



Hazing Prevention Starts with Leadership

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Tampa, FL



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Introductions



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Football Players Accused of Antisemitic Hazing Return to Field After Just One Holocaust Education Session

Lawsuit Against Urseline High School Amended to Allege Four-Year Hazing Culture

High Schoolers Could Face Felonies Over Extreme Hazing Ritual

Parents Say Son Was Hazed by Varsity Soccer Teammates at Prestigious Private School

Hazing Claims Against Pennsylvania School District Settled for \$110K



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Defining the Line

Hazing

- Humiliates, degrades, or endangers
- Creates separation and hierarchy based on fear
- Often involves secrecy and “earning” a spot
- Intent does not matter—Impact does
- Examples: Forced consumption, embarrassment, servitude

Team Building

- Promotes respect, dignity, and empowerment
- Creates unity and shared positive experiences
- Transparent and inclusive for all members
- Examples: Challenge courses, mentorship, community service



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High School Hazing Realities

- Often disguised as “team bonding” or tradition
- Peer pressure and desire to belong amplify risk
- More likely in unsupervised or off campus events



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Mini Group Discussion

**What activities might be considered
“normal” but have hidden risks?**



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The Hidden Cost of Hazing

Mental Health Decline: Victims often experience anxiety, depression, and loss of self-worth, leading to withdrawal.

Erosion of Trust: Hazing destroys the foundational trust between teammates and coaches, killing team cohesion.

Physical Danger: High risk of injury, alcohol poisoning, and in severe cases, tragic loss of life.

Institutional Risk: Severe legal liabilities, reputation damage, and suspension of programs.





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Leadership's Responsibility

Coaches and administrators are the primary architects of team culture. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.

Proactive Leadership Means:

- Addressing “traditions” before they start
- Being VISIBLE and PRESENT in locker rooms and informal spaces
- Modeling the RESPECT you expect from your athletes



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Set Expectations

Implement a clear code of conduct and zero tolerance policy signed by parents and athletes.

Model Behavior

Coaches must demonstrate respectful interaction. Eliminate power-tripping language and behavior. Hold captains accountable as cultural leaders.

Enforce Accountability

Establish clear, consistent consequences for violations. No “star player” exceptions.



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Positive Team Culture Foundations

- Safety, trust, belonging, respect
- Inclusivity as a core value
- Sharing responsibility for upholding standards.



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Empowering Student Leaders

- Student Athlete Leadership Team
- Training for captains on mentoring and conflict navigation
- Encourage captains to welcome and integrate new members
- Encourage captains to be “eyes and ears” in the program



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Safe Reporting Systems

Empowering the Voice: Fear of retaliation is the #1 barrier to reporting. To overcome this, we must provide:

- Anonymous Reporting Channels
- Designated Advocates
- Clear Investigation Process



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Building Healthy Traditions



Community Service Projects



Challenge Courses/Trust Building



Mentorship Dinners



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Mini Group Discussion

What leadership strategies/ideas are you using within your athletic department to prevent hazing?

Questions?



Thank You!



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