



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AMATEUR ATHLETIC UNION FROM THE YOUTH PROTECTION AND ADULT/VOLUNTEER SCREENING TASK FORCES

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Executive Summary

Recent allegations of child sexual abuse by trusted coaches, teachers and mentors at some of the nation's leading schools and universities – including allegations about a former member of AAU's top leadership -- have heightened public awareness of the need for greater vigilance over our youth to protect them from the scourge of sexual abuse at the hands of trusted adults.

While children are often taught about "stranger danger," the fact is that 90% or more of child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of a person who is known and trusted by the child and his or her family – *not* a stranger. It is this insidious and pervasive child abuse threat that needs more attention from every member of society and every institution that serves children and youth to better protect children from being victimized in this tragic and criminal way.

Unfortunately, those who have endured sexual abuse often feel shame and are too stigmatized or traumatized to report their attacker or to seek help for their emotional or physical injuries. Removing this stigma is an integral part of preventing, responding to and eradicating this form of child abuse.

All youth-serving organizations have one characteristic in common: they inherently provide an opportunity for access to children. For this reason, all such organizations have a unique and heightened responsibility to implement every appropriate and reasonable safeguard available to prevent such access to child predators – and always to swiftly respond to reported incidents, allegations and evidence of such abuse.

In December, 2011, shortly after President Louis Stout assumed the helm of the AAU, he announced that AAU child protection policies needed to be changed to more effectively address the threat of child sexual abuse against youth today – and to better screen adults who seek to participate in AAU programs and events. In response, the AAU reached out to some of the best and most credible experts in child protection and law enforcement for recommendations to establish new, updated and improved youth protection standards for everyone participating in AAU sports.

The AAU has made a fundamental commitment to the youth it serves to make child protection an even more integral part of the AAU culture and mission. The AAU appointed two national task forces to review AAU's operations regarding child protection and adult screening – and to develop recommendations for changes to AAU policies, procedures, training and education to enhance youth protection efforts within AAU programs.

Serving on the Youth Protection Task Force: Chris Newlin, Executive Director of the National Children's Advocacy Center; Lauren Book, child sexual abuse survivor and advocate and founder of the Lauren's Kids Foundation; and Ron Book, President of the Lauren's Kids Foundation and an expert in government affairs and administrative law. Serving on the Adult/Volunteer Screening Task Force: Tim Moore, former Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and Dr. James D. Sewell, retired from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Kim Ervin Tucker,

an AV rated lawyer who has worked in public service for most of her career, coordinated the task forces and assisted in researching and drafting this report.

The groups looked broadly at AAU's programs, procedures and policies, meeting with AAU leadership and staff and reviewing existing protocols. The task force members also consulted with other youth-serving organizations to determine trends and best practices and reviewed relevant laws and resources available to assist in identifying individuals who might pose a threat to children.

Based on this comprehensive work, the task forces made a series of recommendations, described in detail in this report, that fall into several main categories:

CULTURE

- **The AAU should establish and foster a culture that clearly and explicitly makes child protection an overarching value and priority.** All adult volunteers, staff, youth participants, and parents should understand and adhere to this culture through overt training, education, communication and reinforcement. This includes encouragement and requirement to report suspected abuse, questionable behavior or violations of safety policies.

PROTOCOLS

- **The AAU should adopt clear policies, procedures and protocols to protect children from abuse and exploitation to the fullest extent possible.** These include policies relating to individual adults not being alone with children, and provisions for privacy, and other protocols that help to eliminate the opportunity for abuse. In addition to guarding against sexual abuse, these policies will help reduce other damaging behaviors, such as bullying or hazing.

SCREENING

- **The AAU should implement significant screening procedures for all adults who participate in AAU activities to help identify and exclude individuals who may pose a threat to youth participants.** We recognize that fingerprint-based screening is the "gold standard," but it is not allowed in every state. Clubs should certify that they have conducted the highest level of screening allowed under state law. At a minimum, districts should conduct name-based screening annually that includes criminal history and sex offender registry checks.

PARTICIPATION

- **Participation in AAU activities is a privilege, not a right.** Anyone who is prohibited from participating in a youth-serving organization or who violates the AAU's child protection

Code of Conduct and policies can be barred from participating in AAU, even if they have not been convicted of a crime. The AAU's Board of Review will have the final say on determinations of eligibility to participate in AAU programs.

TRAINING

- **The AAU should educate staff, adult volunteers, parents and guardians, and youth participants in safety protocols, appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors, recognition of abuse, strategies to avoid abuse, reporting requirements and other information they need to keep children participating in AAU activities safe.** Training should be comprehensive, should be offered continuously and updated regularly, and should be made widely accessible, including through the AAU's website.

REPORTING

- **All AAU volunteers and staff will be considered mandatory reporters and will be expected to report suspected child abuse to appropriate law enforcement authorities and child abuse hotlines.** In addition, inappropriate behavior and violations of AAU guidelines and protocols are to be reported internally to AAU leadership according to clear protocols.

The goal of the recommendations provided by the task forces is to establish a foundation of protection for AAU participants that can serve as a model for all youth-serving organizations in the future. These recommendations reflect established standards from other youth-serving organizations that have been successful in implementing comprehensive youth protection programs.

The AAU performs a vital mission: Building character and self-esteem in a half million young people per year through the work of tens of thousands of concerned adults who sacrifice their own time to make a difference. These recommendations are intended to preserve and support that important mission and the great institution that is the AAU, while making sure children are protected from those who would abuse or exploit them. These measures, while aimed at protecting youth, also serve to better protect thousands of adult coaches and volunteers. The members of the task forces commend the AAU for initiating this independent review, opening up its processes for external scrutiny, and embracing change for the purpose of better protecting the young athletes it serves.

