



Read this scenario:

You are at a swim meet and you see a coach massaging the back and shoulders of an athlete. You know this is against the rules.

Discussion Questions:

What do you do?

>Safe Sport says: Speak up! Massage of an athlete by a coach is against the rules! Tell your coach or an official so that they can talk to the coach and stop the behavior.

What if the coach is not massaging the athlete, rather he/she is stretching the athlete's legs?

>Safe Sport says: Stretching should not be done by a coach. Trust your gut. If what you see makes you feel uncomfortable or you think something doesn't look right, tell your coach or an official.

What do you do if you need stretching or massage at a meet?

>Safe Sport says: Brainstorm ways you can be at your best while following all the rules. Ask your coach to instruct you on effective stretches or utilize the team's licensed sports medicine practitioner. You could also ask a teammate to help you, and be specific about what you need help with.

Wrap It Up:

What do you think of when I say "physical boundary"?

>Safe Sport says: Your physical boundary is your personal bubble. It's how comfortable you feel being close to someone, as well as who can touch you, where they can touch you, and how often they can touch you. You have different physical boundaries with your family and friends than you do with strangers or people you know in a more professional environment. Trust your gut and speak up if someone is ever making you feel uncomfortable by being in your personal bubble.

***For Coaches: Massage of athletes by coaches is against the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, even if the coach is a licensed massage practitioner. This should be reported to the Meet Director. Teach athletes proper stretching techniques and how to utilize things like foam rollers and other tools.**

Also, talk to your team about what kind of touch is okay on the team. (Example: high-fives, pats on the upper back, or even hugs between teammates may be okay and part of your team's culture.) For more resources, visit www.usaswimming.org/protect or contact Safe Sport at safesport@usaswimming.org.