



National Coaching Charter (NCC)

Part 1 – Athlete Tenets

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NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER (NCC)

INTRODUCTION

Coaches should be the most ethical persons in an organization. The public and all of its people are constantly observing and scrutinizing sport organizations. Sport organizations are in the public eye and the public should demand nothing less than professionalism from its coaches. Everyone knows that coaches are role models and any prospective coach should be aware of and strive to produce positive images and public relations for the sake of the sport organization and the community.

The **NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER** (NCC) Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that are applied to members of National Gymnastics Association (NGA). Whether or not a coach, or other professional, has violated the NCC Code does not by itself determine if they are legally liable in a court action, if a contract is enforceable or if other legal consequences occur—these results are based on legal rather than ethical rules. However, compliance with or violation of NGA NCC Codes may be admissible as evidence in some legal proceedings, depending on the circumstances.

The NCC Code provides both the general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by coaches and industry professionals. Its primary goal is the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom coaches work. This Code and its parts also provides a common set of values upon which coaches and professionals build their professional work. It is the individual responsibility of each person to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Coaches and industry professionals respect and protect human and civil rights and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

The NCC Charter was inspired by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (*American Psychological Association, Vol. 47, No.12 1597-1611*). Other ideas for ethical standards were drawn from Coaching Association of Canada and British Institute of Sport Coaches. The NCC Code has been provided by the US Gymnastics Coaches Association, and partnered with US Elite Coaches Association as a document to use in its entirety.

This charter is not intended to supersede USOPC SafeSport codes.

NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER

Part 1—ATHLETE TENETS

- 1. My athlete is not less than me**
 - Amid the fast pace of coaching, it can be easy to forget that my athlete is not less than me
- 2. Athletes are capable of so much**
 - Coaches don't always see the athlete—sometimes, they only see their efforts to train the athlete instead—recognize 100% the athlete
- 3. We miss their competency**
 - Coaches experience the exhaustion of managing, scheduling and maintaining the day-to-day training that causes them to miss their competency
 - Coaches think athletes are capable because of the coaches, when, in so many ways, the coaches strength comes from the athlete
- 4. Athlete courage, exhibition of self**
 - Simple ways athletes communicate joy, the honesty in their voice and the vulnerability in their questions leave a newfound joy for who they are becoming—recognize and embrace this courage
- 5. Replace the superiority**
 - Instead of superiority, athletes need to feel the coaches trust them, believe in them, and that they see them as equals
- 6. Athlete training takes a village**
 - Training an athlete is a partnership between parent, athlete, coach and peers and all should realize the beautiful human being who wants to be just like their role models
- 7. Treat athletes as you would like to be treated**
 - Coaches should model the behavior they want to encourage in their athletes
- 8. Talk up to the athlete**
 - In times of learning, coaches talk at the athlete, exasperated in what most likely has been told 100x times, but does not help when coaches talk down to the athlete
 - Coaches who engage in caring, respectful relationships with other adults understand it is possible with a athlete

- Athletes feel everything from the adult mentors in their lives—show the athlete how much they mean to the coach through talking

9. Include athletes in the training plans

- When making decisions about the training session, big or small, ask the athlete often for their input
- Watch as the athlete revels in the inclusion of the coaches choice—be mindful of asking for their participation that might be above what might be their level of ability
- Help athletes to believe in themselves!

10. Offer choices, show an interest in their opinions

- Along with asking for their opinion, provide the athlete the space to make decisions on their own, ensuring they have the coaches support in whatever those decisions are
- When athletes are told what to do, often they begin to relinquish their own power of choice, not even realizing it as an option
- Remind the athlete that everyone has choices in their lives—the chosen response to those choices is what strengthens us

11. Give options

- Frame questions with choices—yes or no questions imply hierarchy, whereas choices signify an interest in the other's opinion

12. Think less like a superior

- If athletes are treated as if they know less than the coaches, the approach will always infer they know less
- Coaches subconsciously speak above the athlete, not even hearing the condescending tone in their voice
- Empathize with a athlete's perspective—athletes see things differently with less of a filter than coaches—to think less like a superior is not to act less like a superior
- Coaches are responsible to the athletes and must always be acting with their well-being in mind
- Coaches actions should show we care for athletes deeply

13. Pay attention

- Coaches should dwell less on what they think athletes need and be more mindful of what the athletes are showing what they need

- Ask the athlete more questions and make eye contact—come to their level, and when finished asking questions, ask if there is anything else they would like to say

