



RULE OF TWO

interacting with children

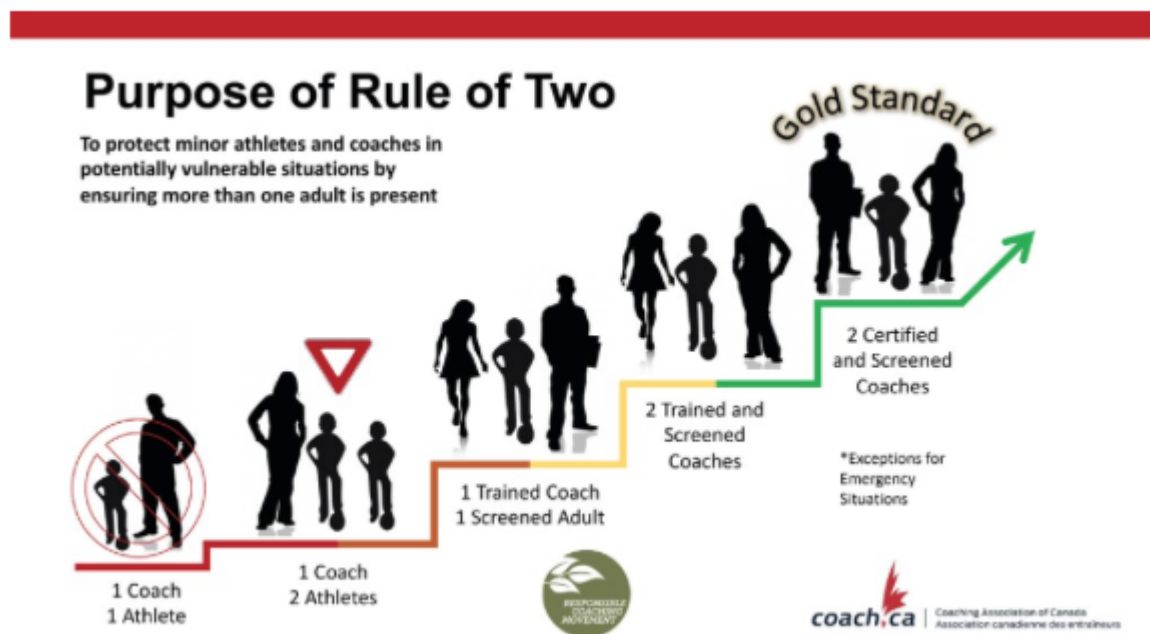


Introduction

The safety of players is a guiding principle at TSS. We strive to not only provide children with a safe place to play, but more importantly a feeling of safety when around team officials and members in general. Along with other safety measures already in place, TSS has adopted The Rule of Two, which states that there should be a minimum of two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches with an athlete in all situations where the athlete is potentially vulnerable. This is the “gold standard” of the rule which, whenever possible, TSS will adopt. Essentially, this means that any one-on-one interaction between a coach and a player must take place within earshot and view of a second coach. Private one-on-one interactions in non-visible areas between a coach and a player, without another coach present, must be avoided in all circumstances except medical emergencies.

The policies set forth in this document are designed to protect both players and coaches. They will help protect players by ensuring their interactions with TSS coaches are appropriate, safe, and monitored. They will help protect coaches by ensuring that interactions are monitored and visible in order to prevent or mitigate the possibility of inappropriate interactions, or the perception that an inappropriate interaction has taken place.

The Coaching Association of Canada has developed the following standards for the Rule of Two:



1. SECONDARY COACH

In addition to the primary coach being screened and certified, every team must have at least one screened secondary coach on staff with a minimum certification of "Soccer for Life." Whenever possible, that coach should be involved in all player interactions. For the policies listed below, that individual will be known as a "secondary coach."

2. GENDER IDENTITY

Of the two coaches for every team, one coach should be of the same gender identity as the players. Whenever possible, the coach of the same gender identity should be one of the coaches involved in all player interactions.

3. SAFE LOCATIONS

All interactions with individual players in order to convey feedback, instructions or other information are expected to take place in public visible places. No meetings or interactions should take place in closed rooms or any enclosed areas, including a vehicle. The only exceptions are when the parent is present or, in the case of players 16 or older, when a secondary coach is present of the same gender.

4. VEHICLE TRAVEL

Any motor vehicle travel involving youth players must include a secondary coach and must also have parental consent. Any exceptions to this policy will only be made with the written consent of the player's parent.

5. OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Any overnight soccer trips must include a secondary coach of the same gender (or, if not possible, at minimum a parent of the same gender taking on the role of chaperone).

6. PLAYER MEETINGS

All formal player meetings must be conducted with a parent present when the player is below the age of 16. If the player is 16 or older, a second coach must be present in those meetings if there is no parent present. As a general rule, it is preferable and recommended that a secondary coach be present at all player meetings even when the parent is present to ensure the communication is properly conveyed and corroborated.

7. CHANGE ROOMS/LOCKER ROOMS

Interactions between a coach and a player 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.

8. ON FIELD

A coach should never be alone with a player prior to or following a game or practice. If the player is the first athlete to arrive, the player's parent should remain until another player or secondary coach arrives. Similarly, if a player could potentially be alone with a coach following a game or practice, the coach should ask another coach or parent to stay until all the players have been picked up. If an adult is not available then another athlete should be present in order to avoid the coach being alone with a single player.

9. SIDELINE FEEDBACK

Not all feedback is provided in an official capacity in the form of a meeting. Coaching staff are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback in training and games. When a player is pulled aside privately for specific feedback or coaching, wherever possible, a secondary coach should be present as well. This practice helps to ensure consistency in the delivery of feedback and that interactions are not misunderstood or misconstrued, particularly if those interactions are of a sensitive nature. If the feedback is deemed very sensitive in nature, the coach is generally expected to deliver the feedback in a formal player meeting with the parent present.

10. ELECTRONIC MESSAGES

All electronic communications, including text messages, with individual players must include the player's parent when the player is under the age of 16. If the player is 16 or older, a secondary coach must always be included in those communications. Since TSS deliberately places more responsibility on its older players to communicate with coaches directly, it is important to all parties to observe the electronic communication policy.

Coaches may communicate with players electronically during the regular work day, including school hours. In such cases, TSS (and its coaches) do not expect players to respond to such communications during school hours. The expectation is that players will respond in a timely manner outside of school hours.

Acceptable forms of electronic communication include email, text, and forms of direct messaging including group chat software such as WhatsApp. A specific group chat can be created which includes the player, the primary coach, and the secondary coach. For players under the age of 16, email should be used rather than direct messaging and the parent must always be included.

11. PHONE CALLS

All phone calls with individual players must include the parent when the player is under the age of 16. The player or parent must confirm that the parent is present on the line, or able to participate by speakerphone at the commencement of the call. If the player is 16 or older, a second coach should be included in such phone calls, wherever possible, particularly if they involve a sensitive topic including constructive feedback.

Though ideal, TSS recognizes that it may not always be possible for a secondary coach to participate on such calls particularly in the event the player phones the coach directly. However, if the nature of the phone call is to address a sensitive topic or specific constructive feedback, the coach is generally expected to deliver the feedback in a formal player meeting with a parent or secondary coach present. In such cases, the coach should consider discontinuing the phone conversation and scheduling a formal player meeting.