About the AAU

The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) is one of the largest non-profit, volunteer sports organizations in the United States. A multi-sport organization, the AAU is dedicated exclusively to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs. The AAU was founded in 1888 to establish standards and uniformity in amateur sports. During its early years, the AAU served as a leader in international sports, representing the U.S. in international sports federations. The AAU worked closely with the Olympic movement to prepare athletes for the Olympic games. After

passage of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, creating the U.S. Olympic Committee, the AAU's mission changed and, since that time, it has focused its efforts on providing healthy sports programs for participants of all ages, beginning at the grassroots level. The AAU's philosophy of "Sports for All, Forever," is shared by more than 500,000 youth participants and more than 50,000 adult volunteers annually. The AAU is divided into 56 distinct Districts. These Districts annually sanction more than 34 sports programs, 250 national championships and 30,000 age-division events.

I. CULTURE

GOAL: *Create a culture that makes it clear that child safety is an overarching priority, clearly defining what behaviors are appropriate and expected, and supporting swift reporting of any inappropriate behavior or violation of safety protocols.*

Recommendations: *Strengthen AAU's existing commitment to child abuse prevention in its Constitution, Vision, Mission, and Values; establish advisory councils; and ensure regular focus on child abuse prevention issues in AAU meetings, events, communications and training.*

Keeping children safe from abuse begins by creating an organization-wide culture that focuses attention on child protection as an active, ongoing activity and priority. To make child protection a fundamental part of the AAU's culture, this commitment must be stated clearly, overtly and consistently, utilizing all the organization's communication mechanisms, and repeated often. All AAU activities should be viewed through a lens of child protection, recognizing that individuals who would exploit children will seek to leverage participation in youth-serving organizations to gain access to children.

All adults, youth leaders, parents and youth athletes participating in the AAU programs have a role and responsibility to protect children and youth from abuse in any form. To that end, everyone should be vigilant to **recognize** situations that place youth athletes or other children at risk of being molested; **resist** unwanted and inappropriate attention; and **respond to and report** attempted or actual molestations or violations of the AAU code of conduct to authority figures – either law enforcement, a trusted adult or parent, and the AAU leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adopt a formal and clear, concise set of guiding principles for the protection of the children and youth in the care of its sanctioned clubs, and codify them in the AAU's Constitution, By-Laws or other appropriate place in its governing code. A suggested guiding principles document is included as Attachment I.
2. Review and revise the AAU's Vision, Mission and Values statements to make clear the importance of the safety and well-being of children and youth in the AAU's programs and to reflect that the AAU places a priority on child protection as an integral part of its mission.
3. Create a Youth Protection Committee and Youth Advisory Council within the AAU's organizational structure to reflect that youth protection is an important and integral part of every AAU program and sport and to ensure that youth protection policies are constantly and consistently reviewed and updated as the nature of threats to youth evolve.

4. Convene meetings with AAU staff, leadership and volunteers to achieve input on implementation of the AAU's youth protection efforts at every level of the organization to support the culture change AAU is seeking.

II. PROTOCOLS

GOAL: Ensure the safety of youth in their interactions with employees and volunteers and with each other.

Recommendation: Adopt clear guidelines and protocols to minimize the opportunity for child sexual abuse and to help staff, volunteers and parents to recognize inappropriate or undesirable behavior.

The AAU is committed to ensuring that its guidelines and programs provide children and youth with appropriate game rules and conduct to be safe on the field of competition and appropriate youth protection rules to remain safe off the field of competition.

To achieve this goal, the Youth Protection Task Force recommends that the AAU guidelines include specific mention of appropriate verbal and physical behavior on and off the field by participants in AAU activities. The guidelines should address what type of actions would be inappropriate for an employee/volunteer to do, including a prohibition on sexualized comments, certain types of physical interactions, and exposure of youth to certain stimuli (e.g., pornography or highly sexualized content). Further, the guidelines should make specific mention of certain activities that are strictly forbidden, such as hazing, bathing assistance, youth and any non-parent or caregiver volunteer sharing a bed, and one-on-one contact or inappropriate private interaction between any adult and a youth athlete.

The guidelines should provide a standard for the appropriate ratio of employees/volunteers to youth, which may vary based on the age/developmental level of the youth involved and location of the interactions. *One-on-one interactions between adults and youth must only occur within sight of other adults and youth athletes. Whenever feasible, two adults should be present or, at a minimum, conversations should be held in full view of other adults.* This practice protects both the youth athlete from abuse and the adults with whom they interact from false accusations.

In addition to rules and practices regarding the conduct of AAU employees, members and volunteers, there is a need to develop policies to limit the opportunity for any youth participants to potentially harm other youth participants. Youth-on-youth abuse can include verbal, physical and sexual abuse, on and off the field, and may include in-person or electronic means. This is most likely an issue when sharing dressing rooms and facilities, but also extends beyond child abuse to include issues such as bullying in all forms - both physical and electronic.

AAU activities should be held in settings with good visibility, which will allow for open monitoring by others. Specifically, there should be a “no closed door” policy for AAU activities.

There should be clear policies and procedures for reducing risk of sexual abuse during toileting, showering, and changing clothes. The AAU should strongly consider these issues during the selection of potential sites for AAU functions. Once a site is selected, the AAU should post this policy in plain view for all participants, volunteers, caregivers, and attendees.

Given the nature of many AAU activities, clear policies regarding travel and supervision must be adopted, and there should be open dialogue about the inherent risks if a youth is traveling with a coach. The Youth Protection Task Force recommends that all AAU-related travel have more than one adult present, as the risk and appearance of risk are dramatically heightened in any one-on-one interaction.

In addition to travel for AAU competitions, AAU policies should address the role and limitations of employees and volunteers in providing local transportation to youth participants. If AAU staff or volunteers will be providing this transportation, the youth's parent or guardian must have signed a consent form (developed by the AAU). No consent form is necessary if the child travels with his or her own parent. However, should that parent be providing transportation for his or her child's teammates, those teammates would need to have signed consent forms. Even with permission to transport from a parent or guardian, there should be no one-on-one contact between AAU adults and youth athletes, whether during coaching, counseling, transportation, out-of-town travel, overnight sleeping, showering, changing or using a restroom.

