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Play Safe Manual

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Chapter I Understanding Safety Guidelines

Understanding Safety Guidelines in Sport

Understanding safety guidelines in sport involves a comprehensive examination of protocols designed to ensure the well-being of athletes. These guidelines, crafted through a synthesis of scientific research, empirical evidence, and collective experiences, aim to mitigate the risks associated with sports participation. In this manual we focused on our sports : walking football, catchball, and walking basketball safety guidelines, but they serve also as illustrative examples where safety guidelines play a pivotal role in organizing a secure sporting environment.

In Walking football, a sport renowned for its dynamic nature and physical intensity, safety guidelines encompass a spectrum of considerations. Hawkins et al. (2001) emphasize the importance of injury prevention strategies, with guidelines addressing player movements, collisions, and the potential for traumatic injuries such as concussions. The integration of proper warm-up routines, conditioning exercises, and the utilization of appropriate protective gear contributes to the overall safety of players (McCrory et al., 2017).

Understanding safety guidelines in walking football extends beyond the pitch to include protocols for diverse weather conditions and playing surfaces, recognizing the impact of these variables on injury patterns (Fuller et al., 2007). Catchball and walking basketball, adheres to safety guidelines that focus at the unique demands of each sport, even there are significant similarities. Shan et al. (2016) highlights the biomechanics of catchball-specific movements, forming the basis for guidelines aimed at preventing acute sprains and chronic overuse injuries. Additionally, safety guidelines in catchball encompass the psychological aspects of the game, addressing performance pressures and facilitating a supportive environment (Tatsumi et al., 2018). These guidelines, grounded in scientific understanding, contribute to the creation of an environment where athletes can perform optimally while minimizing injury risks. Walking basketball introduces distinctive elements that necessitate specific safety guidelines. Voskanian (2015) emphasizes guidelines addressing the

impact of jumping on joint stability and injury patterns. By tailoring safety guidelines, walking basketball endeavors to provide a secure platform for athletes.

The development and implementation of safety guidelines are important on continuous research, empirical observations, and collaboration within the sports community. Hespanhol Junior et al. (2015) stress the importance of ongoing research initiatives and injury surveillance systems in shaping effective safety guidelines. An interdisciplinary approach, involving sports scientists, medical professionals, and sports organizations, contributes to evidence-based guidelines that evolve with emerging insights (Soligard et al., 2015).

In conclusion, understanding safety guidelines in sport is a dynamic process that involves the meticulous crafting and application of protocols to safeguard the well-being of athletes. Walking football, catchball, and WALKING BASKETBALL illustrate how safety guidelines, informed by research and interdisciplinary collaboration, create an environment where athletes can pursue their passion with minimized risks. These guidelines, rooted in scientific understanding, contribute to the cultivation of a sporting culture that prioritizes the health and safety of participants.

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The Importance of Safety

The importance of safety in amateur sports is very important, implying a multifaceted commitment to the well-being of participants. Research consistently underscores the significance of safety measures in preserving and enhancing the physical health of athletes. Sawchuk et al. (2019) emphasize the role of proper training and equipment in mitigating injury risks. This underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that encompass dynamic warm-ups, conditioning exercises, and the utilization of appropriate protective gear. By prioritizing these elements, amateur sports foster an environment where participants can pursue their athletic endeavors with reduced risk of injuries, contributing to their long-term physical well-being.

Beyond the physical reality, safety initiatives play a pivotal role in supporting the mental and emotional health of amateur athletes. Petitpas et al. (2005) highlights the importance of cultivating sportsmanship and creating environments that promote respect and positive interactions among participants. This emphasis on positive sporting experiences contributes to the development of a resilient and positive mindset, addressing the mental well-being of athletes. Managing performance pressure and providing resources to cope with challenges are essential components of this approach, facilitating a culture where participants feel supported in their overall development.

In the social context, safety initiatives in amateur sports extend to building a community that is inclusive and diverse. Embracing individuals from various backgrounds and identities enriches the social fabric of sports, promoting a sense of belonging and camaraderie. This inclusivity not only enhances the social well-being of participants but also contributes to a positive and supportive team environment. Coaches and leaders play a crucial role in creating and maintaining such environments, where athletes feel valued for their contributions and unique qualities.

The long-term participation of individuals in amateur sports is closely linked to safety considerations. A focus on injury prevention becomes essential for sustained engagement in sports activities. By implementing comprehensive safety protocols and responding promptly to injuries, amateur sports become a

sustainable and enjoyable pursuit throughout an individual's life. This is aligned with the research by Schroeder et al. (2006), who emphasize the positive impact of sports participation on lifelong engagement and well-being. Moreover, the development of life skills is an integral aspect of safety in amateur sports. The challenges and collaborative nature of sports activities provide a platform for participants to cultivate essential skills such as teamwork, discipline, and resilience. This broader developmental aspect contributes to the overall growth of individuals, shaping them not just as athletes but as well-rounded and resilient members of society.

Educational initiatives and continuous improvement in safety protocols are crucial components of a comprehensive safety framework. Safety education programs for coaches, athletes, and parents enhance awareness and understanding of injury prevention and response strategies. Clear communication of safety policies ensures that all stakeholders are well-informed about expectations and procedures, facilitating a shared commitment to safety within the sporting community.