14. Give autonomy and equity

- Athletes always surprise us with their willingness, tenacity, concentration and awe for what they are accomplishing—they want to do it all
- If coaches gave them the autonomy and equity to do so, they would show that they can do it, too

15. Stay calm

- As a coach, never allow the athlete's mood to control—just keep breathing
- At times, athletes aren't good at regulating their emotions, but coaches can—we are the adults

16. Empower what your athletes can control

- Focus on the choices of the athlete—it's ok to say, "You know what (use their name)_____, that's your choice"
- Empowering the athlete's choice and honoring them also means there will still be consequences that athletes can't control
- Take note of what coaches can control—athletes normally choose something they can control—as coaches, we have control of the things we provide them
- Empowered athletes are safer athletes

17. Listen rather than argue with athletes

- Athletes argue because it gives them a false sense of power
- Take a listening approach and change the dynamic of the conversation—do this by saying, "Oh, that's interesting. Tell me more about that."

18. Be empathic rather than angry

- Let them know that at times it's also hard on you as a coach

19. Treat each athlete as an individual

- Relate to and treat each athlete differently—this is part of what makes that athlete a unique person and is a way of appreciating their special characteristics

20. Allow coaching style changes

- Coaches change their style as they gain experience

- Learning how to be a coach with their first athletes will be different from their relationships with subsequent athletes
- Coaches develop and learn along side their athletes
- Coaches' actions, conversational style, and displays of emotion will change with each new set of athletes

21. Identify athletes' own style

- Each athlete has their own style and needs, initially because of skill level, age, and later because of experiences
- Older athletes need to be treated differently from younger ones
- High-strung athletes need different approaches than do easygoing ones
- On every issue—rules, expectations, responsibilities, rewards, and reprimands—coaches must individualize their coaching style while trying to remain fair to all—very difficult to achieve
- Even if coaches interact with their athletes in a comparable manner, each athlete may perceive these actions differently

22. Development age factors

- Coaches behavior toward their athletes is determined in part by the age and developmental stage of each athlete
- Coaches should treat athletes differently at different ages; problems occur when coaches do not act appropriately for their athlete's developmental age and needs

23. Family dynamics—family size

- Personal family size influences the athlete's development
- Experiences of an only child is different from an athlete in a larger family
- An older athlete's experience is different from a younger one's—older athlete has a younger sibling, while the younger athlete has an older sibling. A middle athlete has older and younger siblings
- Because of birth order and family size, no two athletes experience the gym family the same way either

24. Family dynamics—birth order

- Birth order of athletes within a family may also affect the way they relate to their coaches, the way they respond, the experiences they have, and thus the way they develop as individuals

- Firstborn athletes may feel neglected or unloved after the arrival of a new sibling at home and may act younger or more babylike in order to attract both parental and coach attention

25. Temperaments

- Temperaments of coaches and athletes influence the way each interacts with the other
- A coach whose temperament fares best with order and predictability finds coaching a disorganized, spontaneous, impulsive athlete a daily challenge—and easy going coaches and athletes can readily make allowances for one another

26. Factors of the athlete's family

- Each part of the athlete's family has a unique relationship—athletes relate in different ways to the male coach and to the female coach—their teammates relate to each coach in their own way—each athlete relates to each teammate in a particular way
- Athletes are sensitive to these differences within team relationships; they monitor them, respond to them, and relate to one another in a manner based upon the nature of their experiences and how they perceive them
- Differences among athletes reflect how they perceive their roles and relationships within their team—how they have been appreciated, respected, and understood—factors which can influence their self-confidence, sense of trust, and ability to cope with challenges and disappointments

27. Relationships and attention

- Over the years the relationships among athletes can contribute to increasing differences
- Athletes compete for the affection and attention of their coaches just as they do for their parents—they compare themselves with one another, become aware of one another's strengths and weaknesses, and try to find the most comfortable and rewarding role for themselves within the team family unit
- In this dynamic interaction, differences develop and can become more pronounced with time, affecting everything from self-esteem and behavioral style to life goals and career choices

28. Tough and rewarding

- Training athletes in gymnastics leading or dance is one of the toughest and most fulfilling jobs in the sports world—and one for which a coach might, at

times, feel the least prepared—coaches are not alone in this, reach out for help if the road gets too bumpy

29. Boosting an athlete's self-esteem

- Children start developing their sense of self as babies when they see themselves through their parents' eyes
- As a coach, the tone of voice, body language, and every expression are absorbed by the athletes
- Praising accomplishments, however small, will make them feel proud; letting athlete do things independently will make them feel capable and strong
- By contrast, belittling comments or comparing an athlete unfavorably with another will make them feel worthless

