

Book Review: Youth Sports and the Law: A Guide to Legal Issues

Kirsten Hauser

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YOUTH SPORT AND THE LAW: A GUIDE TO LEGAL ISSUES

Tom Appenzeller

[Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press 2000]

216 pages + x pages

ISBN: 9-89089-663-1

In *Youth Sport and the Law: A Guide to Legal Issues*, Tom Appenzeller ambitiously attempts to cover all aspects of the law as applied to youth athletics. Appenzeller's overview contains an analysis of various topics including; tort liability for injuries suffered by players and spectators, sports facility issues, disabled athletes and those with HIV, and sports medicine. Appenzeller provides basic information primarily directed at those outside of the legal profession.

The opening pages of the book chronicle the beginnings of youth sports. In six pages the author takes the reader from the ancient Olympic games, to muscular Christianity, and then to the formation of little league baseball in the United States. This is a good indication of the amount of ground superficially covered. This opening chapter is strangely concluded with a reprint of the article *Sports Are Bad for Children*.

Appenzeller moves on with a discussion about litigation in youth sports. He begins by speculating on the reasons, in general, for the increasing litigation in the United States. Unfortunately, Appenzeller provides no new insight; instead, he cites the usual reasons for the rise in lawsuits, i.e. the media, the lure or necessity of large monetary awards, a sense of entitlement, and overaggressive attorneys.

Appenzeller then offers readers some basic instruction in the concepts of negligence, liability, and the assumption of risk. This section would be aptly titled Tort Law 101. While this discussion is oversimplified, there is some value to providing non-legal professionals with this basic information. That is, it informs the public in an easy to read and easy to digest manner about the rights and responsibilities of those injured by another's action or lack of action. Armed with this knowledge, some readers should be inspired to take the appropriate action to avoid liability and litigation.

The book follows a similar format in the majority of its thirteen chapters. Specifically, a problem or area of youth sport law is presented and described. The author then provides an often oversimplified and brief summary or summaries of cases brought under the described area of law. For example, in the chapter titled Organization and Administration, Appenzeller gives *Tarkanian v. NCAA*, a single paragraph of discussion.

Given the context of the book and the intended audience these simplifications are forgivable.

The chapters lacking case discussion, however brief, are less defensible. For example, the chapter dealing with Sports Medicine lacks any discussion of case law. Instead, the author opted to discuss the occurrences of ailments such as heat illness and nose bleeds. This chapter would have provided the reader with a more useful direction with some case law discussion.

The book concludes with numerous examples of forms used in youth sports. The examples include application forms, checklists for athletic trainers, accident reports, emergency contact information, insurance forms, and emergency contact forms. These forms are very useful as they round out the basic information readers need to protect themselves from liability.

Youth Sport and the Law: A Guide to Legal Issues is written from the prospective of a sports professional, sports participant, and parent. It is intended to speak to similar individuals. The book combines case law discussion, personal stories, and basic overviews of legal principles. In the end, Appenzeller has written an informative and easy to digest book for the non-legal professional. Although not detailed and by no means comprehensive, this a worthy and valuable effort for the target audience.

KIRSTEN HAUSER