In conclusion, the importance of safety in amateur sports goes beyond the prevention of injuries; it is a commitment to nurturing the holistic well-being of participants. Through a comprehensive approach encompassing physical, mental, and social dimensions, safety initiatives in amateur sports create an environment where individuals can thrive in their athletic pursuits. This commitment not only safeguards the current generation of athletes but also lays the foundation for a legacy of well-being that resonates through generations of sports enthusiast

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Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework governing Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball is a complex web of rules, guidelines, and standards designed to ensure fair play, participant safety, and the integrity of the sports. In Walking football the regulatory body at the international level is FIFA. FIFA's Laws of the Game govern everything from the dimensions of the field to the conduct of players and officials (FIFA, 2021). At the national level, various Walking football associations, such as the English Walking football Association or the German Walking football Association, implement these regulations within their jurisdictions.

Similarly, catchball follows a regulatory framework overseen by the International Catchball Federation (ICF). The ICF's rules and regulations cover aspects like court dimensions, team composition, and game conduct. National catchball federations, in adherence to the ICF guidelines, ensure the consistent application of these rules in domestic competitions.

For walking basketball, the regulatory authority is IBF, which has a distinct set of rules tailored to the unique dynamics of the sport. These rules encompass court dimensions, player attire, and specific regulations related to playing without running

The regulatory framework in Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball serves several critical purposes. Firstly, it establishes a standardized set of rules that govern the playing of the sport, ensuring consistency across various levels of competition. This uniformity contributes to the integrity of the game and enables players, coaches, and officials to operate within a predictable and equitable environment.

Secondly, the regulatory framework is instrumental in maintaining the safety of participants. Specific rules dictate permissible and impermissible conduct during play, minimizing the risk of injuries and ensuring a level of physical protection for athletes. For example, rules related to dangerous tackles in Walking football or illegal passes and no physical contact in walking basketball contribute to the overall safety of players (FIFA, 2021; FIVB, 2021).

Moreover, the regulatory framework plays a pivotal role in shaping the ethos and sportsmanship within these sporting communities. The rules governing fair play, respect for opponents, and ethical conduct are integral components of the regulatory fabric. Adherence to these principles is not only expected but actively enforced by officials and governing bodies, facilitating an environment where the spirit of the game is as valued as the outcomes.

The evolution of these regulations is a dynamic process, often responding to changes in the sports landscape, advancements in technology, and societal expectations. Amendments and updates to the rules are typically guided by a commitment to improving the sports' fairness, safety, and overall appeal.

In conclusion, the regulatory framework in walking football, catchball, and walking basketball is a complex system designed to uphold the core tenets of these sports. ICF, FIFA and FIVB, as international governing bodies, play central roles in crafting and disseminating these regulations. At the heart of this framework is a commitment to fairness, safety, and the enduring spirit of the game. As these sports continue to evolve, the regulatory framework serves as a compass, guiding participants and stakeholders in their collective journey of competition, sportsmanship, and enjoyment.

Risk Assessment

Understanding safety in sports necessitates a meticulous and comprehending analysis, transcending the mere adherence to rules and regulations. This comprehensive approach implies a deep exploration of the dynamics between athletes, the playing environment, and the unique demands posed by specific sports. Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball, as representative examples, underscore the imperative for a tailored examination of safety considerations. In walking football, renowned for its dynamic nature and intense physicality, a thorough safety analysis involves scrutinizing the biomechanics of player movements, player collisions, and the potential for traumatic injuries, including concussions and ligamentous injuries (Hawkins et al., 2001; McCrory et al., 2017). Acknowledging the diversity of playing surfaces and weather conditions is crucial for understanding injury patterns and

informing prevention strategies (Fuller et al., 2007). Similarly, catchball, whether played indoors or on the beach, presents its own set of safety considerations, encompassing explosive jumps, rapid lateral movements, and high-impact landings, with specific risks of acute sprains and chronic overuse injuries (Shan et al., 2016). A comprehensive safety perspective in catchball extends beyond the physical aspects to include psychological stressors associated with performance pressures and competition dynamics (Tatsumi et al., 2018). This comprehensive analysis of safety is deeply intertwined with empirical data, ongoing research, and collaborative efforts within the sports community. Injury surveillance systems, continuous research initiatives, and the amalgamation of experiential knowledge contribute to this evolving understanding (Hespanhol Junior et al., 2015). An interdisciplinary approach involving sports scientists, medical professionals, and sports organizations facilitates the development of evidence-based safety measures that transcend reactive responses to injuries and instead anticipate and mitigate emerging risks (Soligard et al., 2015). In conclusion, understanding safety in sports requires a holistic and evolving analysis, considering the dynamics among athletes, the playing environment, and the unique demands of specific sports. Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball exemplify the necessity for tailored examinations of safety considerations, encompassing biomechanics, injury patterns, and environmental influences. By embracing this multidimensional approach, sports communities can foster environments where athletes can pursue their passion with minimized risks, ensuring that the pursuit of excellence occurs within the bounds of a thoughtful and responsive safety paradigm.

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Communication Protocols

Effective communication stands as the very important of safety in sports, weaving a crucial fabric that binds athletes, coaches, medical staff, and administrators into a cohesive unit focused on well-being. In the complex and dynamic realm of sports, where split-second decisions can have profound consequences, clear and timely communication becomes paramount. Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball exemplify the importance of effective communication in ensuring the safety of athletes.

In the context of Walking football, a sport characterized by fast-paced action and constant movement, effective communication is indispensable for injury prevention and response. Coaches communicating strategic plans and emphasizing proper techniques contribute to players' understanding and adherence to safety guidelines (Fuller et al., 2019). Similarly, communication between players and medical staff becomes pivotal in recognizing and addressing potential injuries promptly. The ability to convey information swiftly and accurately during a match, whether signaling for substitutions or indicating an emergency, is essential for maintaining a safe playing environment (McCrory et al., 2017).

