
Make Ethical Decisions Scenarios

To play or not to play

A young athlete mentions a possible knee injury to the coach.

Jaime is a Gymnastics Foundations Certified coach. Recently, she has noticed that one of the athletes, 7 year-old Taylor, has been favouring his left knee. Jaime asks Taylor if the knee has been causing problems. Taylor admits that it hurts a bit, but he is okay to participate this week.

Jaime's concern led her to bring up the situation with Taylor's parents. They say that they are aware of the situation and have called their family doctor. The physician was away, but during a telephone conversation, the doctor told them not to worry as "this is normal for growing children" and "there shouldn't be any risk"; however, Jaime spoke to a friend who is a sport physician who strongly suggested that Jaime proceed with caution and that Taylor's parents consult a specialist as soon as possible.

Club policy dictates that it's the coach who ultimately decides whether the gymnast will participate in a lesson. Another policy dictates that an injured gymnast can't return to the gym until the coach has written confirmation, from a medical doctor, declaring that the gymnast is fit to return. Taylor's parents are both members of the organization's board of directors and know these policies.

Shortly before Taylor's lesson is set to begin, the parents approach Jaime. They repeat what their family doctor has said, and guarantee that first thing tomorrow morning, Jaime will have the required letter confirming that Taylor is fit to return. The parents insist that Taylor must participate, because they have already paid for all lessons and don't want to waste their money. They also tell Jaime that she needs to respect Taylor's desire to participate. The parents start to walk away, leaving Taylor to stay and take part in the lesson.

Travel time

A young athlete needs a ride home and only you (a certified Gymnastics Foundations coach) are available.

You have been coaching recreational gymnastics at your club for the last 2 years. This session, you have a new gymnast, Raj, whose family recently immigrated to Canada. Both parents have jobs involving shift work and they are often unable to drive or pick up Raj at practice.

Knowing the family's work situation, you have asked other parents if they will help with transportation. The gym is a 20-minute drive from the Raj's house, which is too far for a child that age to walk alone. The other parents gladly agreed to help and devised a schedule.

Today you have practice from 1:00pm – 2:00pm. All the gymnasts have arrived except for Janelle. Janelle's parent, who is scheduled to pick up Raj after practice, calls to tell you there has been a family emergency. With that ride no longer available to drive Raj home, you call Raj's mother and ask if there's any way she or her husband can pick up their child at 2:00pm. She tells you they're both working and asks if you would be able to drive Raj as their house is on your way home. You're travelling by yourself, which means it would be just you and the gymnast in the car. You know the club has a rule-of-two policy that coaches must follow. The mother feels guilty that she can't be there to pick up Raj, but says she is comfortable with you taking her child home.

What should you do?

