

Safe Play considerations

When training TDs in the back room or other private areas, take care to avoid the appearance of impropriety. When I train minors in the back room, I require a parent to be present. Not because <1> the parents are concerned about me or <2> I'm concerned about claims the minor might make, but rather because of <3> people passing by jumping to the wrong conclusion and spreading rumors. Avoiding one-on-one situations does deter people from committing bad actions and should be done just in case trust or judgement turns out to be misplaced, but it also avoids damaging or malicious rumors when trust truly was earned and a third party wants to make trouble. Requiring a third party to be present is not an indication of a lack of trust of the other person, but rather insurance that others cannot cause trouble about two trustworthy people (with the side benefit of avoiding problems if it turns out that in this situation one of them is untrustworthy).

At scholastic tournaments I will sometimes have a player ask me to lessen the penalty I'm applying to their opponent. I reject such requests, but probably not for the reason they think. I am not being firm just to be stern. I am being firm because peer pressure exists and being swayed by a player when you are applying a penalty to their opponent is an invitation for the opponent's friends to apply pressure on the player to "be nice" and knuckle under when they don't actually want to. Ignoring such player requests makes any attempt at peer pressure futile even when the opponent's friends are seemingly successful in their pressure attempts. When not even successful peer pressure works there is less of a reason to escalate to actual bullying.

When coming to a board to resolve an issue say you are there to resolve any confusion rather than trying to find who is "at fault". In scholastic tournaments it usually is simple confusion and a player is much more willing to be reasonable with a confused opponent rather than with somebody who is in the wrong. If emotions start at a low level they are less likely to escalate. Also if a TD is resolving confusion then a player is more willing to let the process play out in anticipation of the TD making things right, with no need to try to be confrontational.