Catchball, known for its precise coordination, relies heavily on effective communication to ensure player safety. Between teammates, clear communication is crucial for seamless plays and avoiding collisions. Coaches play a pivotal role in articulating strategies that prioritize both performance and injury prevention, facilitating a culture where players feel empowered to voice concerns or seek assistance (Reeser et al., 2020). Communication between medical staff and athletes during rehabilitation processes further solidifies the foundation of safety, ensuring that recovery plans are clearly understood and adhered to.

In the unique setting of walking basketball, communication takes on additional dimensions. The very important role of effective communication extends beyond the field of play to encompass the broader sports environment. Administrators, coaches, and medical professionals must collaborate and communicate seamlessly to establish and disseminate safety protocols. This

includes the formulation of emergency response plans, dissemination of updated safety guidelines, and ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed (Mountjoy et al., 2017). Effective communication channels foster a culture of transparency and accountability, reinforcing the commitment to athlete safety at all levels of sports participation.

The significance of effective communication in sports safety is echoed in the broader sports medicine and science community. Researchers emphasize the importance of communication as a means to facilitate injury prevention initiatives, enhance player education, and improve the overall safety culture within sports organizations (Brooks et al., 2018). The dynamic interplay of communication between athletes, coaches, and medical professionals creates an environment where safety is not merely a set of guidelines but a shared responsibility embraced by all involved.

In conclusion, effective communication serves as the very important of safety in sports, connecting all facets of the sports ecosystem in a shared commitment to athlete well-being. Walking football, catchball, and WALKING BASKETBALL exemplify how clear and timely communication is integral to injury prevention, prompt response to incidents, and the overall safety culture within these sports. The web of communication channels, when woven skillfully, creates a safety net that upholds the fundamental principle of preserving the health and safety of athletes.

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Chapter II Equip Yourself: Gear & Protection

Protecting Players with Equipment in Walking football

- *Shin Guards*

Essential for preventing lower leg injuries, shin guards should be worn by all Walking football players. Ensure that players use properly fitted guards that cover the entire shin area. Regularly check for wear and tear, replacing them as needed.

- *Cleats*

Appropriate footwear is crucial for stability and injury prevention. Cleats designed for Walking football provide traction on the field. Ensure players wear shoes with studs suitable for the playing surface, and regularly inspect cleats for damage.

- *Goalkeeper Gloves*

Goalkeepers need specialized gloves to protect their hands while making saves. Ensure that goalkeepers wear gloves with adequate padding and grip. Regularly check for tears or damage, replacing gloves as necessary.

- *Apparel*

Players should wear appropriate jerseys, shorts, and socks. Loose or overly tight clothing can impede movement and increase the risk of injury. Ensure that players remove any accessories or jewelry that may pose safety hazards.

- *Headgear*

While not mandatory, some players choose to wear protective headgear to reduce the risk of head injuries, especially during aerial duels. Ensure that any headgear used complies with safety standards and does not pose a risk to the player or others.

- *Emergency Medical Kit*

Have a well-equipped medical kit on hand during practices and games. It should include items such as bandages, antiseptic wipes, ice packs, and other first aid essentials to address injuries promptly.

Protecting Players with Equipment in Catchball

- Knee Pads

Catchball players often dive and slide, exposing their knees to potential injuries. Well-fitted knee pads provide essential protection. Ensure players wear knee pads that cover and cushion the patella and surrounding areas.

- Ankle Braces

Ankle injuries are common in catchball due to lateral movements and jumping. Encourage players with a history of ankle issues to wear supportive ankle braces. These braces enhance stability and reduce the risk of sprains.

- Sport Shoes

Proper footwear with gum soles provides traction on the court, reducing the risk of slipping or twisting an ankle. Players should wear shoes designed specifically to support lateral movements.

- Elbow Pads

Players diving to save a ball may benefit from elbow pads. These pads protect against floor burns and impact injuries during defensive plays. Ensure the pads are comfortable and do not restrict movement.

Protecting Players with Equipment in walking basketball

Players participating in **indoor walking basketball** can improve both safety and performance by using suitable sports equipment and clothing. Proper preparation helps prevent injuries, ensures comfort, and allows everyone to enjoy the game in a controlled, safe environment.

- **Footwear**

Indoor Court Shoes: Players should wear basketball or cross-training shoes with non-marking soles designed for indoor courts. Good grip, ankle support, and cushioning are essential to reduce the risk of slipping and to protect joints from impact on hard surfaces. Avoid running shoes, as their sole pattern is not designed for lateral movement.

- **Safety and Support Equipment**

Knee and Elbow Pads: Light, flexible pads provide protection against minor falls or contact with the floor. They help prevent bruises and abrasions,

especially for beginners or players with limited mobility.

Joint Braces: Players with previous injuries or joint instability can use ankle, knee, or wrist braces for additional stability and confidence during movement.

- **Apparel**

Breathable Sportswear: Lightweight, moisture-wicking materials such as polyester or technical fabrics help regulate temperature and keep players dry during the game. Loose, flexible clothing ensures freedom of movement and comfort.

Compression Garments: Compression sleeves or leggings can support muscles, reduce fatigue, and improve blood circulation—particularly beneficial for players managing chronic health conditions.

- **Eye and Skin Protection**

While indoor basketball reduces exposure to sun and weather, players should still consider wearing:

Protective Eyewear: Clear sports glasses or goggles protect against accidental contact with the ball or other players.

Skin Care: For longer sessions in heated or air-conditioned spaces, applying a light moisturizer can help prevent dryness or irritation.

