

Guidelines for Coach-Player Ratios:

The Schools Insurance Association of Washington's (SIAW) administrator, Canfield, has found no exact ratios for players-coach for particular sports. The following guidelines should help establish minimum staffing for each sport.

For each team in a **collision sport** - football, wrestling - we recommend a minimum of two coaches for each team. If there are three football teams, a minimum of six coaches are needed. The reason for this recommendation is that two players could be in need of medical attention at the same time; therefore, two trained coaches would be needed.

Other factors to consider when assigning coaches should include, but not be limited to, the following:

Ability of the coach: Is the coach trained to supervise/coach the skill level of the players on the particular squad or team? This should include the coach's knowledge of the sport, ability to know, breakdown and teach fundamentals and skills of the sport. There are segments of some sports that require specialized certification, such as diving coaches in swimming and pole vault coaches in track. Do you have persons able to coach those events?

Ability of the players: At what level are the players — beginning, advanced?

Space needed for the activity. As an example, track can encompass a large expanse of ground. Do you have an adequate number and/or quality of coaches to cover the events?

Locker room supervision. Having only male coaches for a female team presents some locker room supervision problems. Are those problems being addressed prior to the season?

Ability to teach the sport: Do you have enough coaches to allow good instruction? The responsibility to provide proper instruction in a sport is one of the duties for proper coaching and supervision. As an example, having one coach assigned to 30 linemen in football would not be reasonable in terms of teaching and monitoring the drills needed to successfully coach the skills and monitor the drills for that position.

One coach can not supervise two teams: As an example, frequently soccer, baseball or softball play both the varsity and JV at the same time. One coach can not coach both teams.

Providing adequate coaching for the particular sport. As an example, in wrestling, during tournament time, two or three wrestlers may be wrestling at the same time. A trained coach is to be present at each match.

Use of volunteer coaches can help. If volunteers are used, the school must make sure they are qualified as a school volunteer, including state mandates for fingerprinting and background checks, trained in first aid and CPR, meet the WIAA requirements for coaching certification and are supervised by a school employee who has the knowledge of the sport and the ability to supervise.

If you have any coach-player ratios that have been proposed from a nationally recognized sports authority, please forward that information to Canfield's risk control department at riskhelp@canfieldsolutions.com or call us at 800.407.207.