RULE OF TWO GUIDELINES

Purpose

To increase the safety and security of Thompson Junior Soccer Association (TJSA)'s participants including players, coaches, staff, and administration.

The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) is a call to action for sport organizations, parents/guardians, and coaches to enact responsible coaching across Canada – on and off the field. The three pillars of the RCM are: Background Screening, Ethics Training and Rule of Two. The Rule of Two helps to ensure participants and coaches benefit fully from sport participation.

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable, and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that a coach is never alone with an athlete. There may be exceptions for emergency situations. The Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches with an athlete in situations where the athlete is potentially vulnerable. One–on– one interactions between a coach and an athlete, without another individual present, must be avoided in all circumstances except medical emergencies.

Standards

The following standards have been developed for the Rule of Two.



Canada Soccer expects that all organizations will work toward the safest possible environment by having two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches always present with an athlete. If NCCP-trained or certified coaches are not available, a screened "Person in Authority" (such as managers, support personnel, chaperones, or director of the club or organization) should be present instead. If a screened Person in Authority or other volunteer is not available, another adult (such as a parent/guardian of another athlete in a youth environment or another athlete in a senior environment), should be asked to temporarily substitute. If another adult is not available, there should always be more than one athlete with the coach (this is the lowest standard and is not recommended).

Good Rule of Two Implementation Practices and Practical Tips

Clubs and teams can consider the following practical tips when working toward implementing the Rule of Two:

a. Take the Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge.

b. The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present.
c. Allow training environment to be open to observation.
d. Inform parents/guardians and players (particularly in a senior environment) that the club or team is aiming to achieve the highest expectation for the Rule of Two; that is, that two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches should always be present with an athlete
e. To hold the club or team accountable, share these guidelines with parents/guardians and players and ask them to help identify situations, and acknowledge instances, when the club or team was not following the Rule of Two **f.** If a participant rides in a coach's vehicle, another adult should be present (see Guidelines-Travel below).
g. Consider the gender identity of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches and volunteers who are present. For teams that only have coaches who do not share the same gender identity of some or all the athletes (i.e., for girls' and womens' teams with male coaches), ask a parent/guardian or other volunteer of the gender identity of the athletes to serve as a regular volunteer or 'bench parent/support' with the team (see Guidelines-Gender Identity below).
h. Recruit a Team Liaison or other individual to help find parents/guardians or volunteers to assist in situations where two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches may potentially not be present.
i. Ask parents or other individuals who volunteer with the team to participate in the organization's screening process and obtain a criminal record check.
j. Provide parents/guardians and other volunteers with information about the NCCP so that they can become NCCP-trained or certified coaches (even if they are not actively coaching the team).
k. Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents/guardians (see Applying the Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting below).
l. Follow the requirements described in Canada Soccer's Club Licensing Program, which requires all clubs to have: **i.** A Code of Conduct to Protect Children
ii. Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children
iii. A policy and procedure, provided to parents and Persons in Authority, that outlines what to do if inappropriate conduct is witnessed
m. Adopt a Discipline Policy that includes the appropriate processes for addressing misconduct and failures to follow these Rule of Two Guidelines

Guidelines

TJSA strongly recommends the following guidelines to ensure they are following the Rule of Two. In the guidelines below, a 'Person in Authority' is defined as an NCCP-trained or certified coach, a screened volunteer, or other adult. The organization is meeting the highest standard for the Rule of Two if the Person in Authority is always a screened and NCCP-trained or certified coach.

Travel

The following guidelines are strongly recommended during travel with athletes:

a. A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent/guardian
b. A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian
c. Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority

Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room

The following guidelines are strongly recommended for locker rooms, changing areas, and meeting rooms:

a. Interactions between a Person in Authority and an individual athlete should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, meeting room, washroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for all necessary interactions in any such room
b. Locker room or changing area should be supervised by two Persons in Authority of the same gender identity as the players whenever possible

c. If a second Person in Authority is not available, the Person in Authority supervising the locker room or changing area should never be alone with an individual athlete
d. If Persons in Authority are not present in the locker room or changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they should still be available outside the locker room or changing area and be able to enter the room or area if required; however, this would not be deemed to be a best practice

Training / Competition Environment

The following guidelines are strongly recommended for the training and competition environment (including before, during, and after practices and games):

a. A Person in Authority should never be alone with an athlete prior to or following a game or practice, unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian.
    a. If the athlete is the first athlete to arrive, the athlete's parent/guardian should remain until another athlete or Person in Authority arrives. If an athlete drives themselves, the athlete should wait for another athlete to arrive before going to the field
    b. If an athlete would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a game or practice, the Person in Authority should ask another Person in Authority (or a parent/guardian of another athlete or another athlete in a senior environment) to stay until all the athletes have been picked up. If an adult is not available, then another athlete should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a single athlete
b. Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual athlete should always be doing so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority

Gender Identity

A Person in Authority who is interacting with athletes should be of the same gender identity as the athletes. The following guidelines are strongly recommended:

a. For teams consisting of athletes of just one gender identity, a Person in Authority of the same gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction
b. For teams consisting of athletes of more than one gender identity (e.g., co-ed teams), a Person in Authority of each gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction

Applying the Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting

The Rule of Two should continue to apply to all minor athletes in virtual environments (additionally, for those athletes under age 16, a parent or guardian should be present during the session where possible). It is recommended that the Rule of Two be applied to non-minor athletes, as well, in the current circumstances.

Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting Implementation Practices and Practical Tips

a. For every session, the Rule of Two requires two adult coaches be present, or one coach and one adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator) – one-on-one sessions should be prohibited.
b. A clear statement of professional standards expected of the coach during calls should be communicated – (i.e., sessions are not social engagements, and should be focused on training/coaching).
c. Encourage parents/guardians to debrief with U-16 athletes about virtual training on a weekly basis.
d. Parents/guardians should be fully informed beforehand about the activities undertaken during the sessions, as well as the process of the virtual session.
e. It is recommended to record sessions where that capacity exists.
f. Communication during each session should be in an open and observable environment (i.e., avoid bedrooms) in the athlete's home (athlete's parents'/guardians' home), and the coach must initiate the session from an appropriate location (i.e., avoid bedrooms or "overly personal"/unprofessional settings).
g. Parents/guardians should be required to consent to virtual sessions prior to each session, if irregularly scheduled, or prior to the first session if there is a series of regularly scheduled sessions.
h. Prohibit one-on-one texting, emailing or online contact between coach and athlete – any texting, emailing or online contact should be limited to group text/email that includes at least 2 adults (2 coaches or 1 coach and 1 adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator), and limited to coaching (non-social) matters, and parents of minor athletes should be provided the opportunity to receive these texts/emails
    - Social media contact by coach to athlete should be prohibited (including the sharing of memes, non-training video, etc.)

Learn more: https://coach.ca/responsible-coaching-movement