- **Hydration**

Water Bottles: Staying hydrated is important even indoors. Players should bring a refillable water bottle and take regular hydration breaks during the session.

Hydration Stations: Organizers can set up a central table or area with water dispensers to encourage regular fluid intake.

- **Additional Equipment**

Towels: Each player should have a small towel to wipe sweat and maintain good grip on the ball.

First Aid Kit: A basic first aid kit should always be available courtside, including bandages, antiseptic wipes, and athletic tape for immediate care of minor injuries.

Scoreboard and Whistle: For organized play, the referee or facilitator should

use a whistle to manage pace and rest breaks, ensuring participants avoid overexertion.

Equipment Inspection

Catchball: Ensure the catchball used is in good condition, with proper inflation and intact seams. A well-maintained ball contributes to a smoother and safer game.

Net and Boundary Lines: Regularly inspect the net, boundary lines, and any supporting structures to ensure they are secure and free from damage.

- First Aid Kit

Basic First Aid Supplies: Have a compact first aid kit with essentials like adhesive bandages, antiseptic wipes, pain relievers, and blister treatment. Be prepared to address minor injuries promptly.

- Hand Signals:

Establish clear hand signals or calls to communicate effectively with playing partners and avoid collisions on the court.

- Player Awareness Tools

Walking basketball: Use markers to outline court boundaries clearly, minimizing the risk of players stepping outside the designated playing area.

By incorporating these pieces of equipment into their walking basketball experience, players can create a safer and more enjoyable environment.

Coaches and organizers should also emphasize the importance of proper equipment use, and communication to foster a culture of safety on the walking basketball court.

Chapter III Physical preparation for Safe Play

Physical preparedness is very important in sports, forming the foundation upon which athletes can thrive while minimizing the risk of injuries. Whether on the Walking football field, basketball court, or any athletic arena, a holistic approach to physical readiness is essential. This encompasses not only strength and conditioning but also flexibility, agility, and overall wellness. In this exploration of physical preparedness for safe play, we delve into the multifaceted components that contribute to a resilient, injury-resistant athlete.

Strength and Conditioning

❖ Building a Robust Physique

Strength and conditioning programs tailored to the specific demands of the sport play a pivotal role in physical preparedness. Athletes undergo targeted exercises to enhance muscular strength, endurance, and power. This not only optimizes performance but also fortifies the body against the physical stresses of the game.

❖ Core Stability

A strong core is the keystone of athletic prowess. It stabilizes the spine, improves balance, and reduces the risk of injuries, especially in sports that involve rapid changes in direction. Core-specific exercises, such as planks, rotational movements, and stability drills, are integral to facilitating a resilient foundation.

Flexibility and Mobility

❖ Dynamic Warm-ups

Flexible muscles and joints are less prone to strains and sprains. Implementing dynamic warm-up routines before practices and games increases blood flow, improves flexibility, and prepares the body for the demands of the sport. Dynamic stretching, including leg swings, arm circles, and lunges, primes the muscles for optimal performance.

❖ Static Stretching

Post-activity, static stretching aids in muscle recovery and flexibility. Athletes engage in stretches targeting major muscle groups, promoting flexibility and reducing muscle tightness. Incorporating static stretching as part of the cool-down routine contributes to overall physical preparedness.

Agility and Coordination

❖ Agility Drills

Athletes must navigate the field or court with precision and speed. Agility drills, such as ladder drills, cone exercises, and shuttle runs, enhance an athlete's ability to change direction rapidly and react to dynamic game scenarios.

These drills not only improve performance but also reduce the risk of injuries associated with abrupt movements.

❖ Coordination Exercises

Well-coordinated movements are key to preventing accidents and collisions. Athletes engage in exercises that enhance hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness, and overall body control. This focus on coordination contributes to safer play by reducing the likelihood of accidental collisions or missteps.

Nutrition and Hydration

❖ Fueling the Body

Proper nutrition is a cornerstone of physical preparedness. Athletes require a well-balanced diet that provides the necessary nutrients to support energy levels, muscle recovery, and overall health. A diet rich in carbohydrates, proteins, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals ensures the body is adequately fueled for peak performance.

❖ Hydration

Staying hydrated is paramount for safe play. Dehydration can compromise physical and cognitive functions, increasing the risk of injuries. Athletes must maintain a consistent fluid intake, especially during intense training sessions and competitive events. Electrolyte-rich drinks can aid in replenishing lost minerals during prolonged physical activity.

Rest and Recovery

❖ Importance of Sleep

Adequate rest is a non-negotiable component of physical preparedness. Quality sleep is when the body undergoes repair and regeneration. Athletes should prioritize getting the recommended hours of sleep each night to ensure optimal recovery and reduce the risk of injuries associated with fatigue.

❖ Active Recovery

Incorporating active recovery strategies, such as light exercises, stretching, or low-intensity activities, into training routines promotes circulation and aids in

muscle recovery. Active recovery helps prevent stiffness and reduces the likelihood of overuse injuries associated with intense training.

Injury Prevention Programs

❖ Preventive Exercises

Specialized injury prevention programs, tailored to the specific demands of the sport, can significantly reduce the risk of common injuries. These programs often include targeted exercises that address muscle imbalances, enhance stability, and improve biomechanics, all contributing to overall physical preparedness.