SPECIFIC CODE OF CONDUCT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Two-deep leadership is required at all times.** Two adults must be present at all times during AAU sponsored programs and events, as well as training.
2. **Secluded, one-on-one contact between adults and youth athletes is prohibited.** In situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth. There are no exceptions to this rule, including for purposes of transportation of a youth athlete to or from an event or training activity or at any other free time.
3. **Youth leaders must be monitored and supervised by adult leaders, and youth must demonstrate appropriate maturity to be chosen as youth leaders.** Youth volunteers working with athletes must be appropriately trained and supervised by adults at all times.
4. **Respect the privacy of youth athletes and yourself.** Adult and youth leaders must respect the privacy of youth athletes in situations such as changing clothes and showering, intruding only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults and youth coaches, staff and volunteers must similarly protect their own privacy in similar situations. Adults and youth coaches, staff and volunteers are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with youth athletes.
5. **Respect the dignity of youth athletes.** Adult and youth coaches and volunteers will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Adult and youth

coaches and volunteers will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.

6. **Physical contact should only be in the presence of other adults and children and must be appropriate to the situation.** Educate coaches and volunteers about appropriate vs. inappropriate “touches,” respecting privacy and honoring an athlete’s right to establish personal physical boundaries.
7. **Separate accommodations for adults and youth athletes are strongly recommended.** To the extent possible, youth athletes should not sleep in the room of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian. If these arrangements are not feasible due to mandates by the venue or host organization, then traveling AAU teams and coaches should ensure that adults and youth are assigned to rooms and beds in a manner that best protects both the youth and the adults. Consider the use of rollaway beds, adjoining rooms, or strategically placing parents with their own children and additional team members to ensure that personal space and privacy are respected and protected. Separate shower and toilet facilities should be available for youth and adults and males and females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for youth and adults and males and females should be scheduled and posted for showers and toilets.
8. **Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited.** While most adults and youth involved in AAU programs use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, the pervasiveness of cell phones with cameras has made it very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in showers, dressing rooms, restrooms and other areas where privacy is expected by participants and privacy must be provided and protected.
9. **The possession of sexually oriented materials is prohibited.** AAU coaches, staff, volunteers and youth athletes are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of youth athletes.
10. **The use of the internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials is prohibited.** AAU coaches, staff and volunteers are prohibited from using the internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials in the presence of youth athletes.
11. **No secret organizations are permitted.** The AAU does not allow any secret organizations as part of its programs. All aspects of AAU programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.
12. **Hazing will not be tolerated.** Physical or emotional hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any AAU activity.

13. **Bullying will not be tolerated.** Verbal, physical and cyber bullying are prohibited by the AAU and not permitted by any adults or youth athletes participating in AAU programs.
14. **Discipline must be constructive and never imposed one-on-one.** Discipline of youth athletes should be constructive and reflect leadership and good sportsmanship. Two-deep leadership and avoiding one-on-one contact are most important if and when discipline is to be administered. AAU coaches, staff and volunteers are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of youth athletes. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may be used only to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth athlete or others.
15. **Display and expect an attitude of respect, dignity and safety.** AAU coaches, staff, volunteers and youth athletes are expected to reflect respect, sportsmanship and partnership in providing for the safety and dignity of every individual.

III. SCREENING

GOAL: To screen out individuals who have sexually abused children or youth or who pose a risk of abusing children or youth from staff or volunteer positions with the AAU.

Recommendation: Require background screening of AAU staff and of AAU volunteers at the Club level.

Issue: Background Screening

The national leadership of the Amateur Athletic Association, including its elected officers, its Congress, and its professional staff, plays a vital role in defining the expectations of its coaches, volunteers, youth athletes and their parents and caregivers. This is particularly true in ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and youth who are entrusted to the AAU's care through participation in AAU programs. The national officers and the AAU's governing body have made clear their commitment to establishing and maintaining a culture that promotes the safety and security of children and youth and reinforces the highest levels of ethical conduct.

To date, the AAU has not required mandatory background screening of all coaches and volunteers participating in AAU programs. Complicating adoption of an AAU system-wide screening program is the fact that many youth participants in amateur sports – and the adults who coach or volunteer in those programs – are part of local programs operated by other groups (cities/counties, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.), and the AAU has no authority over those programs. But in improving and strengthening its own culture, the AAU is motivated to adopt a uniform new adult screening requirement for any coaches and adults from any program that brings its athletes and adults to AAU programs and events.

Changing legal requirements at the state level -- mandatory screening requirements in some states -- demand a more pro-active policy by the AAU. Since AAU events are hosted in multiple states, a universal screening program will ensure compliance with all state laws.

The use of background screening has increasingly become the standard and customary practice in youth-servicing organizations, whether those organizations are in the business of providing care to children and youth, or are involved with athletic and recreational activities for children and youth. As noted in "*Who's Lending a Hand? A National Survey of Nonprofit Screening Practices*," a 2008 report by the National Center for Victims of Crime, such background screening efforts include contact with previous employers, credit history reviews, contact with child protective services, a review of national or State sex offender registries, and criminal history checks. The latter may be either based on an applicant's name and other identifying information or, the more effective alternative, a fingerprint-based check.

Federal and state laws govern the ability of non-governmental agencies to access such criminal history information. The major obstacles to requiring *fingerprint-based* background screening are legal access to the information and cost. In light of these impediments, many organizations utilize

a *name-based* approach. The AAU should review the various reputable, reliable, and professional vendors throughout the nation that offer these services to find screening services that are appropriate for use by the AAU.

The AAU currently uses IntelliCorp for the limited number of background checks that it performs at the national level. Additionally, the National Center on Youth Sports (NCYS), of which AAU is a member, utilizes the CheckItTwice system of the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) to conduct background screening for its member agencies when requested to do so. The USOC conducts its background screenings through the NCSI.

It should be noted, however, that fingerprint-based screening which provides a comprehensive state and federal criminal history check remains the “gold standard” and should be employed, if possible, to screen those individuals with the greatest access to children and youth. This is particularly the case in the screening of adults who work in the closest proximity to children and youth or who travel with AAU teams. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is reducing the cost of electronically submitted fingerprints, and, in many states, the costs for volunteers, especially those working with children, have been reduced. However, fingerprint-screening currently is not permitted in all states. It should be AAU’s objective that clubs make use of the most comprehensive screening allowed by their state laws. At a minimum, it is recommended that clubs be required to ensure all coaches have a name-based screening that is updated annually and must certify that they have complied with the highest level of screening allowed in their state.

