

Reflections on 30 years of Child Protection in Sport

Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport research

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Content

- Police / investigators perspective
- Start point – late 1980's
- 1990's – Specialism / Trigger cases
- 2000's – Wider understanding, legislation, CPSU
- 2010's – Sports responsibility, multi Sport historic cases, Working Together, dilution
- Going forward / preventing

Perspective / introduction

- Early 70's in Sport - National Comp level UK and abroad
- 1984 joined Met police
- Coached football, FA Welfare officer
- In CP units since 1991/2, permanent from 1998
- Complex paedophile and child murders since 2003
- 3 years on first MASH, Serious Case Reviewer
- Retired 2014 – now ICPO / ISO

Late 1980's

- Sexual legislation based in 1950's
- Until 1986 – no power to arrest for sexual assault on a female!
- Attitudes – disbelief / mistrust of children's accounts
- Cross class abuse finally acknowledged
- No clear CP guidelines or dedicated Child Protection Units
- Children Act 1989
 - Sec 47 – Are / likely to suffer significant harm – joint investigations

1990's

- Serious abuse cases - specific Police Child Protection Teams
- Specially trained (Memorandum) interviewers
- Child friendly interview suites
- Still fewer checks for those working in sport vs education / care
 - Sports coach / teacher checks – rudimentary (no POCA, List 99)
- Two specific cases in swimming – Hickson / Drew – internationally reported / comments

Hickson



- Coach to the GB Swimming team - 1984 and 1988 Olympics
- Ran squads Norwich, Swansea, Millfield (Somerset)
- Arrested 1992
- Absconded to France - Crimewatch
- On return arrested on family holiday in Sherwood Forest
- Further victims emerged – 13, nine gave evidence
- Sentenced to 17yrs '2 x rape, multiple sexual assaults' – 1976 – 1991, ages 13 to 20 - predatory

Hickson ctd ..

- Trial – emerged prior complaints from adult female swimmers re behaviour (to ASA)
- University Formally Warned – made athletes strip naked
- Somerset school suggested they had taken up and PH had ‘impeccable references’ from the University
- 1993 US Swimming comment – Executive Director ASCA – ‘would not permit any suspicions of sexual abuse against a coach to be officially reported by parents or athletes unless the accusation had been assessed by another coach who agreed that there were grounds for making an official report’.

Drew



- GB Coach and president of British Swimming Coaches Association, ASA CP Committee
- 1995 stated “The Hickson case did a lot of damage to our profession. Now we have to establish the procedure that will make it easier for suspects to be dealt with. If anyone has any doubts about the conduct of one of our members they should come directly to us’
- 1999 – Young man revealed sexually assaulted by Drew
- Arrested – absconded – more victims – 1969 to 1991, 10 charges - multiple rapes, sexual assaults, off poolside assaults, extra sessions, hotel and home visits etc

Drew ctd..

where swimming galas had been held, and by the time the case came to court there was so much evidence against him that Drew, who had no previous convictions, pleaded guilty.

Havering police will now be working with the swimming organisations to try and prevent a similar case happening again.

In 1996, Paul Hickson, Britain's chief coach at the Seoul and Los Angeles Olympics in the 1980s, was convicted of 17 offences including rape and sexual assault.

Perversely, while he was president of the BSCTA, Drew promised to safeguard children's wellbeing.

At the time Drew said: "The Hickson case did a lot of damage to our profession. Now we have to establish the procedure that will make it easier for suspects to be dealt with. If anyone has any doubts about the conduct of one of our members they should come directly to us."

Following the Hickson scandal, a helpline was set up by the Amateur Swimming Association, but the Drew case has renewed calls for further procedures to be put in place.



Det Sgt Oddy.



Drew ctd..

- Judge told Drew '....utterly depraved ... in complete disregard to the boys who were in your charge. Your only thought was to manipulate the opportunity to gain selfish and perverted sexual gratification'
- Later reduced from 8yrs to 6yrs imprisonment
- Defence argued not 'depraved' / 'predatory'
- Mismatch in sentencing powers (rape)

2000's

- Tennis, diving etc other sports coaches arrested
- National Coaches receptive to understanding risk

2000's ctd

- Post convictions - swimming, diving, athletics and gymnastics
NGB's met the Sports Council, NSPCC, National Coaching Foundation (NCF) - child protection in sport
- Establishment CPSU 2001*
- Links between UK Sports, NGB's, Active (County Sports Partnerships) and NSPCC, police on local levels

2000's ctd

- 2002/3 – stronger legislation to protect children from adults who pose a risk to them (PoT)**
- 2003 - Criminal record checks available to sport
- 2003/4 – Sexual Offences Act
- 2004 - LADO's set up in Children Act
- 2004 - Children's voices to be heard in decisions



2010's

- CSOD 2010 – Sarah's Law
- Research data - greatest risk of emotional and sexual abuse occurs among the highest ranked athletes
- Early 2010's emergence of Social Media / Smart / Camera Phones – technology risks
- Police cross border intelligence
- 2012 – Operation Yewtree – Savile etc
- Operation Hydrant 2014

2010's ctd

- CPSU funding £1m over 2yrs Sport England - sports taking more ownership
- Police – cost saving - merging CP / PPU / Sexual Offences
- Specialism's reducing – in some cases diluting specific experience
- GDPR and DPA
- Police 'Disclosure Units' – lessening Info Sharing
- Struggling with examination of technology

2010's ctd

- Football - 1970's through 2000's some clubs suggesting not aware of concerns, but records existed suggesting concerns ignored.
- 2016 FA Enquiry
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)
- 2018 - USA Gymnastics
- 2019 - USA Swimming – CEO's unaware of policy / practice – calls for resignation

2010's ctd

- 2018 Working Together –
 - Some (sports clubs)... will be community amateur sports clubs.. **All should have the arrangements** in place and should collaborate to work effectively with the *Safeguarding Partners* as required. **Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, respond to child protection concerns**
- CEO's / Board members becoming more accountable
- Sport Case Management – Central reporting

**Getting
the
balance
right?**





Good Sport policy

- ANY suspicion of Criminal Offences
 - NOT for Sport to investigate
 - Risks;
 - Compromise Police investigation - lose evidence available
 - Compromise Police interviews
 - Compromise Court process
 - Fail to comply – fail to protect children LONG TERM
 - Compromises NGB Risk assessments



Sports should ask how we prevent...

- Football Coach 24 years imprisonment
- Victim's quote;
 - "The abuse after 1991 could have been stopped if the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Southampton Football Club and the FA had all done their jobs properly"

Prevention 2020 →

- Active / effective use of CP Policies
- Act positively on ALL concerns raised
- Considering each sport's environments (Contextual Safeguarding)
 - E.g. Swimming Clubs advised to segregate male / female swimmers use of changing rooms
 - National working with facility providers / Pool design Forum to design out risk of sexual images / assaults

Prevention continues

- Come a long way
- Still much to do – information sharing
- Out with the old - ‘Few bad apples’ 1990’s 2000’s and failing to respond to concerns
- In with the new - preventative environment / culture, discussion and reporting process

Questions?



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