

April 20, 2010

Dear Members, Coaches and Parents,

Over the last few weeks the sport of swimming has been the subject of many media stories, regarding **two civil suits in the United States** which are centered on coaching conduct and questions of inappropriate behavior.

The issues raised in these cases are not ones the CSCTA can ignore. Whether or not the specific claims are proven true is unrelated to the need to address the protection of our children on an ongoing basis; and to make our members and the public, both comfortable and aware of our current processes.

The CSCTA has a member screening process in place, and each member must re-apply for membership and go through the process at the beginning of each new coaching season

Additionally, the CSCTA continues to work directly with our legal advisors to ensure that our current screening processes guarantee that we are doing everything within our authority to properly screen our membership; or are improved upon to further enhance this mandate.

It is clear that this issue goes beyond just the CSCTA, the Provincial Sport Organizations, or Swimming Canada and that every one of us has a role to play going forward.

Here are some very important factors to consider:

- **The majority of offenders/potential offenders do not have criminal records at the time of their application or hiring.** The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that by the age of 18, one in four girls and one in six boys have been sexually molested. This tragic issue is as terrible as it is widespread, and that makes it incredibly important for all child-focused organizations including the CSCTA, to be proactive and ensure that their hiring practices are sound.
- **Parents have the most important role.** Parents need to talk with their children about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable physical contact between the child and their coach and other adults. Parents must also stress to their children the importance of telling them anytime there is inappropriate or questionable behavior by a coach or any other adult.
- **Sexual abuse must be reported to the police.** It is estimated that 30% of sexual abuse incidents go unreported. Everyone needs to understand that it is not only okay to report these incidents, but that reporting is the only way

that sexual predators can be brought to justice and prevented from harming others.

- **Child protection safeguards are both national and local.** The CSCTA provides a number of safeguards, but the most important application of safeguards must take place at the club level.

The CSCTA's current screening processes include:

- **Background Screening** – all member coaches must clear the CSCTA screening process that asks whether a coach has been dismissed, or has resigned, for reasons of ethical or moral misconduct; has ever been convicted for possession or trafficking of illegal drugs; disciplined by a sport body; or if they have ever been subject of a decision of a court that might reflect adversely on the profession of coaching or on the sport of swimming.
- **Code of Conduct** – The CSCTA enforces a thorough Code of Conduct that is applied to all members, which includes that members will avoid any behavior that abuses the power inherent in the coaching position to encourage inappropriate physical or emotional intimacy between the Member and swimmer. Such behavior will be construed as sexual misconduct under this Code and will represent an automatic violation. The Code also states that no Member will engage in a sexual relationship with a minor. Coaches and teachers of college- or university-aged swimmers will not engage in sexual relations with swimmers whom they coach, regardless of the swimmer's age.

The full CSCTA Code of Professional Conduct is available online at www.csc.ca.org.

- **Reporting of Complaints** – our Code of Conduct also details the procedures for reporting any possible Code of Conduct violations. Any complaints involving misconduct should be sent directly to my attention at:
 - Email to chris@cscta.org
 - Phone: (604) 317 5756
 - Mail: 519-4438 West 10th Ave, Vancouver BC V6R 4R8

Both members and non-members may file complaints directly to the CSCTA.

The CSCTA recommends the following with respect to Club hiring and termination processes:

- **Conduct Thorough Reference Checks** – Club Executive members should take the time to thoroughly check the personal and professional

background and previous employment experiences of coaches before they are hired. Employers should not rely on the CSCTA's membership screening in isolation of other measures; checking driving records and other police records are also important.

- **Importance of Reporting** – Sexual abuse is a criminal act and must be reported to the police. Reporting to the CSCTA is also important because we can then take action with regard to membership in our organization, and hopefully keep them from becoming involved with any other youth organizations.

Clubs are encouraged to inform the CSCTA, in writing, should they relieve a coach for any reason of Ethical or Moral misconduct. This will aid in our ongoing screening efforts of our members.

Should you have any questions about this please do not hesitate to contact Executive Director, Chris Hindmarch-Watson directly.

Sincerely,



Chris Hindmarch-Watson
Executive Director
CSCTA



Dr. Peter Vizolyi
VP Professional Practice, Governance and Ethics
CSCTA