In evaluating the need to do background checks, the AAU’s national leadership must consider all applicable federal and state laws relating to the protection of children and youth that apply to the AAU and its members, including State-by-State screening mandates. Because AAU sporting events are staged in multiple States with varying laws, the AAU must ensure its policies and practices comply with the requirements of each State.

For example, as of July 1, 2010, Section 943.0438 of the Florida Statutes, imposed stringent background screening requirements on “independent sanctioning authorities” defined as: all private, nongovernmental entities that organize, operate, or coordinate a youth athletic team in Florida, if the team includes one or more minors and is not affiliated with a private school as defined in section 1002.1, Fla.Stat. Under this law, independent sanctioning authorities, such as the AAU are directed as follows:

- *must conduct a background screening of each current and prospective athletic coach annually; and*
- *no person shall be authorized by the independent sanctioning authority to act as an athletic coach after July 1, 2010, unless a background screening has been conducted and did not result in disqualification under the provisions of this law.*

For purposes of this law, a background screening shall be conducted with a search of the athletic coach’s name or other identifying information against state and federal registries of sexual predators and sexual offenders, which are available to the public on internet sites provided by:

- a. The Department of Law Enforcement under section 943.043, Fla. Stat.; and
- b. The Attorney General of the United States under 42 U.S.C. § 16920.

The task forces recommend that this Florida law be used as the model and foundation for AAU background screening policies and practices, since this is the standard under which the AAU operates within its home state.

Because of the large number of people affiliated with the AAU who will have to undergo background screening to meet this standard, this report recommends that the responsibility for conducting these screenings rest at the district level under the leadership of the District Governors, pursuant to standards established at the national level and subject to random verification by national staff. It is, however, appropriate for the national leadership to lead the way by subscribing to the most stringent level of background screening (finger-print based screening) *for themselves*.

Further, the task forces believe that through partnering with other youth-servicing entities, including the Boy Scouts of America and NCSI, these background screenings could be accomplished at a reasonable cost. To be clear, this imperative is not about what it costs – but rather about what it saves: enhancing the protection of children from potential abuse. Funding for these screenings could be pursued from sponsors dedicated to providing specific support to the AAU’s child protection initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Mandate that all adult applicants being considered for a staff or volunteer position within AAU programs or events successfully undergo background screening, including criminal history and sex offender registry checks.
2. Adopt a clear list of prior offenses or conduct, which, if discovered during background screening, would disqualify any adult from working within AAU programs and events with youth athletes.
3. Work with other key groups to cooperatively develop a national database of individuals who have been disqualified from participation in AAU activities and explore a working relationship with other youth-servicing organizations to share access to their respective “disqualified individual” databases.
4. Establish a fair appeals process, with proper guidelines and oversight for any applicant whose application for AAU membership has been rejected.
5. Maintain an updated and evolving digest of those federal and State laws governing the protection of children and youth that apply to AAU programs, its coaches, athletes or

volunteers. This repository should include the types of background screening checks authorized by each state and should be posted on the AAU's website so it is easily accessible to all members and parents/guardians.

6. Develop and promulgate a list of approved vendors, such as the National Center for Safety Initiatives or IntelliCorp, for performing background screening on behalf of AAU clubs, particularly when clubs are not legally able to access fingerprint-based screening.
7. Require all AAU National Officers and professional staff to complete a fingerprint-based background screening process before assuming office.

Issue: Club Applications

The AAU functions on behalf of 15,000 athletic clubs representing 500,000 youth athletes and tens of thousands of coaches and adult volunteers throughout the United States and its territories. For an organization this large and geographically dispersed, it is critical that the local organized element—the individual clubs—take a strong leadership role in dealing with this issue. As part of the process for approval of initial and renewing club applications, it is necessary and appropriate that each club certify by notarized statements that it has fulfilled certain basic activities for the protection of its youth athletes.

While each district should screen every adult, i.e., coach, athlete, team manager, or volunteer involved in AAU activities through both criminal history databases and sexual offender/predator registries, certain individuals should receive further screening based on the nature of their involvement. For example, persons who handle club or AAU funds should be vetted through previous employers and a credit check, and persons who transport AAU youth should be licensed drivers with a good driving record and proper insurance on their vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. As part of the application process, each applying club should certify that it has complied with applicable State laws regulating/requiring background screening of adults working with children.
2. As part of the application process, each applying club should certify that it has screened each individual adult through the Federal Sex Offender/Sex Predator website provided by the Attorney General of the United States under 42 U.S.C. 16920 (National Sex Offender Public Website).
3. As part of the application process, each applying club should certify that it has conducted the most comprehensive level of screening allowed under the laws of its State on adults involved in its programs.
4. In states where fingerprint background screening is allowed, each applying club should

certify that it has conducted such screening.

5. Absent state laws allowing fingerprint-based background screening, each applying club should certify that it has completed, at a minimum, name/social security based screening through the National Center for Safety Initiatives or other private agencies entities approved by the National Leadership of AAU.
6. Each applying club should certify that it has implemented an approved awareness/education program targeting coaches, adult volunteers, parents and caregivers, and child and youth athletes.
7. AAU National Leadership, through its professional staff, should implement a program of random verification of background screening results to ensure compliance with these recommendations.
8. Once these recommendations are finally adopted, the AAU National Leadership should codify them in its By-Laws or other appropriate place in its governing code and post these online on the AAU website.

Issue: Unattached Adults

In some sports, such as gymnastics, wrestling, and hockey, coaches and athletes may not be affiliated with organized clubs. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 adults may fall within this category of “unattached.” In spite of the size of this population, background screening on all adults affiliated with these sports programs still should be required and conducted.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The National AAU staff should develop a process for ensuring that each “unattached” adult is vetted through the most comprehensive level of screening allowed under the laws of that individual’s state before he/she participates in AAU-sanctioned events. Absent state requirements allowing fingerprint-based background screening, the process must ensure that such individuals have completed, at a minimum, name/social security based screening through the National Center for Safety Initiatives or other private agencies approved by the National Leadership of the AAU.

