

### 3.1.2: The responsibilities of a coach

#### Health and safety

This is a fundamental responsibility of sports coaches as they must ensure that all of their training sessions take place in a safe and secure environment that minimises the likelihood of any accidents taking place. Health and safety considerations for a sports coach should include the following:

- consideration of any facilities to be used
- consideration of any equipment to be used
- consideration of any resources to be used
- consideration of any protective equipment needed
- the age, gender and ability of the participants
- the activities to be carried out.

#### Professional conduct

This area of responsibility covers a number of different factors which, when combined, make up the level of professional conduct that every sports coach will be expected to maintain. Failure to conduct themselves professionally is likely to have a serious impact on the level of success a sports coach has, as athletes, particularly children, are unlikely to want to be coached by someone who cannot behave professionally.

Sports coaches demonstrate professional conduct by dressing appropriately, by being well prepared, by always being on time, by the language they use and their behaviour and attitude towards the participants in their training sessions and during competitions. The coach should also remain calm and reasoned when dealing with athletes.

#### Risk assessment

This is the process used by sports coaches to identify hazards and risks that have the potential to cause harm to the participants during their planned training sessions. The coach must then analyse and evaluate the level of risk associated with each hazard and ensure that they have plans in place to mitigate the risk. This would reduce the likelihood of any accident or injury occurring. If an activity's risk level is too high, the coach should remove it from the session plan and replace it with an activity with a more acceptable level of risk.

Sports coaches will also have to carry out risk assessments on the relevant facilities and any resources or equipment being used in their sessions. The risk assessment of the facilities will be of particular importance if the session is planned to take place outdoors and the weather is poor. The coach will have to decide if conditions are safe.

#### Safeguarding

This is a vital area of responsibility that must be accepted by any sports coach, particularly a coach involved in coaching junior athletes or sports teams. Safeguarding is the process whereby coaches look after the health, wellbeing, safety and welfare of the athletes they are coaching. This will include ensuring that if they, and all other coaches and volunteers they work with, are coaching athletes or teams who are Under 18, they all have valid DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificates. This means that background checks have been carried out by a government agency on each person and that no factors, such as a criminal conviction, has come to light that should prevent the individual from being involved in junior sports coaching.

Many sports governing bodies now insist coaches having a valid DBS certificate and all clubs having a trained Safeguarding Officer.