30. Using words

- Words and actions as a coach affect athletes developing self-esteem almost as much as their parents
- Avoid making loaded statements or using words as weapons—comments like "What a stupid thing to do!" or "You act more like a beginning athlete than they do!" cause damage just as physical blows do
- Choose words carefully and be compassionate—let athletes know that everyone makes mistakes and that you, as the coaches, still care for them and appreciate them, even when you don't care for their behavior

31. Catch athlete being good

- Be aware of how many times you as a coach react negatively to the athletes in a given training session—and may criticize far more often than compliment—with negative guidance, even if it was well intentioned
- More effective approach is to catch athletes doing something right: "You finished your conditioning without being asked — that's terrific!" or "I was watching you show a younger athlete a better way and you were very patient." These statements will do more to encourage good behavior over the long run than repeated reprimands
- Make a point to find something to praise each athlete every training session

32. Be generous with rewards

- Your attention, high-fives, and compliments work wonders and are often reward enough—eventually you will find the "growth" of the behavior you would like to see

33. Set limits and be consistent with the discipline

- For safety, discipline is necessary in every gym
- Goal of discipline is to help athletes choose acceptable behaviors, learn self-control, all leading to a safer environment
- Athletes may test the limits the coach establishes for them, but they need those limits to grow into responsible athletes
- Establishing gym rules (similar to home rules) helps athletes understand the expectations and develop self-control
- Some rules might include: no future skill training until the daily event assignment is done, and obsessive talking during and event to be curbed
- Have a well documented system in place: one warning, followed by consequences such as a loss of privileges (i.e., free time, etc.)
- Common mistake coaches make is failure to follow through with the consequences—do not discipline athletes for obsessive talking during training one day and ignore it the next
- Being consistent teaches what you expect

34. Make time for athletes

- It's often difficult for parents and kids to get together and spend quality time together—there is probably nothing kids would like more
- Athletes who aren't getting the attention they want from their parents or family unit often act out or misbehave in a training environment because they're sure to be noticed that way
- Coaches should find the time to give each athlete each training session a personal comment or a few minutes just for them
- Adolescents seem to need less undivided attention from the adults in their life than younger athletes

35. Be a good role model

- Young athletes learn a lot about how to act by watching the adults around them
- The younger they are, the more cues they take from the coaches
- Before lashing out or showing anger in front of the athlete, think about this: Is that how you want your athlete to behave when angry?
- Be aware that as a coach, you're constantly being watched by the athletes—studies show that athletes display what they have as role models in their life

- Model traits you wish to see in athletes: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance—exhibit unselfish behavior
- Do things for other people without expecting a reward—express thanks and offer compliments
- Above all, treat athletes the way you expect other people to treat you

36. Make communication a priority

- Do not expect athletes to do everything simply because you, as a coach, “because I said so.”
- Athletes want and deserve explanations as much as adults do
- If time isn’t taken to explain, athletes will begin to wonder about values and motives and whether they have any basis
- Coaches who reason with their athletes at times, allow them to understand and learn in a nonjudgmental way
- Make expectations clear—If there is a problem, describe it, express your feelings, and invite the athlete to work on a solution with you—be sure to include consequences
- Make suggestions and offer choices—be open to the athlete's suggestions as well
- Negotiate
- Athletes who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out

37. Be flexible and willing to adjust your coaching style

- Coaches who often feel “let down” by their athlete's behavior, may have unrealistic expectations
- Coaches who think in “should's” (for example, “My athlete should have this skill by now”) might find it helpful to read up on the matter or to talk to other coaches or child development specialists—find a peer who can help and ask!
- Athletes' environments have an effect on their behavior—change the behavior by changing the environment
- If a coach is constantly saying “you are not making the changes I am giving you” to their athlete, look for ways to alter the words so fewer things are expected to change—resulting in less frustration for both
- As athletes change, coaches gradually have to change their coaching style—what works with the athlete now won't work the same in a year or two

- Teen athletes tend to look less to their adult mentors and more to their peers for role models
- Continue to provide guidance, encouragement, and appropriate discipline while allowing the athlete to earn more independence
- Seize every available moment to make a connection!