Issue: Supplemental Screening Instruments

The majority of professional misconduct, child endangerment and sexual abuse committed in this country go unreported. As a result, regardless of its comprehensive nature, background screening will not identify all individuals with a propensity toward child sexual abuse, especially if the behavior has not resulted in a sanction by the criminal justice system. A scientifically validated screening instrument can be used to supplement the results of such screening and identify

individuals who have a poor understanding of adult/child boundaries or a probability of having abused a child in the past (although the abuse was not reported). During the course of this review, task force members and AAU staff had the opportunity to review the “Diana Screen” as such an instrument that may be able to further identify and screen out those individuals posing a threat to children.

The Diana Screen is being employed by a growing number of youth-serving organizations as a supplement to criminal background checks, which are inherently limited in their scope and predictive usefulness. The task forces strongly advocate that the AAU consider adoption of a psychological screening tool such as this, at least as a pilot program, to determine if this would be an appropriate screening tool for the AAU to use nationwide, as an element of its comprehensive child protection program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The AAU should have a presentation made to its leadership and governing body members on the Diana Screen at one of its upcoming conferences to determine if the Diana Screen would be a useful tool for screening adults seeking access to children and youth through AAU programs.
2. If determined to be an appropriate tool to consider for use to screen potential coaches and volunteers, the AAU should pilot test the Diana Screen or other similar screening instruments to assess their effectiveness, utility and cost-effectiveness.
3. If the pilot program yields positive benefits, the AAU should adopt the Diana Screen (or another similar supplemental screening tool) for general use in all AAU sports, in all States.

IV. PARTICIPATION

Goal: Prohibit participation in any AAU activity by any individual who may pose a risk to youth safety.

Recommendation: Make clear that the AAU reserves the right to exercise its authority to prevent or preclude from participation in AAU activities any individuals who fail any background screening measure, are prohibited from participating in any other youth-serving organization, engage in unacceptable behavior or violate an AAU safety protocol.

Participation in any AAU program is a privilege, not a right. Accordingly, participation in the AAU can be denied whenever such participation would not be in the best interests of the AAU or the children and youth that the AAU serves.

A violation of the AAU's Youth Protection Code of Conduct is adequate grounds to terminate someone from further participation in AAU programs and deny someone further access to the youth athletes in AAU programs. A criminal conviction is NOT required before someone can be terminated from participation in AAU activities and access to the youth the AAU serves. Being terminated from another youth-serving organization (e.g., getting on the Boy Scouts of America's ineligible list), criminal investigation, or criminal charges that fail to lead to conviction still are sufficient red flag events to terminate a person's access to youth athletes involved in AAU programs. Persons who are determined to be ineligible can have an opportunity to challenge that determination through an appeals process; but, unless successful in that appeal, the person shall have no right to participate in AAU programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The AAU Youth Protection policy should make clear that violation of any provision of the AAU Youth Protection Code of Conduct is sufficient to deny participation in AAU programs. Criminal investigations, charges or convictions by a court are not needed to keep an adult from participating as a coach or volunteer in AAU programs. A determination of ineligibility to have access to youth by another youth-serving organization (e.g., being on the ineligible list compiled by the Boy Scouts of America) is sufficient grounds to render the person ineligible to participate in AAU programs should AAU make that determination. The AAU Board of Review shall always have the final word on determining who is eligible to participate in AAU programs.
2. All AAU employees and volunteers should be required to submit to updated background checks and face termination from eligibility for participation in AAU programs if reported for violation of any element of the Youth Protection code of conduct, until and unless cleared of such allegations through the AAU appeals process. The AAU Board of Review will have the final say on such eligibility determinations. Similarly, all employees and volunteers must immediately notify the AAU if they are the

focus of any criminal justice investigation. The AAU should obtain the official police report in any case involving an AAU employee or volunteer.

3. Incorporate a requirement into the AAU handbook, policies and procedures that club or district leadership immediately notify the National AAU Office of any criminal or civil charges or written allegations or other reports alleging sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior filed against an AAU member and that policy mandate an appropriate course of action (including suspension from AAU programs) pending resolution of such charges or allegations.

V. TRAINING

GOAL: Promote a culture of child protection through awareness of, and compliance with, AAU safety protocols.

Recommendations: Develop and implement an ongoing organization-wide training program on youth protection and the AAU safety procedures to support youth safety for all employees, volunteers, youth participants and athletes, parents and caregivers.

Training may best be achieved by production of some simple and informative materials that may include videos, workshops, online tools and conferences. This training plan should be reviewed and updated regularly by the AAU's Youth Protection Committee so it remains timely and effective. There should be goals and timeframes set for priority training initiatives. Additionally, youth protection content should be included in every AAU training program in the future – further highlighting the AAU Leadership's commitment to this issue. The training provided to the various AAU constituents should be seamlessly integrated, ongoing, and internally consistent. The AAU should seek to partner with child maltreatment experts at both national and local levels to ensure the training content and delivery are consistent with current practices and knowledge in the field, as well as effectively using changing technology. Child predators will continue to evolve their methods for grooming and preying on children as technology evolves; so, too, must the response of a youth-serving organization.

All AAU employees and volunteers (including all board members and leadership) shall have minimum required levels of training on youth protection, and records of this training should be maintained in their files. Failure to comply with mandated youth protection training should result in immediate suspension from the AAU and all AAU activities; there should be no exceptions to this policy.

The AAU would benefit from having a youth protection expert available to respond to individual concerns from the vast AAU network, provide meaningful staff support to the Youth Protection Committee, and maintain all records of training and reports related to youth protection. To maximize the likelihood of attention and importance, the AAU should also consider utilizing highly recognizable past AAU participants (possibly Sullivan Award recipients) in this training.

One model approach to child protection training developed by the Boy Scouts of America uses the "Three Rs" as its foundation:

- Recognize
- Resist
- Report

The Three Rs provide an appropriate foundation for the AAU to build its own Youth Protection Code of Conduct and the educational and training programs required for coaches, staff,

volunteers, parent and youth athletes to reinforce the culture of awareness and protection that the AAU is creating.

