Risk Management
Risk Management in a Digital World

Coaches, players and parents all utilize the “digital world” for communication; it is instant, constant and is global. Cell phones, email and the web are utilized daily. Although all are common everyday forms of communication, they come with a risk.

Cell phones are more than a phone. They are used for instant /text messages, as a camera or video recorder and to access the internet. There are some basic standards and protection barriers that should be considered when using this technology.

- Coaches and team representatives should only use text messages on issues that are soccer related. When the coach replies to a player’s text message, the reply should copy the parents as well.
- Coaches and team representative’s cell phone use with players should be minimal and only used for team business when it is necessary.
- Players should advise their parents of calls being received that are more than soccer related communications
- Parents should occasionally check their player’s cell phone records to identify the numbers and time of day called. Any calls after normal “soccer” events should be discussed with their player.

Barriers should also be established for email use. Coach and team representatives should utilize group emails where possible. If it is necessary to email a player, parents should also be copied. In addition, use “blind copy” functions as much as possible to prevent access to others by the email being forwarded outside the group.

Many teams have initiated websites. Basic risk management of these sites should be practiced to minimize and hopefully prevent putting players at risk.

- Team rosters should NOT be posted on a website.
- No individually identifiable player photographs or information on address, interests, hobbies or siblings should be mentioned.
- No “contact lists” that includes each child’s name, parent’s business phone, home phone or household email.

Clubs should consider Cyber-Situations within their Rules and Codes of Conduct.

- A code of conduct that explicitly includes dealing with negative public postings on Internet sites.
- Expectations of good behavior – including good on-line behavior – should be reviewed with players by coaches and/or team administrators.

For more risk information, contact the US Youth Soccer at www.usyouthsoccer.org