

The 2024 Florida Statutes (including 2025 Special Session C)

[Title XLVII](#)

[Chapter 943](#)

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CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AND CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

943.0438 Athletic coaches for independent sanctioning authorities.—

- (1) As used in this section, the term:
 - (a) “Athletic coach” means a person who:
 1. Is authorized by an independent sanctioning authority to work as a coach, assistant coach, manager, or referee, whether for compensation or as a volunteer, for a youth athletic team based in this state; and
 2. Has direct contact with one or more minors on the youth athletic team.
 - (b) “Independent sanctioning authority” means a private, nongovernmental entity that organizes, operates, or coordinates a youth athletic team in this state if the team includes one or more minors and is not affiliated with a private school as defined in s. [1002.01](#).
- (2) An independent sanctioning authority shall:
 - (a) Effective January 1, 2025, conduct a level 2 background screening under s. [435.04](#) of each current and prospective athletic coach. The authority may not delegate this responsibility to an individual team and may not authorize any person to act as an athletic coach unless a level 2 background screening is conducted and does not result in disqualification under paragraph (b).
 - (b)1. Before January 1, 2026, or a later date as determined by the Agency for Health Care Administration for the participation of qualified entities in the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse under s. [435.12](#), disqualify any person from acting as an athletic coach as provided in s. [435.04](#). The authority may allow a person disqualified under this subparagraph to act as an athletic coach if it determines that the person meets the requirements for an exemption from disqualification under s. [435.07](#).
 2. On or after January 1, 2026, or a later date as determined by the Agency for Health Care Administration, not allow any person to act as an athletic coach if he or she does not pass the background screening qualifications in s. [435.04](#). The authority may allow a person disqualified under this subparagraph to act as an athletic coach if the person has successfully completed the exemption from the disqualification process under s. [435.07](#).
 - (c) Provide, within 7 business days following the background screening under paragraph (a), written notice to a person disqualified under this section advising the person of the results and of his or her disqualification.
 - (d) Maintain for at least 5 years documentation of:
 1. The results for each person screened under paragraph (a); and
 2. The written notice of disqualification provided to each person under paragraph (c).
 - (e) Adopt guidelines to educate athletic coaches, officials, administrators, and youth athletes and their parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury.
 - (f) Adopt bylaws or policies that require the parent or guardian of a youth who is participating in athletic competition or who is a candidate for an athletic team to sign and return an informed consent that explains the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including the risk of continuing to play after concussion or head injury, each year before participating in athletic competition or engaging in any practice, tryout, workout, or other physical activity associated with the youth’s candidacy for an athletic team.
 - (g) Adopt bylaws or policies that require each youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or competition to be immediately removed from the activity. A youth athlete who has been removed from an activity may not return to practice or competition until the youth submits to the athletic coach a

written medical clearance to return stating that the youth athlete no longer exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other head injury. Medical clearance must be authorized by the appropriate health care practitioner trained in the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of concussions as defined by the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the Florida High School Athletic Association.

(3) In a civil action for the death of, or injury or damage to, a third person caused by the intentional tort of an athletic coach that relates to alleged sexual misconduct by the athletic coach, there is a rebuttable presumption that the independent sanctioning authority was not negligent in authorizing the athletic coach if the authority complied with the background screening and disqualification requirements of subsection (2) prior to such authorization.

(4) Independent sanctioning authorities for youth athletic teams must participate in the Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System, as authorized by the National Child Protection Act of 1993 and s. 943.0542.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2010-94; s. 1, ch. 2012-167; s. 13, ch. 2013-116; s. 1, ch. 2014-9; s. 5, ch. 2023-220; s. 5, ch. 2024-243.