Staff, Coaches and Volunteers

All employees and volunteers should complete youth protection training without exception. For new employees and volunteers, a structured training (likely an online training) should be completed before the individual may begin official duties. This training should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The definition of different types of child maltreatment;
- Prevalence of child maltreatment in the United States;
- Risk and protective factors for victimization and perpetration;
- Common myths about child maltreatment;
- The requirements of the AAU Code of Conduct including the mandatory reporting requirement;
- All AAU Policies and Procedures related to Youth Protection, especially highlighting reporting requirements, handling disclosures, and personal conduct for employees and volunteers;
- Case scenarios to have employees and staff identify higher risk situations vs. appropriate interactions between youth and employees/volunteers
- Immunity for reports made in good faith and for cause; and
- Support available from the AAU regarding any valid youth protection issue

Parents and Caregivers

There are two primary purposes for training parents and caregivers: general education about child maltreatment and information about the AAU's youth protection policies and procedures. It is likely this training will be most easily accessible via an online training format, but brochures, videos and registration forms should also reference this important content.

Consistent with the training for AAU employees and volunteers, the parent and caregiver training should be delivered in the context of supporting healthy development and include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- The definition of different types of child maltreatment;
- Prevalence of child maltreatment in the United States;
- Common myths about child maltreatment;
- Warning signs for sexually inappropriate behavior;
- The requirements of the AAU Code of Conduct including the mandatory reporting responsibility;

- How to talk with their child about sexuality and youth protection, focusing on what to do if they are concerned for their safety or the safety of others and emphasizing they will not be in trouble for communicating about this;
- The caregiver's responsibility if he/she suspects child maltreatment and how to report this within the AAU context. Also, caregivers should be encouraged to contact law enforcement or child protective services immediately if they suspect child maltreatment; and
- A list of resources available outside of the AAU.

Youth/Child Athletes

Youth protection training targeted toward child and youth participants and athletes should be age appropriate. An online training with a corresponding caregiver section may be most useful in fostering an open dialogue about these issues, but there should also be direct communication about these issues from AAU volunteers to the athletes on their teams. Topics that must be addressed in the training include, but are not limited to:

- Warning signs for inappropriate behavior;
- The requirements of the AAU Code of Conduct;
- The importance of reporting suspected child maltreatment or inappropriate conduct;
- The importance of telling youth that they should report any concerns to a trusted adult, and information about who is available within the AAU to whom they can report concerns;
- The importance of looking out for the safety of others and reporting any violations of the AAU Youth Protection Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide a nationwide leadership program for coaches and adult volunteers that focuses on, and continually reinforces, the appropriate safety culture of the AAU.
2. Produce, periodically update and present training materials and programs for adults participating in AAU programs, about proper, safe and required behavior.
3. Produce, periodically update and present to its youth athletes materials that are informative, educational and age-appropriate about recognizing, resisting and reporting inappropriate behavior by adults coaches or volunteers.

VI. Reporting

GOAL: *To respond quickly and appropriately to all inappropriate or harmful behavior, violations of AAU youth protection policies, and suspicions of child maltreatment.*

Recommendations: *AAU will make it clear that all AAU employees and volunteers should act as mandatory reporters of suspected sexual abuse. AAU will establish an internal protocol for reporting of inappropriate behavior or violations of AAU guidelines.*

The AAU has made the safety of children, on and off the field, its primary concern. While no youth protection initiative is foolproof, nor is it a guarantee of the safety of all youth, embracing a comprehensive Youth Protection program can create a culture of awareness and protection for everyone involved: coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and child and youth athletes.

It is imperative that this comprehensive program includes additional policies and procedures to ensure appropriate steps are followed in the event an incident of child maltreatment or abuse is suspected or does occur. These procedures should be codified in the AAU Code Book – within the AAU Policies and Procedures. Indeed, to have the necessary positive impact on making child protection an integral part of the AAU culture, any violations must result in adverse consequences for the person who violates it.

As a result of the numerous high-profile cases of the past year, it has become clear that the role of organizations, including the AAU, is not to investigate cases of alleged abuse, but rather to swiftly report these suspicions to the authorities that have a mandate to investigate these allegations. This must be explicitly communicated in AAU Policies and Procedures, and also in all employment and volunteer documentation. ***All AAU employees and volunteers should act responsibly and immediately report to law enforcement all cases of suspected child abuse.***

This means that once any AAU employee, volunteer, parent or youth athlete has observed or has good cause to suspect a violation of law or of the AAU Policies and Procedures, he or she should immediately report that to an appropriate AAU staff member and any other trusted adult. This also means that once any AAU employee or volunteer has good cause to suspect child abuse may have occurred, he/she should immediately contact the local child protective services and/or law enforcement to report this concern.

The AAU should develop policies governing an effective process for these reports to also be shared with AAU leadership, but this internal reporting is done AFTER an official report is made to the proper investigatory authorities (i.e., law enforcement or child protective services). AAU employees should not interview children regarding the allegations at hand, leaving this to the professionals who will be involved in the investigation. However, AAU employees and volunteers should document the context in which the observed, suspected or alleged abuse became known (e.g., how did it come out?), any specific statements made by the youth related to these allegations, and any specific behavior witnessed related to this allegation. Any allegation of a violation of the AAU Policies and Procedures or law may result in a determination of ineligibility to

participate in AAU programs. Until and unless a successful appeal of an ineligibility determination is made, the person shall remain ineligible – *even if acquitted in future criminal proceedings*, subject to a determination by the AAU Board of Review, which has the final authority in all eligibility determinations.

The AAU should retain all records and documentation related to youth protection concerns, using newly developed forms to identify pertinent information that may be needed for an investigation and also to demonstrate the AAU's strong commitment to immediate reporting. This should be integrated with other incident reporting procedures, and complete records maintained by the AAU Compliance Office. The AAU Compliance Office should review all of these incidents, maintain records of these incidents, and provide regular reports to the AAU leadership about these incidents and suggested new policies and procedures that may help improve youth protection efforts.