38. Show that your caring is unconditional

- Coaches are responsible for training and guiding their athletes
- How a coach expresses their corrective guidance makes all the difference in how a athlete receives it—when an athlete must be confronted, avoid blaming, criticizing, or fault-finding, which undermine self-esteem and can lead to resentment
- Instead, strive to nurture and encourage the athlete—make sure they know that although the coach wants and expects better next time, their care is there no matter what

39. Know your own needs and limitations as a coach

- All coaches have imperfections with strengths and weaknesses as a team leaders—recognize your own abilities — "I am caring and dedicated"
- Vow to work on the weaknesses — "I need to be more consistent with discipline"
- Try to have realistic expectations for yourself, your peers, and the athletes
- Coaches don't have to have all the answers—be forgiving of yourself—try to make coaching a manageable profession
- Focus on areas that need the most attention rather than trying to address everything all at once
- Admit it when you're burned out—take time out from coaching to do things that make you happy as a person
- Focusing on personal needs does not make you selfish—It simply means you care about your own well-being, which is another important value to model for the athletes

40. What you do matters

- What you do makes a difference—the athletes are watching
- Don't just react on the spur of the moment—ask yourself, "What do I want to accomplish, is this behavior likely to produce that result?"

41. You cannot be too caring

- It is not possible to spoil an athlete by caring too much
- Product of leniency with an athlete is never the result of showing an athlete too much attention—is usually the consequence of giving an athlete things in place of caring—like leniency, lowered expectations, or material things

42. Be involved in the athlete's life

- Being an involved coach takes time, is hard work, and often means rethinking and rearranging some priorities—frequently means sacrificing what you want to do for what the athlete needs to do
- Be there mentally as well as physically
- Being involved does not mean solving an athlete's problem for them—problem solving for the athlete means the athlete is not learning

43. Adapt your coaching to fit your athlete

- Keep pace with the athlete's development—the athlete is growing up
- Consider how age is affecting the athlete's behavior—the same drive for independence that is making a beginning level athlete strive to learn skills their way is also what's motivating them to be follow the coaches lead
- Same intellectual growth spurt making a 13-year-old curious and inquisitive also is making them argumentative at some levels of the training process
- Problem with young teens could be a number of things: athlete may be depressed, could be getting too little sleep, staying up too late, could be they simply need some help in structuring time, or may have a learning problem. Pushing the athlete to do better is not the answer—problem needs to be diagnosed by a professional

44. Establish and set rules

- If coaches don't manage an athlete's behavior when they are young, they will have a hard time learning how to manage themselves when they are older
- Rules the athlete has learned from the coach are going to help shape the rules they apply to themselves in the future—do not micromanage an athlete
- Once they're middle school age, let the athlete have a part in their own training, make some choices and not intervene

45. Foster the athlete's independence

- Set limits to help the athlete develop a sense of self-control
- Encouraging independence helps them develop a sense of self-direction

- To be successful in life, they need both
- Normal for athletes to push for autonomy—many coaches mistakenly equate their athlete's independence with rebelliousness or disobedience
- Athletes push for independence because it is part of human nature to want to feel in control rather than to feel controlled by someone else

46. Be consistent

- If training rules vary from day to day in an unpredictable fashion or if enforced only intermittently, the athlete's misbehavior is the coaches fault, not the athlete—most important disciplinary tool is consistency
- Identify the non negotiable—the more the coaches authority is based on wisdom and not on power, the less the athlete will challenge it—many coaches have problems being consistent, force yourself to be more consistent—athletes get confused

47. Avoid harsh discipline

- Coaches should never use conditioning as a discipline tool, under any circumstances
- Athletes who are negatively disciplined are more prone to showing aggression with other athletes, are more likely to be bullies and more likely to use aggression to solve disputes with others
- There are many other ways to discipline a athlete, including 'time out' (child-rearing 101) which work better and do not involve aggression

48. Explain the rules and decisions

- Good coaches have expectations for the athlete to live up to
- Generally, coaches over-explain to young athletes and under-explain to adolescents
- What is obvious to the coach may not be evident to a 12-year-old—do not have the priorities, judgment or experience that the adult has

Example: 6-year-old athlete is very active and very smart—but constantly steps out of line, butts in front of others—not giving other kids a chance, and talks too much in training—coach needs to address the athletes behavior problem, to talk to the athlete about it. Coaches should meet with the parent and develop a joint strategy to keep the athlete safe, to have a well-defined set of expectations

49. Treat the athlete with respect

- Best way to get respectful treatment from an athlete is to treat them respectfully—give an athlete the same courtesies given to anyone else
- Speak politely, respect their opinion, pay attention when they are speaking to you, treat them kindly, try to please them when you can
- Athletes will treat others the way their coaches and other adult figures treat them
- The coaches relationship with their athlete is the foundation for the athletes' relationships with others

