

# Managing your Coach Within the Institution

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Colleges and universities are paying closer attention to compliance and risk assessment in their on-campus activities, particularly as they relate to athletics. However, despite well-intentioned compliance programs, the perceived importance of a particular athletic program or coach can put an institution in an uncomfortable and perhaps damaging position if those programs or coaches are not properly overseen.

Below are several steps that colleges and universities should consider when dealing with a high-powered coach or program:

- **Draft a coach's contract so the institution has control over the athletic program,** including budgets, player discipline, athletic department staff, and scheduling approval for games and special events.
- **Define a clear chain of command.**  
If you are going to empower your athletic director, make sure he or she has the institution's backing to discipline and determine the fate of the coach. Make it clear that the coach and the program are being judged on more than just a win-loss record; they're being judged on their adherence to the school's overarching mission and values.
- **Remove from the purview of the coach all compliance protocols and the people responsible for such protocols.**  
The General Counsel's office should monitor compliance throughout the athletic department. The athletic director and compliance director should periodically discuss and issue reports on those matters.
- **The athletic director must ultimately be responsible for the budget.**  
A team's coach should not operate independently of the institution, its athletic department or the school's other financial considerations.
- **Establish written rules and policies for the coach and the specific sport.**  
Update and review these rules at least annually with the coach and his or her staff. Implement a reporting system that does not allow for retaliation against those who report rules violations.
- **In contracts with your coach, provide reasons for dismissal for cause.**  
If a coach demonstrates behavior that rises to the level of dismissal for cause, follow set protocols and, after proper due process, take appropriate action, including termination.

All coaches and universities want to their coaches to succeed. But if that success comes at the expense of an institution's reputation or its financial future, the effects can be devastating. Review your compliance procedures carefully to avoid the damage that can be caused to your institution's reputation, its fundraising goals, and most importantly, its ability to fulfill its primary mission: Providing quality education to all students.