AAU policies should clearly define permitted and non-permitted access to these confidential records and develop a strategic communications plan for responding to the press and community regarding allegations of child maltreatment or violations of the AAU Policies and Procedures.

It can be difficult to find the appropriate balance between hyper-vigilance and under-reaction to youth protection issues. All these measures are recommended, not because anyone is automatically suspected of inappropriate or illegal behavior, but rather because everyone in AAU programs is expected to be a partner in safety. In any case where the course of action is unclear, it should be a core AAU ethic to err on the side of child protection.

The Youth Protection Committee of the AAU must help identify the continuum of appropriate, inappropriate, and harmful behavior which may occur in each AAU sanctioned activity and constantly update the AAU Policies and Procedures to best protect the interests and safety of the children and youth involved in AAU programs. Further, the AAU Policies and Procedures should clearly identify those issues that require a report to the mandated authorities (e.g., observing a sexualized interaction between a volunteer and youth) and those that may be handled internally (e.g., youth making sexualized comments). It should be made clear to volunteers and participants that the AAU has authority to ban individuals who violate the AAU Policies and Procedures from further participation in AAU activities, even if those actions do not require reporting to law enforcement and child protection authorities.

The AAU must develop specific and stringent guidelines for responding to allegations of child abuse by AAU employees and volunteers. While an allegation alone does not equate to guilt, the AAU should develop policies that require AAU employees and volunteers be immediately suspended if an allegation is made. This suspension should remain in effect during the course of the investigation or other proceedings. If criminal charges are being pursued, this suspension should remain in effect at least until such time as the case is disposed of, but in no case until and unless determined to be appropriate during consideration by the AAU in an appeal of the suspension.

If criminal charges are not being pursued, the involved individual may apply to return to his/her former position through the AAU appeals process. In order to be considered for reinstatement, the individual must provide consent for the release of information to the AAU from all entities involved in the investigation of the allegations. Failure to do so will result in the suspension becoming a permanent ban from the AAU. The AAU will review all of the available facts, consult with external experts as indicated, and render a decision on potential return to AAU programs. The decision of the AAU Board of Review will be final and may not be appealed further.

If an AAU employee or volunteer is convicted of any child abuse or sexual offense, his/her relationship with the AAU must be severed immediately – and permanently. This should be a lifetime ban from further involvement in AAU activities, including a prohibition for the individual to attend any AAU events in the future.

Internally, any allegation of this type may cause a range of emotional responses from other AAU employees and volunteers. The AAU should develop a mechanism to properly communicate the facts to employees and volunteers -- and to discuss the issue as needed. This would include providing a simple, broad response to all AAU employees and members about the steps taken by the AAU related to the incident (within appropriate confidentiality standards) to limit any internal or external concern about a lack of responsiveness.

SUMMARY

In summary, the task forces recognize and respect that the AAU has historically served an important function for America's youth, contributing greatly to their physical and emotional well-being and to the development of their character as good citizens. We commend President Louis Stout, and the AAU leadership team and national staff for their dedication and commitment to a strong and smart positive direction to improve the organization's culture of safety. We believe the vast majority of adult staff members and volunteers who seek to participate in AAU programs are involved for the right reasons – to support and positively influence youth athletes. However, we also recognize that individuals who would abuse and exploit youth may seek out opportunities to have access to them through many youth-serving organizations. The AAU has acted decisively in this process and is to be commended for convening these groups and requesting a comprehensive review of its operations to identify ways to keep its youth participants safer. We believe the comprehensive recommendations outlined in this report, if embraced and implemented, will significantly protect youth in AAU programs, better serve the adults involved in these programs and will represent a national model for child protection.

About the AAU's Youth Protection and Adult/Volunteer Screening Task Forces

The Youth Protection Task Force and the Adult/Volunteer Screening Task Force both worked with the AAU to strengthen the AAU's child protection mission. The task forces worked collaboratively on separate, but related, efforts to develop their final recommendations for enhancements to existing policies. While the AAU has provided the task forces with organizational support, the work of the task forces has been completely independent and their recommendations are being presented to the AAU for action to better protect children without any editorial intervention by the AAU.

These task forces have studied the efforts being undertaken by other youth-serving organizations to address this problem and have drawn upon their own expertise in the area of youth protection and law enforcement to develop strong, specific and significant recommendations to better integrate youth protection into the culture of all AAU programs. The enhancements to AAU policies recommended by the task forces are aimed at the overarching priority of enhancing the safety and protection of youth athletes and in giving youth athletes tools to better protect themselves from such abuse.

Youth Protection Task Force: The AAU named nationally renowned child protection experts to the Youth Protection Task Force, empowering them to review policies and procedures as well as volunteer, athlete and parent training. Members on the Youth Protection Task Force include: Chris Newlin, Executive Director of the National Child Advocacy Center (NCAC); Lauren Book, founder of Lauren's Kids Foundation and child sexual abuse survivor; and Ron Book, a Florida attorney and lobbyist, who has successfully lobbied, with his daughter Lauren, for significant improvements to the child protection laws of Florida and the United States.

Chris Newlin

Chris Newlin is the Executive Director of the National Children's Advocacy Center and has held that position since July 2005. He provides leadership and management of NCAC and participates in national and international leadership activities regarding the protection of children. The NCAC was the first Child Advocacy Center in the United States, and continues to provide child abuse prevention and intervention services in Huntsville, Alabama. Over the past 25 years, the NCAC has trained more than 80,000 child abuse professionals from throughout the world, and for the last 11 years has hosted the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Conference.

Chris is a Board Member of the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, an ex-officio Board Member for the National Children's Alliance, member of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), and a Clinical Member of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). He has presented at numerous local, regional, national and international conferences on topics related to the implementation of evidence-based practices, and the

dissemination and utilization of child maltreatment research to improve frontline practice.

Chris graduated from Hendrix College, the University of Central Arkansas, and the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program.