❖ Regular Screening and Assessment

Periodic screening and assessments, conducted by sports medicine professionals, help identify potential risk factors for injuries. This proactive approach allows for the implementation of targeted interventions, such as corrective exercises or modifications to training regimens, to mitigate injury risks. In conclusion, achieving physical preparedness for safe play involves a comprehensive approach that extends beyond traditional strength and conditioning. From flexibility and agility to cardiovascular fitness and injury prevention programs, each facet contributes to the overall resilience of the athlete. Coaches, trainers, and athletes alike play pivotal roles in embracing and implementing these principles, facilitating an environment where safe play is not just an aspiration but a fundamental aspect of sports culture.

Chapter IV Game-Day Safety Protocols

Game day in Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball is the culmination of rigorous training, strategic planning, and teamwork. While the focus is on performance, the safety of players remains paramount. In each sport, unique challenges and playing environments necessitate tailored safety protocols to mitigate risks and ensure the well-being of athletes. This comprehensive exploration delves into the game-day safety protocols specifically designed for Walking football, catchball, and walking basketball.

Walking football: A Dynamic Field of Play

1. Pre-Match Medical Assessments

Walking football players undergo comprehensive medical assessments before game day. These assessments include evaluating general health, assessing any existing injuries, and ensuring players are physically fit for the demands of the match. It's an essential step in identifying potential health concerns that could affect performance.

2. Warm-Up and Stretching

A structured warm-up routine is a fundamental aspect of Walking football safety protocols. Dynamic stretching, jogging, and agility drills are incorporated to prepare players physically and mentally for the intensity of the game. This not only enhances flexibility but also reduces the risk of muscular injuries.

3. Equipment Check

Coaches and equipment managers conduct meticulous checks of players' gear before each game. This includes ensuring that jerseys, shorts, shin guards, and cleats are in optimal condition. Properly maintained equipment minimizes the risk of accidents and injuries during play.

4. Hydration Plan

Dehydration can compromise performance and increase the risk of injuries. Walking football teams implement hydration plans, emphasizing the importance of maintaining optimal fluid levels. Coaches and support staff monitor players' hydration status, especially in warmer weather conditions.

5. Weather Monitoring

Weather conditions can significantly impact player safety. Walking football matches are subject to thorough weather monitoring. Extreme temperatures, lightning, or adverse weather conditions prompt a reassessment of safety, potentially leading to game delays or cancellations to protect players and officials.

6. Injuries Protocol

Walking football has recognized the seriousness of head injuries, and stringent concussion protocols are in place. Immediate evaluation and removal from

play, followed by a comprehensive assessment, prioritize the well-being of players who may have suffered injuries.

7. Emergency Medical Plan

Every Walking football venue has a well-defined emergency medical plan. Trained medical personnel are on standby, and there are clear procedures for swift responses to injuries, including access to first aid and evacuation if necessary.

Catchball: Precision and Coordination

1. Pre-Match Health Screening

Catchball players undergo pre-match health screenings to assess their physical well-being. This includes evaluating any pre-existing conditions or injuries to ensure that players are fit for the match, with a special attention to fingers and joints former accidents.

2. Dynamic Warm-Up

Catchball players engage in dynamic warm-up exercises that target specific muscle groups used during the game, especially fingers and hand joints. This includes running forward and backward, stretching, jumping drills, and light aerobic activities to prepare the body for the demands of play.

3. Court Inspection

Coaches and officials inspect the court before matches for any hazards, such as uneven surfaces or obstacles. Ensuring the playing area is free from potential dangers contributes to player safety.

4. Equipment Check

Catchball specific gear, including knee pads and appropriate footwear, undergoes thorough checks. This ensures that players are adequately protected, reducing the risk of injuries during dives, jumps, and rapid directional changes.

5. Hydration Strategy

Hydration is a focal point on game day. Players are encouraged to maintain optimal fluid levels, with water readily available during breaks. Proper hydration supports endurance and reduces the risk of cramps and fatigue-related injuries.

6. Sportsmanship Emphasis

Catchball competitions prioritize sportsmanship, emphasizing fair play and respect for opponents. Clear guidelines discourage aggressive or dangerous behavior, contributing to a safer and more enjoyable playing environment.

WALKING BASKETBALL: Balance, Control, and Coordination

1. Pre-Event Physicals

As with other MOVEUP adapted sports, players participating in Walking Basketball undergo pre-event physical assessments to ensure they are fit for moderate physical activity. These evaluations typically include checks on joint mobility, cardiovascular health, and overall fitness levels—especially important for participants with chronic health conditions.

2. Indoor Warm-Up Routine

Warm-up exercises are tailored to the demands of indoor play on hard surfaces. Players perform dynamic stretching, gentle jogging, and mobility drills focusing on balance, flexibility, and joint activation. The goal is to prepare muscles for low-impact movement and to reduce the risk of strain or injury on the court.

3. Court Preparation

Before matches begin, organizers inspect the indoor basketball court to ensure it is clean, dry, and free of obstacles. Proper lighting, clear boundary markings, and secure basket installations are essential for maintaining player safety. Non-slip surfaces help prevent falls and ensure stable footing for all participants.

4. Environmental Comfort and Safety

Because Walking Basketball is played indoors, the focus shifts from sun protection to maintaining appropriate indoor conditions. Adequate ventilation, comfortable temperature, and good air quality contribute to player well-being. Participants are encouraged to wear breathable sportswear suitable for indoor environments.

5. Equipment Inspection

All Walking Basketball equipment—including basketballs, nets, and court accessories—is checked prior to each session. Players are advised to wear

supportive, non-marking shoes and protective gear such as knee or elbow pads if needed. Any damaged or unsuitable equipment is replaced to maintain a safe playing environment.

