



Coach's Handbook for Preventing Youth Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Use

*A discussion guide to help coaches
talk to their players about smoking,
drinking and illegal drug use*



The format and some of the lesson content in this publication has been taken, with permission, from a coach's handbook distributed by the Kids Sports Network (KSN), a nonprofit association located in San Antonio, Texas. KSN promotes quality sports for kids and provides training programs for volunteer coaches across the country. For more information, contact:

Kids Sports Network

8206 Roughrider, Suite 104, San Antonio, Texas 78239
(800) 576-2516 – ksntexas@ksnusa.org – www.ksnusa.org

Coach's Handbook

This handbook is designed to help youth sport coaches provide information to young athletes about the negative effects of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use. For the program to work, you need to talk with your players for 10-15 minutes each week about avoiding these substances. This handbook will be a discussion guide through eight weeks of your season.



How it works:

- Once a week, read the appropriate exercise from this manual.
- Bring this handbook with you when talking to your players.
- Using the handbook, lead them through the discussion.
- The shaded boxes contain comments you may use to get their attention.
- Talk with your team members, making sure they understand what you're saying. Encourage their responses.
- Answer questions from the team members as best you can.

Use the Web sites at the end of this booklet for additional information about any of these topics. The SAFE Web site, www.chesterfieldsafe.org, also provides links to many sites and to resources in the community.

LESSON 1 – Why do kids use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs?

Explain to your players that you, as their coach, are concerned about their health and athletic performance during the season – and throughout their lives.

ASK: Why do you think some young people use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs?

Give some examples to get the conversation started:

- “To escape a bad situation”
- “To fit in”
- “To act cool”

EXPLAIN:

These feelings are common among young people. But using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs can produce damaging effects today and possibly for a lifetime to come.



ASK: Why is the use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs especially harmful to athletes?

Let team members share some ideas. Then add any others from the list below.

- Alcohol and some drugs can slow down reaction time.
- Tobacco makes you short of breath.
- Steroids can give men and women acne all over their bodies.
- Alcohol and drugs can mess up your coordination.

By coming to practice, doing your best, supporting your teammates, and making healthy choices to stay tobacco-, alcohol- and drug-free, you will be doing your part for this team!

ASK: Do you think most middle-school kids smoke, drink or use drugs?

EXPLAIN:

Most middle-school kids don't smoke, drink or use drugs. According to a recent national survey of middle-school students, in the past year:

- Four out of five hadn't smoked even one cigarette
- More than four out of five hadn't used any kind of illegal drug
- Two out of three hadn't had even one drink of alcohol

EMPHASIZE:

When you use, you lose. I want you to be winners – in sports and in life. Using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs can be harmful and can keep you from reaching your goals. For that reason, we'll take a few minutes each week to talk about keeping our bodies free of substances that are harmful.