Lauren Book

Lauren Book is a childhood sexual abuse survivor, who has dedicated her life to healing fellow survivors, aiding in crisis intervention for children and families dealing with the aftermath of sexual abuse, and preventing childhood abuse of all kinds through educational programs and awareness - a true child advocate. Lauren is a University of Miami graduate, with a degree in Elementary Education and Creative Writing with a Masters Degree in Community and Social Change. Born and raised in Miami, Florida, she is a native Floridian. A PEOPLE Magazine All Star Among Us and published author, Lauren has dedicated herself to her nonprofit organization, Lauren's Kids Inc., founded in 2007.

Lauren is Founder and CEO of the Lauren's Kids Foundation, which has as its mission: "To prevent sexual abuse through awareness and education, and to help survivors heal with guidance and support." Lauren's Kids has a nationwide 24-hour toll-free number for children and families to call to receive crisis intervention and referrals to counselors in their state for help. Lauren's *Safer, Smart Kids* prevention curriculum educates more than 10,000 students annually in the Miami-Dade school system. This year, at the direction of the 2011 Florida Legislature, Lauren has created an abuse prevention education curriculum specifically for kindergarteners that is being implemented in every public kindergarten classroom and guidance office in Florida in 2012. Lauren Book serves on the State Child Advocacy Center Board.

Ron Book

Ronald L. Book is President of Lauren's Kids Foundation and a specialist in government affairs and administrative law, with a Juris Doctorate degree from Tulane University and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Florida International University. An active participant in South Florida's professional arena, Book is a trustee of the Council of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and sits on the Legislative Affairs and State Affairs committees. He also served as Chair of the Children's Home Society of Florida Foundation Board. In addition to serving more than 20 community organizations, Book is a founding member of Lauren's Kids. Mr. Book currently operates his own lobbying practice in Aventura and Tallahassee.

For more than a decade Ron and Lauren Book have successfully lobbied for the passage and enactment of numerous laws increasing the penalties on perpetrators of child sexual abuse and increasing the rights of victims of child sexual abuse,

including elimination of the statute of limitations for both civil and criminal prosecutions for crimes committed against children under 16, related to sexual assault and development of statewide network of SATCs.

Adult/Volunteer Screening Task Force: The AAU named two experts in Florida law enforcement, with significant child protection experience to the Adult/Volunteer Screening task force, former FDLE Commissioner Tim Moore and Dr. Jim Sewell.

Tim Moore

Tim Moore served as the longest-tenured Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), an agency in which he worked for more than 30 years, with a distinguished track record of protecting children and enhancing child safety programs. While Commissioner of FDLE, Moore created the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse (MCIC) that was the first of its kind in the nation. The MCIC, now known as the Missing and Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse, serves as a liaison between citizens, private organizations and law enforcement officials, providing information and assistance in cases involving missing and endangered children. Moore was also instrumental in Florida becoming the second state in the nation to create a statewide AMBER Plan. Under his leadership, Florida was also among the first to publish names and pictures of sexual predators and offenders on the Internet. A graduate from the Harvard Senior Executive Leadership Program, Moore earned a Master's degree in Public Administration at Georgia State University, and a B.S. in Criminology from The Florida State University.

Dr. James D. (Jim) Sewell

James D. Sewell retired as Assistant Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in February 2005, following a 32-year career with university, municipal, and state law enforcement agencies in Florida. Since his retirement from active law enforcement, he has provided training and management consulting services to a number of law enforcement and social services agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and professional associations. From January 2007 through January 2011, he served as an advisor to the Secretary of Florida's Department of Children and Families.

Dr. Sewell received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in Criminology from The Florida State University. He has published two textbooks, one in its second edition, and over fifty journal articles and book chapters, principally on law enforcement management and law enforcement stress. Dr. Sewell is a graduate of the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Chief Executive Seminar (Eighth Class) and F.B.I. National Academy (114th Session).

Assisting the two task forces in the drafting of their report to the AAU is Kim Ervin Tucker.

Kim Ervin Tucker

Kim Ervin Tucker is an AV rated lawyer who has worked in public service for most of her career. Upon graduation from the University of Virginia, School of Law, Ms. Tucker began her career with the Florida Attorney General's Office. In addition to serving in various posts in the Attorney General's Office, Ms. Tucker has served as Special Counsel to the Florida Department of Corrections and General Counsel to the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (now the Department of Children and Families). Since 2001, she has been in private practice.

Ms. Tucker has represented the State of Florida in many of the most significant and landmark cases the State has confronted over the past 25 year on such disparate subjects as: prison conditions; election law, writing the Article II Sections of the Florida Attorney General's briefs in the Florida and United States Supreme Courts in *Bush v. Gore*; child protection; collective bargaining; federal jurisdiction over State institutions; State acquisition and preservation of environmentally sensitive lands; tobacco; and, most recently served as staff to the Florida Legal Advisory Group appointed by Governor Charlie Crist to advise the Governor and Attorney General on matters relating to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. She currently represents the Mississippi Attorney General in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; as well as private corporate interests, individuals and entities in legislative and legal matters ranging from the routine to crisis management situations through her consulting firm, Ervin Consulting.

She is a member of the State Bar Associations of Florida, Maine and the District of Columbia. She is also a member of the Bar Associations of the United States Supreme Court, U.S. Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Northern and Middle Districts of Florida.

Attachment I - MODEL AAU GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The healthy nurturing and development of the nation's children and youth as athletes and as citizens is the bedrock upon which the AAU exists.
2. The most important priority of the AAU is the safety and well-being of the participants in our programs. As such, we are committed to providing an atmosphere of safety and security for all youth participating in our athletic organizations and events -- and fostering a culture of safety and protection for the children we serve.
3. The AAU is committed to establishing modern, model standards that effectively provide for youth safety, including protection from child sexual abuse or mistreatment of any type. Accordingly, the AAU continues to strengthen its policies and standards regarding youth and adult participation in its programs and events to always make protection and safety of youth our overarching priority.
4. The AAU provides strong and appropriate guidelines, boundaries, training, and monitoring to govern the interaction of our coaches, chaperones, volunteers and other adults with youth athletes to ensure a common and continuing approach to safeguarding those young people.
5. The AAU supports appropriate orientation, training and empowerment of young athletes and their parents and guardians about their rights, roles and responsibilities as part of the AAU safe environment.