

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 602

Short Title: Coach Safely Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Reeder and Willis (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, State and Local Government, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 1, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR PERSONS SERVING AS PART OF THE ATHLETICS PERSONNEL OR COACHING STAFF OF ASSOCIATIONS THAT CONDUCT YOUTH ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES ON PROPERTY OWNED, LEASED, MANAGED, OR MAINTAINED BY THE STATE OR ANY OF ITS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS; AND DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO APPROVE COURSES THAT MEET THIS ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as "The Coach Safely Act."

SECTION 2. Chapter 130A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 18A.

"The Coach Safely Act for the Protection of Youth Athletes.

"§ 130A-443.10. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Part:

- (1) Association. – An organization that sponsors or conducts high-risk youth athletic activities on property owned, leased, managed, or maintained by the State or any of its political subdivisions. The term includes a city, county, business, or nonprofit organization that organizes community-based youth athletic events on such property.
- (2) Athletics personnel. – Athletic directors and other persons actively involved in organizing, training, or coaching athletic activities for youth who are 18 years of age or younger.
- (3) Coach or coaching staff. – Any person, whether paid, unpaid, volunteer, or interim, who has been approved by an association to organize, train, or supervise a youth athlete or team of youth athletes. The term includes any person who has not been approved by an association but has been selected by a youth athlete or a team of youth athletes to organize, train, or supervise the youth athlete or team of youth athletes when the person approved by an association is unavailable.
- (4) Department. – The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health.



(5) Youth athlete. – A youth who is 18 years of age or younger and participates in an organized sport.

"§ 130A-443.12. Annual training requirement for athletics personnel and coaches.

(a) Each association shall require any person who is actively engaged in or serving as part of its athletics personnel or coaching staff to complete a youth sports injury education course that has been approved by the Department under G.S. 130A-443.14. The association shall offer the training required by this section free of charge to each person who is actively engaged in or serving as part of its athletics personnel or coaching staff.

(b) Each person who is actively engaged in or serving as part of the athletics personnel or coaching staff of an association is required to complete the youth sports injury education course offered by the association pursuant to subsection (a) of this section within 30 days after first becoming actively engaged in or serving as part of the association's athletics personnel or coaching staff, and annually thereafter by the anniversary of the date on which the person became actively engaged in or started serving as part of the association's athletics personnel or coaching staff.

(c) Each association that has athletics personnel or coaching staff who are required to complete a youth sports injury education course in accordance with this section shall maintain an individual record of course completion for each member of the association's athletics personnel or coaching staff for as long as the person serves in that capacity.

(d) The annual course completion requirement established by this section does not apply to any of the following persons who have completed training in advance trauma life support training:

(1) Athletic trainers licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

(2) Physicians licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

(3) Nurses licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

(4) Advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders, and emergency medical services-nurse practitioners, as these terms are defined in G.S. 131E-155.

(5) Other healthcare practitioners.

"§ 130A-443.14. Department approval of youth sports injury education courses; limitation.

The Department shall approve one or more courses that meet the evidence-based, best practice standards of the National Athletic Training Association, National Council of Youth Sports, or other nationally recognized organization for youth sports injury education that may be used to fulfill the requirements of G.S. 130A-443.12. The Department shall not approve any youth sports injury education course that omits any of the following topics:

(1) Safety techniques and methods that can be undertaken by coaches to decrease the likelihood that a youth athlete will sustain a serious injury while engaged or participating in youth athletic activities.

(2) Emergency preparedness and planning, and rehearsal for responding to traumatic injuries sustained during youth athletic activities.

(3) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and general first aid techniques.

(4) Concussions and head trauma.

(5) Heat and extreme weather-related injuries.

(6) Physical conditioning and training equipment usage.

(7) Heart defects and abnormalities leading to sudden cardiac death.

"§ 130A-443.16. Defense to claims of liability against athletics personnel and coaches.

A person who is actively engaged in or serving as part of the athletics personnel or coaching staff of an association shall not be liable in any action that arises from an injury sustained by a youth athlete as a result of the youth athlete's participation in a youth athletic activity upon a demonstration that the athletics personnel member or coach did both of the following:

(1) Completed the sports injury education course required by G.S. 130A-443.12.

- 1 (2) Reasonably conformed his or her conduct to the safety techniques and
2 methods identified in the sports injury education course."
3 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2025.