

What is Risk Management?

Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association's risk management initiative is much more than background checks for coaches and volunteers.

The principal aim is to provide a reasonable level of safety and security for our 130,000 players while they are participating in soccer activities. In order to do this, ENYYSA will be providing awareness education to coaches, communicating information on field and player safety, and screening volunteers and coaches.

Recently, the background checks on coaches have been a major focus for ENYYSA. Coaches are now required to complete a Volunteer Disclosure Form (generally on-line), and this information is used to conduct a background check.

The results of the background check are reviewed at the state level. This assures that the ENYYSA policy is administered fairly and consistently across the state and that a coach's private information is kept confidential. The specific background check information is never shared with a league or club even if a coach is denied soccer privileges. In that case the league and club are simply informed of the suspension/denial for risk management concerns.

Because of the sensitive communication between the state and the coach, all notifications to the coach and all responses from the coach are to be in writing and sent to a private post office box.

The ENYYSA Risk Management Committee also asks that the individual coach not share information regarding their own personal situation with others. We have already had incidences of coaches sharing details even though ENYYSA maintains strict confidentiality.

Clearly the information requested on the Volunteer Disclosure Form is personal information. However, for ENYYSA to be able to conduct a background check that reasonably assures accuracy and completeness, this information is required.

It is important to note that while an individual coach may be asked to explain an issue in their background, it does not mean they will be denied soccer privileges. It simply means that the committee needs more information. ENYYSA is asking coaches to graciously cooperate and provide the information or explanation requested in a timely manner.

Generally, we want to make sure a coach does not have a criminal record of violence or of endangering the welfare of a minor. However, there is other conduct that could be relevant particularly when a coach is entrusted with the welfare of his/her players. ENYYSA has limited resources and does not have the capacity to do a high level of background investigation, but we are trying to eliminate persons who should not be supervising our children. Once a final decision is made, coaches may appeal the decision.

Knowing that ENYYSA conducts background checks should not offer a false sense of security. ***Common sense, reasonable precautions and parental involvement are as important, if not more important, than background checks. We encourage all our members to be active participants in risk management.***

ENYYSA will, to the best of our ability, continue to work to assure player safety.