

## How to Help Your Team Bond, Not Haze

1. Define hazing for your team: Any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of that person's willingness to participate. This does not include activities such as rookies carrying the balls, team parties with community games, or going out with your teammates, unless an atmosphere of humiliation, degradation, abuse or danger arises.

2. Help dispel the myth that "forcing" someone to participate is an essential part of hazing. Student-athletes seem to identify the activity as hazing only if a person is physically forced to participate.

3. Offer alternatives for student-athletes. Suggest community-service projects, team dinners or other activities. Teams can have cook-outs, do community-service projects together or have a night of silly skits to help form team bonds.

4. Understand that definitions matter. Students define hazing differently. Ask if there is a ritual, a tradition or an initiation rite in which someone gets humiliated.

5. Know that whether the initiation is a drinking game, wearing silly clothes or enduring a beating, no one is likely to object. Almost certainly, no one will refuse to do it. If an incident is discovered, everyone involved — from the rookies to the captains — to the coaches - will be accountable for hazing and face University disciplinary actions.

6. It is important to give student-athletes specific, concrete examples of hazing and unacceptable conduct. Review what your teams have done in the past and discuss options.

7. Samples of Hazing include the following:

- > they will be pressured into getting a tattoo;
- > they will get their heads shaved;
- > they will wear their clothes inside out and parade through the campus library in full gear;
- > they will drink Tabasco sauce concoctions;
- > they will run with cookies wedged in their buttocks;
- > they will be tied to benches in the locker room;
- > they will have their athletic supporters or sports bras coated in Cramer's Icy Hot;
- > they will stand on chairs in restaurants and sing their alma mater on command;
- > they will run or play a game in the nude;
- > they will be kidnapped, tied to a teammate, blindfolded and forced to find their way across campus;
- > they will be spanked, paddled, beaten or even branded.

**8. It's a Tradition** - Traditions are important. There are traditional colors, songs, cheers, rituals and chants. So, too, however, is the initiation onto the team, which may be grounded in drinking, humiliation or physical abuse. The "tradition" may be light-hearted but humiliating, such as being thrown in a campus fountain in the nude. Or it may be something the freshmen are said to look forward to, such as a campus-wide scavenger hunt in full hockey gear. Either way it is still a tradition of hazing.

9. Students look at hazing as tradition, and that makes it very different in their eyes. And sometimes, as a coach, you're dealing with something that has gone on for decades. Upperclassmen feel since they went through it, then they have the 'right' or 'responsibility' to make the freshmen do the same. Someone needs to break the cycle.

10. **Is it really hazing?** Most hazing is not so easy to identify. Is it hazing if you're told to walk across campus in a Speedo and flippers? Is the party afterward, in which the underage freshmen compete in a drinking game against the underage sophomores and juniors, hazing?

11. Most student-athletes think, ' If I'm willing to do it, it's not hazing,' hazing is when someone does something against my will.

12. **Code of silence and denial** - "That was actually the most important part to us," said one female former student-athlete. "If you ever told anyone or complained, you were off the team. I mean, you still wore the jersey and played and everything, but you were not a part of the team anymore. All you had to do was see it happen to someone else — even on another team or at another school — and you would never risk that."

13. -Athletics is a part of student-athletes' identity, and they are not going to endanger their entire identity by reporting hazing.

14. In one study, student-athletes who engaged in what the researchers called "questionable" behaviors (humiliating or degrading, but not dangerous or illegal) also were likely to participate in dangerous or illegal activities. 85 percent of those who said they had been forced to wear embarrassing clothing also were required to commit a dangerous or illegal act.

15. **Creating rites of passage** -Numerous student-athletes feel some kind of initiation or rite of passage is essential. **Humiliation is not a right of passage. Initiations need to be real, serious and challenging. They need to help the person find an identity in a group of athletes and give them a sense of belonging.** The seniors can share a meal with the freshmen, there can be a tradition of community service. Without careful thought by their upperclassmen or coaches, the rites too often degenerate into hazing where they humiliate, degrade or endanger people.

From a student-athlete: **As a freshman I probably would have done anything the upperclassmen or captains said, just to be liked and to fit in.** But it shouldn't be that way. No one should be put in a position to have to make a decision like that. Who would have thought that sending some fellow teammate on a scavenger hunt or making them wear clothes that set them apart from everyone else would be considered hazing? But in reality, it is. People may agree to do these activities, but that doesn't mean they really want to take part. Even if they do say they want to take part at the time, the reason they want to is to "fit in" on the team. **Team bonding is important and sticking together is important, so why would you want to put your teammates in any danger or discomfort?**

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