

Guidelines for Including Minors on Adult Teams

USA Ultimate

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1. Purpose.

Minors are not adults. This is true in all aspects of development (physical, emotional, social, cognitive, communication, etc.). Before a minor participates on a team with adults, it is crucial for the team to intentionally and thoughtfully consider what needs to be adjusted, both on and off the field, to make sure the team is a safe, healthy and appropriate place for a minor athlete. In this process, prior to adding a minor, the team must be willing and able to make these changes. Although it is impossible to prescribe exactly what these considerations might be, below are areas for all clubs and adult constituents to thoughtfully consider. Please note, these guidelines supplement, and do not override, any stricter rules or policies set by World Flying Disc Federation (“WFDF”), the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (the “USOPC”), the SafeSport Center, and any applicable laws, regulations or policies.

2. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

The best starting point is the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies \(MAAPP\)](#). MAAPP is a comprehensive framework established by the [SafeSport](#) Center. Before adding a minor to your team, you should engage with this content and use it as a basis for making thoughtful and intentional decisions. Your team must adopt all MAAPP standards, including without limitation, rules for travel, supervision, changing facilities, and electronic communication with minors.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Prior to adding a minor to any adult team, ensure that the athlete meets any minimum age or classification requirements set by WFDF for the relevant competition tier.

A parent or legal guardian must sign the club’s Minor Athlete Participation Consent Form, which should be renewed annually and whenever a competition tier changes materially.

The athlete should have a recent physical examination (at least every twelve months) to ensure readiness for the sport, including without limitation:

- Skeletal/growth-plate readiness
- Cardiovascular and general fitness for adult-level training loads

The club coach and a second independent coach must both agree and document that the minor athlete’s skill and tactical level is appropriate for adult-level training and competition intensity.

In addition, a club officer or medical professional should discuss with the athlete and their parent or guardian the social and emotional demands of adult-team environments (including without

limitation, locker rooms, travel, media, competitive pressures, etc.) to alleviate any such concerns.

4. Club Considerations

It is important to fully consider how having a minor on your team will impact all aspects of the team. You will need to consider your team's on-field team culture (communication, cheers, language, music, etc.) and its off-field team culture (social gatherings, team bonding activities, alcohol or recreational drugs, etc.). If your team travels, the team will need explicit policies and procedures relating to all aspects of travel, including overnight stays, lodging, and rooming arrangements.

It is also important to remember that no matter how talented an athlete is, minors are not fully developed physically, mentally, or emotionally. Be cognizant of this fact as you map out playing time and usage within games, tournaments and seasons. This should also include consideration of other teams or playing opportunities with which the minor is involved, and the cumulative physical, mental, and emotional load. It is the team's job to protect their young athletes, paying attention to individual needs and differences, to ensure their long term health (mental and physical) and participation. This might mean making decisions which are not in the short-term interest of the team for any given point, game, etc.

You will need buy-in not only from the minor and their parent or guardian, but from all of the adults on your team who will have to implement the required adjustments.

5. Liability Waivers and Medical Treatment

Each of the minor athletes and a parent or guardian must sign a Liability Waiver and Release. It should also be made clear to the parent or guardian what participation on the team will look like for their child. You must maintain a [Medical Treatment Authorization form](#) to ensure an adult is aware of any medical issues so the minor can receive emergency care if a parent is not present.

6. SafeSport Training / Welfare Officer

Adult participants (players, coaches, and volunteers) who have regular contact with a minor may be required to complete abuse prevention training. Abuse prevention training can be completed through SafeSport (the training is accessible, and free, through any 18+ current member's USAU account). Teams should consider having a chaperone, who has both SafeSport training and a background check, to support and assist the minor.

The club should designate a Club Welfare Officer (whose name should be published to all athletes and parents/guardians) as the first point of contact for any concern involving a minor on an adult team. Any concern about conduct, wellbeing, or safeguarding must be reported through the club's reporting procedure and, where required by law or applicable policy, escalated to USAU, WFDF, the SafeSport Center or law enforcement.

7. Insurance

Confirm the insurance policy that covers your team includes sexual abuse and molestation coverage and does not have an "athletic participation exclusion." Prioritize occurrence-based coverage. In many states, minors can sue for injuries many years after an incident occurs (well past the age of majority), and occurrence policies should cover claims as long as the policy was active when the injury happened. USA Ultimate's insurance for sanctioned events and practices includes all of these coverages.

Adult leagues often require different medical/accident coverage limits than youth leagues. If your league team(s) includes minors, verify that the event's insurance plan covers participants under 18.

8. Club Policies

The club's policies with respect to minor athletes' participation should be reviewed at least annually and whenever WFDF, USOPC, the SafeSport Center, USAU or other governing bodies update age-eligibility or safeguarding rules.

9. Conclusion

Beyond legal requirements, general standards and expectations concerning inclusion of minors should be documented and established with parents or guardians to earn and keep their trust.

Understand that adding a minor to an adult team SHOULD require extra time and effort. Your team needs to do everything in its power to make sure it provides a safe, healthy and positive environment for minors before adding any to the team.