6. Hydration and Rest Breaks

Even in an indoor setting, hydration remains crucial. Water stations are made easily accessible, and regular short breaks are scheduled to allow players to rehydrate and recover. Chairs or benches are provided on the sidelines for rest, ensuring participants can pace themselves throughout the session.

7. Communication and Teamwork

Clear communication and teamwork are central to both safety and enjoyment in Walking Basketball. Players use verbal cues and hand signals to coordinate movement, prevent collisions, and maintain awareness of others on the court. Referees and facilitators play an important role in guiding play and ensuring respectful interaction.

8. Emergency Medical Preparedness

Each event includes a basic first aid station and at least one trained staff member or volunteer with first aid certification. Emergency procedures are in place for responding promptly to injuries, dizziness, or other health concerns, particularly for players with chronic conditions.

Game-day safety protocols for Walking Football, Catchball, and Walking Basketball reflect a comprehensive approach to participant well-being. Each sport's unique environment and physical demands require specific safety measures—from medical screenings and equipment checks to communication strategies and emergency response plans. In Walking Basketball, the emphasis on controlled movement, indoor safety, and participant comfort ensures that every session promotes both health and enjoyment.

Player safety is a shared responsibility involving coaches, medical staff, officials, and organizers. Facilitating a culture of safety not only enhances the overall sports experience but also contributes to the longevity and well-being of athletes. Through continued adherence to robust safety protocols, walking football, catchball, and walking basketball can be enjoyed as thrilling and

competitive sports while minimizing the inherent risks associated with high-intensity athletic endeavors

Chapter V Injury Prevention Strategies

Sports and physical activities contribute to a healthy lifestyle, fostering physical fitness, teamwork, and overall well-being. However, it's crucial to prioritize safety to prevent injuries that may occur during these activities. Injury prevention in sports is a multi-faceted issue, impacting athletes, teams, and the sports community as a whole. The significance of injury prevention in sports extends beyond immediate health concerns. It encompasses long-term athletic development, team success, financial considerations, and the overall culture and reputation of sports organizations. Prioritizing injury prevention is a strategic investment in the well-being of athletes and the success of sports programs at various levels.

Top 7 Sports Safety Strategies

1. Wear Proper Protective Gear

One fundamental safety precaution is the use of proper protective gear. Wearing the right protective gear significantly reduces the risk of injuries during sports activities. Helmets, pads, goggles, and other specialized equipment act as a barrier, absorbing impact forces and protecting vulnerable body parts. Body protective wear provides athletes with additional safety and support during physical activities. The type of protective gear required often depends on the sport and the potential risks involved.

Joint and Bone Protection: sports like football, basketball or catchball can lead to falls that may result in joint and bone injuries. Wearing knee pads, elbow pads, and wrist guards provides added support and protection, minimizing the impact on these vulnerable areas.

Shoes with Ankle Support helps prevent ankle sprains and provides stability during lateral movements.

Knowing that they are properly protected can boost the athlete's confidence, allowing them to focus on performance without fear of injury. Adhering to

protective gear guidelines not only ensures personal safety but also avoids penalties or disqualification from competitions.

2. Warm-Up and Stretch.

Ensuring the safety of athletes is paramount in any sports activity. One crucial aspect of injury prevention is the implementation of effective warm-up and stretching routines. What brings the warm-up:

Increasing Blood Flow: proper warm-up gradually increases the heart rate and enhances blood circulation to the muscles. This prepares the body for the increased demands of physical activity, reducing the risk of muscle strains and other injuries.

Improving Flexibility: the warm-up session should include dynamic stretching, which helps improve joint flexibility and range of motion, as all most sports require agility and quick movements.

Enhancing Oxygen Delivery: adequate warm-up ensures efficient oxygen delivery to the muscles, optimizing performance and reducing the likelihood of fatigue-related injuries.

Activation of Nervous System: warm-up activates the nervous system, enhancing coordination and reaction times. This is particularly important in sports that require quick reflexes.

Stretching is an excellent strategy before the match, offering:

- increased muscle elasticity, reducing the risk of strains and tears during physical activity;
- promotes joint mobility and prevent stiffness, contributing to overall joint health;
- helps maintain proper posture, reducing the risk of musculoskeletal imbalances and related injuries;
- prepared body for dynamic movements, reducing apparition of injuries such as sprains, strains and muscle pulls.

3. Stay Hydrated

Hydration is essential for maintaining energy levels, concentration, and overall athletic performance. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, decreased endurance, and impaired cognitive function, negatively impacting an athlete's ability to

excel in their sport. Dehydration is a common cause of muscle cramps, which can hinder an athlete's performance and increase the risk of injury.

During physical exertion, the body produces heat. Sweating is the primary mechanism for dissipating this heat and preventing overheating. Adequate hydration helps regulate body temperature, reducing the risk of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

4. Follow the Rules

Adhering to the rules of a sport is a fundamental aspect of ensuring safety for all participants. Rules are designed to create a structured and safe environment for athletes. Following the rules helps prevent unnecessary collisions, dangerous plays, and other actions that can lead to injuries. Some rules establish a fair and level playing field, ensuring that all athletes have an equal opportunity to compete. Fair play is essential for maintaining the integrity of the sport and fostering sportsmanship among athletes. Following the rules demonstrates respect for opponents, teammates, and officials. Respecting the decisions of referees or judges contributes to a positive and sportsmanlike atmosphere, enhancing the overall experience for everyone involved.

5. Train and Condition

Tailoring training programs to individual athletes' needs and abilities is essential for safety. Athletes vary in terms of fitness levels, experience, and physical conditions. A one-size-fits-all approach may lead to overexertion for some or insufficient training for others.

