



## **Coach Note: Moving from Compliance to Ethics**

*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 the bigger picture of addressing abuse in sports.*

The Freeh Report brought to light the rotten underbelly of the power, corruption, and failings of Penn State University and its athletic department. Inflated by its power to generate revenue and to attract visitors and scholars, the success of the Penn State football program trumped the well-being of dozens of young boys. In reaction, the NCAA issued sanctions, and Louis Freeh was commissioned to complete an investigation into the allegations. The investigation yielded blame and recommendations for moving forward.

The recommendations put forth by the Freeh Report, and the regulations of any league, organization, or community are important. But they are only part of the solution to prevent child abuse. If organizations hold these recommendations or any other rules as a standard for behavior, they will be failing children. Compliance falls miles short of creating an environment that is actually beneficial for a child's development. Compliance with rules should simply be a checkpoint that an organization is on the right path; it should not be a guide or framework around which you coach, mentor, or administer.

Rules and regulations rarely reflect whether or



### **April is Abuse Prevention Month**

On April 26,  
Play Like A  
Champion hosted:

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

The symposium educated leaders collegiate athletic departments around the country on the vital role they play in ensuring kids have safe and positive experiences at sports camps.

Read the full story on our [website!](#)

not a sports organization is developing happy and healthy children. They may provide a structure for a baseline of safety and accountability, but it says nothing about Champion Coaching. Champion Coaching requires coaches and administrators to go beyond compliance, and to create an ethical, developmental culture in sports. Champion coaching follows the Play Like a Champion Today GROW model:

**GOALS**-Coaches, with their athletes should set physical, mental, and moral goals for individuals and teams.

**RELATIONSHIPS**-Coaches must encourage healthy, supportive relationships on a team, and treat team dynamics with the same importance as teaching a specific skill.

**OWNERSHIP**-Coaches must realize that sports belong to athletes, and they deserve a say in team decisions. They will work harder, and gain more when they feel ownership of the experience.

**WINNING**-When Coaches ensure that goals are set, relationships are cultivated, and ownership is shared, this will take care of itself.

A coaching philosophy based on the GROW model, dedicated to the holistic development will naturally satisfy compliance with rules. A coaching philosophy that holds compliance as the gold standard will fall short because it will only serve the rules, and not serve children.