



## **Coach Note: Addressing Abuse Starts with the Victim**

*April is Abuse Awareness Month. This month, the weekly coach notes will focus on issues pertaining to the recognition, prevention, and handling of incidences of child abuse in sports. This week's note will focus on addressing abuse in the proper channels-starting with the victim.*

You probably saw the Mike Rice tapes. If you haven't, they're worth a look, especially if you're in the mood to get angry. And if you are like most people, one of your first reactions was probably one of vitriolic disgust toward the former Rutgers coach who showed no respect for his players, his program, or the game of basketball. And rightly so. What Mike Rice did was wrong, and the fact that he has been using these tactics for as long as he has is a black mark on the institutions he has coached for as well as the state of college basketball as a whole.

Unfortunately, our knee-jerk reaction when we see an incident like this is to attack the offender. But what about the victims of these crimes? Did any of us want to know the name of player beamed in the head? Or learn about how a scholarship athlete reacted being belittled in the sport that he has grown to love? Probably not.

Luckily, Mike Rice attacked grown men. Does that make his actions right? NO. Were his actions physically and psychologically damaging? YES. But the damage he did to his



**April is  
Abuse Prevention  
Month  
On April 26,  
Play Like A  
Champion is hosting:**

### **An Abuse Awareness Symposium: "Championing Children through Collegiate Summer Camps"**

This inaugural symposium is designed to prepare collegiate athletic programs for hosting summer sports camps which are fun, safe and which promote character development.

The Symposium will enable attendees to train camp coaches and counselors in the legal, ethical and psychological dimensions of working with campers. Play Like A Champion staff along with experts in the fields of child advocacy law, social work, and child & adolescent development will lead this interactive symposium to equip athletic departments with the tools to train their staff. Attendees will learn proven techniques of developing character through camps, while building a safe, transparent, fun environment for all.

Read more on our website,  
<http://playlikeachampion.nd.edu/college/>

athletes was not nearly as detrimental as if he did it to children.

Whether we are talking about professional athletes or 8-year-olds, rarely are we more concerned with victims of crimes than we are with the perpetrators. We are proud to issue sanctions, levy repercussions, or cry for a dismissal, but we fall short in caring for those abused. As coaches, parents, and lovers of sports, let us always remember that victims of abuse deserve the most attention in cases of abuse. Perpetrators deserve their day in court, but unless you are in a position that can do something about them, focus your attention on victims.

- Listen to their story.
- Let them know they are loved.
- Let them know that they were not in the wrong.
- Assure them that this was not their fault.
- Be there for them on the long road to recovery.

In short, make a difference, and do it in the ways that you can best do that.