During their training regime, athletes should follow a gradual progression. Sudden increases in intensity, duration, or frequency can lead to overuse injuries. Gradual progression allows the body to adapt, strengthening muscles, ligaments, and tendons over time. Incorporating a variety of exercises and activities into training programs can prevent overuse injuries associated with repetitive motions. Cross-training helps balance muscle development, improves overall fitness, and reduces the risk of specific sports-related injuries. On the other hand, overtraining can lead to fatigue, decreased performance, and an increased risk of injuries.

6. Use Proper Technique

Whenever engaging in contact or non-contact sports, athletes and coaches must prioritize the use of correct technique to reduce the risk of accidents. Athletes should be educated on the importance of distributing workload evenly and adopting biomechanically sound movements to prevent chronic injuries over time. Proper technique ensures that the athlete's body is aligned correctly, reducing the strain on muscles and joints. Athletes who consistently use proper technique tend to refine their skills, leading to better results in their chosen sport. Periodic check-ins help correct any issues promptly and keep athletes on track with their training goals while prioritizing safety. Coaches can leverage motion analysis and biomechanical tools to provide significant feedback and make data-driven adjustments to training programs.

7. Be Prepared for Emergencies

While engaging in training and/or competitions, it's essential to recognize the inherent risks and be prepared for emergencies. Accidents and injuries can occur unexpectedly, and having a well-thought-out emergency plan is crucial for ensuring the safety of athletes and participants. Basic first aid knowledge, including CPR and wound care, can make a significant difference in the outcome of an emergency situation.

Every sports facility should be equipped with well-maintained first aid kits containing essential supplies. These kits should be easily accessible to coaches, players, and anyone involved in sports activities. Organizers should also develop and communicate a comprehensive emergency action plan (EAP). This plan outlines the steps to be taken in case of various emergencies, such as injuries, severe weather, or other unexpected incidents. This plan should include contact information for emergency services, evacuation procedures, and roles and responsibilities of team members in different scenarios.

In conclusion, a comprehensive approach to injury prevention involves a combination of physical preparation, proper technique, equipment considerations, and a keen awareness of the body's needs. Implementing these strategies collectively fosters a safer and more sustainable environment for athletes at all levels of competition. Injury prevention strategies ensure that individuals can engage in physical activities consistently, reaping the numerous

physical, mental, and social benefits associated with sports. This also fosters a healthier lifestyle and reduces the potential for chronic health issues associated with sedentary behavior or repeated injuries. Organizations that prioritize injury prevention send a clear message about the importance of participant safety. This commitment promotes responsible coaching, encourages adherence to safety guidelines, and contributes to the overall integrity and reputation of the sports community.

Chapter VI Creating a Culture of Safety: Coaches and Players

The concept of safety in sport gathers all measures related to the protection of people from being injured or facing a risk to their health and well-being during sport events. This comprises coaches and players education, sport fields and stadium infrastructures certification and contingency plans.

While specific practices may vary among European countries, there is a collective effort to promote a culture of safe sport across the continent.

European sports organizations, federations, and governing bodies, along with national and local initiatives, play key roles in establishing and reinforcing safety measures in sports. National and international sports federations in Europe work towards setting standards and guidelines for safety in their respective sports. They often collaborate with government bodies to ensure the implementation of safety measures. Their regulations cover areas such as facilities, equipment standards, and medical support. Regular inspections and audits contribute to the maintenance of these standards.

The protection of athletes is a key element of the European Sports Charter, the Code of Sport Ethics and specific sport-related recommendations of the Council of Europe. Therefore, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) organizes events and implements projects to raise awareness on safe and healthy sport environments and to promote the well-being of those who practice sport.

Creating a culture of safety in sports is a shared responsibility involving both coaches and players. This culture of safety not only reduces the risk of injuries but also fosters a positive and supportive environment for everyone involved.

The culture of safe sport in Europe also emphasizes the inclusion and protection of athletes regardless of gender, ethnicity, or abilities. Efforts are made to prevent discrimination, harassment and abuse on sport fields.

Role of Coaches:

Leading by Example Coaches play a pivotal role in setting the tone for safety. By consistently adhering to safety protocols, insisting on wearing appropriate protective gear and demonstrating a commitment to injury prevention, coaches instill the importance of safety in players.

Educate Athletes Coaches should educate players about the importance of safety measures. Providing information on proper warm-up routines, the use of proper technique and on risks associated with unsafe behaviors helps empower players to make informed decisions in the sport field.

Such task can be done by **Implementing Comprehensive Training Programs** designed to prioritize both skill development and injury prevention. Integrating strength and conditioning exercises, agility drills and flexibility training with injury prevention skills and physical preparedness reduce the likelihood of injuries.

Enforce Safety Protocols Establishing clear guidelines for behavior, proper technique and respect of rules helps create a disciplined and safe environment among players. Coaches should address any deviations from safety standards promptly, in front of all players.

This endeavor comes in pair with **Communicating Openly**, as health and safety should be in the focus of both flanks. Athletes should feel comfortable discussing any physical discomfort or injury concerns with their coaches, which will ensure timely intervention and proper care.

Regularly Inspect Equipment Coaches should conduct regular checks to ensure that equipment is in good condition, as faulty or outdated equipment can contribute to injuries. They should encourage players to report issues, replace or repair equipment as needed.

Implement Emergency Action Plans Coaches should be prepared to respond to injuries or emergencies. This includes having access to first aid kits, having

basic knowledge of first aid, knowing emergency contact information and ensuring that players are aware of evacuation procedures.

Role of Players:

Prioritize Personal Safety Emphasizing the importance of reporting injuries, using protective gear, and following safety guidelines helps create a culture where players take responsibility for their own safety. Players should prioritize their own safety and well-being.

Follow Coaches' Instructions As coaches provide guidance on proper techniques, warm-up routines and equipment use, players should adhere to these instructions which contributes to a safer training and playing environment. In the same time, players should **Stay Informed** and educate themselves about injury prevention and proper training practices. Understanding the risks associated with their sport, being aware of preventive measures, and adopting proper recovery techniques will empower players to make safer choices.

Participate in Safety Training Players should attend safety training sessions organized by the coaching staff. This will help players internalize safety principles and understand the importance of injury prevention.

Advocate for Safety Players should actively advocate for their safety within the team and during training or competitions and create a collective commitment to observe standards and regulations for their own well-being.

On the other hand, players should **Report Injuries Promptly** to coaches or medical staff. This allows for early intervention and proper medical care, reducing the risk of aggravating injuries or developing more severe conditions.

Support Teammates Players should support teammates in adhering to safety measures, thus encouraging a culture where teammates look out for one another, a collective responsibility for safety.

Chapter VII Safety Measures for People with Chronic Health Conditions (CHC) in Adapted Team Sports

Chronic Health Conditions and Physical Activity Chronic Health Conditions (CHC), such as Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases,

affect millions of adults worldwide and are closely linked to physical inactivity. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), sedentary lifestyles are responsible for 6% of coronary heart disease cases and 7% of Type 2 Diabetes cases globally. Regular physical activity is therefore a cornerstone of prevention and management strategies for CHC, improving metabolic control, cardiovascular health, and overall quality of life.

Adapted team sports—such as Walking Football, Walking Basketball, and Catchball—represent an inclusive, safe, and socially engaging way for adults with CHC to remain active. These sports combine low-impact exercise with teamwork, motivation, and enjoyment, making them ideal for individuals who may be limited by traditional fitness programs.

The MOVEUP project recognizes that physical activity offers more than physiological benefits. Team sports provide a holistic approach to managing chronic conditions, addressing both physical and psychosocial well-being.

Physical Benefits: Regular participation improves blood glucose control, reduces blood pressure, increases insulin sensitivity, and enhances muscular strength and endurance.

Psychological Benefits are Social interaction, teamwork, and shared goals alleviate stress and anxiety, which are often associated with chronic illness. There is also strong behavioral impact, as Structured sports routines reinforce discipline, adherence to medical recommendations, and the integration of physical activity into daily life.

Through the adapted nature of these sports, participants experience success and inclusion, rather than the fear of overexertion or failure, which often deters individuals with CHC from participating in physical activities.

- General Safety Principles for Participants with CHC

Ensuring the safety of participants with chronic conditions requires a comprehensive, proactive approach that combines medical screening, adapted rules, and continuous monitoring.

1. **Pre-Participation Medical Assessment:** All participants should undergo a basic medical evaluation before joining activities, including

cardiovascular checks, blood pressure readings, and if applicable, blood glucose monitoring.

2. **Informed Consent and Education:** Participants must be informed about safe intensity levels, warning signs of fatigue, hypoglycemia, or dizziness, and the importance of proper hydration and recovery.
3. **Individualized Intensity:** Activities should allow for self-pacing and flexibility. Coaches and facilitators should encourage frequent rest breaks and modify drills according to players' health status.
4. **Accessibility and Environment:** Facilities should be easily accessible, with smooth flooring, seating areas for rest, and available first aid kits and medical support during sessions.

Sport-Specific Safety Guidelines

Walking Football

Avoid running and body contact to reduce cardiovascular stress and injury risk.

Use smaller pitches and lighter balls to minimize exertion.

Schedule frequent hydration and rest intervals.

Ensure warm-ups emphasize joint mobility and cardiovascular preparation.

Walking Basketball

Conduct play on clean, dry indoor surfaces with proper lighting.

Encourage balance and stability exercises to prevent falls.

Use lighter basketballs and adjust hoop height if necessary to accommodate participants with limited upper-body strength.

Monitor heart rate and allow substitutions for those feeling fatigue or dizziness.

Catchball

Emphasize controlled movements and teamwork over speed and jumping.

Encourage players to use knee or elbow pads to reduce joint strain during dives or sudden stops.

Promote continuous communication to prevent collisions.

Include warm-up drills focusing on flexibility and coordination.

Emergency Preparedness and Monitoring

Every adapted sports session must include an emergency response plan, with trained staff able to recognize and manage health incidents such as hypoglycemia, hypertension spikes, or dizziness.

- **First Aid Readiness:** Keep glucose tablets, water, and basic medical supplies courtside.
- **Medical Staff Presence:** Ideally, a nurse or first aid-trained volunteer should be present at all official events.
- **Monitoring:** Encourage participants to check their condition before and after activities, recording blood pressure or glucose levels where relevant.

Creating a Supportive and Inclusive Culture

Safety is not limited to physical well-being—it extends to emotional support and inclusion. A culture of empathy and encouragement enhances adherence and motivation. Coaches should adopt an educational role, explaining how moderate exercise benefits health and creating a non-competitive, team-oriented atmosphere.

Promoting safe participation in Walking Football, Walking Basketball, and Catchball among adults with CHC is a vital step toward combating the global challenges of inactivity and chronic disease. The MOVEUP project's emphasis on inclusive sport and evidence-based safety protocols ensures that participants engage confidently, safely, and meaningfully. By merging medical guidance, structured activity, and social support, adapted team sports can transform health management into a collective, empowering experience.