50. Our national coaching charter

- Do not discount our instinctive generosity is to just those in our ranks
- Our compassion is not just for our own athletes but all athletes
- Our confidence is that we can succeed together, not at each other's expense

NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER

Part 2—COACH PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE A—COMPETENCE

- Strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work
- Recognize boundaries of their particular competencies and limitations of their expertise
- Provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training or experience
- In areas in which recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work
- Maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the rendered services and recognize the need for ongoing education
- Make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical, administrative resources

PRINCIPLE B—INTEGRITY

- Seek to promote integrity in the practice of coaching
- Be honest, fair and respectful of others
- In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, or extra fees they do not make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive
- Strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on their work
- Clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles
- Avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships

PRINCIPLE C—PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes
- Consult with, refer, cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their athletes or other recipients of their services

- Moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when coaches' conduct may compromise their professional responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in the coaching profession and coaches
- Be concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' professional conduct and when appropriate, consult with colleagues to prevent or avoid unethical conduct

PRINCIPLE D—RESPECT FOR PARTICIPANTS AND DIGNITY

- Respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants (*athletes, their family members, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and spectators*)
- Be aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, military status or marital status
- Eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices

PRINCIPLE E—CONCERN FOR OTHERS' WELFARE

- Seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally
- Consider the welfare and rights of their athletes and other participants in their professional actions
- When conflicts occur among professionals' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm
- Be sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships

PRINCIPLE F—RESPONSIBLE COACHING

- Be aware of their professional responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live
- Apply and make public their knowledge of sport to contribute to human welfare
- Avoid misuse of their work
- Comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport
- Be encouraged to contribute a portion of their professional time for little or no personal advantage

NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER

Part 3—INDUSTRY STANDARDS

1.0—GENERAL STANDARDS—These NCC Standards are applicable to the professional activities of gymnastics coaches and professionals in all disciplines

1.1—APPLICABILITY OF THE NCC CODE

While many aspects of personal behavior and private activities seem far removed from official duties of coaching, all coaches should be sensitive to their position as role models for their athletes. Private activities perceived as immoral or illegal can influence the coaching environment and coaches are encouraged to observe the standards of the NCC Code consistently

1.2—BOUNDARIES OF COMPETENCE

- A. Coaches, and other professionals provide services only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience or appropriate professional experience
- B. Coaches, and other professionals provide services involving new techniques only after first undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision and/or consultation from persons who are competent in those areas or techniques
- C. In those emerging areas in which generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist, coaches and other professionals nevertheless take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect athletes and other participants from harm

1.3—MAINTAINING EXPERTISE

Coaches and other professionals, maintain a reasonable level of awareness of current scientific and professional information in their fields of activity and undertake ongoing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use

1.4—BASIS FOR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENTS

Coaches, and other professionals, rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge when making professional judgments or when engaging in professional endeavors

1.5—NATURE AND RESULTS OF COACHING SERVICES

When coaches and other professionals, provide services to an individual, a group or an organization, they provide, using language that is reasonably understandable to the recipient of those services, appropriate information beforehand about the

nature of such services and appropriate information later about results and conclusions

1.6—RESPECTING OTHERS

Coaches, and other professionals, respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes and opinions that differ from their own

1.7—NONDISCRIMINATION

Coaches, and other professionals, do not engage in discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status or any basis proscribed by law

1.8—SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A. Coaches, and other professionals, do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances or verbal or nonverbal conduct sexual in nature and:

1. Is unwelcome, is offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the professional knows or is told this
2. Is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context—sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

B. Coaches, and other professionals, accord sexual-harassment complainants and respondents dignity and respect—professionals do not participate in denying an athlete the right to participate based upon their having made, or being the subject of, sexual harassment charges

1.9—OTHER HARASSMENT

Coaches, and other professionals, do not engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to persons with whom they interact in their work based on factors such as the persons' age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language or socioeconomic status.

1.10—PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, recognize their personal problems or conflicts may interfere with their effectiveness—accordingly, refrain from undertaking an activity when knowing their personal problems are likely to lead to harm to athletes or other participants to whom they may owe a professional obligation
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, have an obligation to be alert to signs of, to obtain assistance for, their personal problems at an early stage to prevent significantly impaired performance

- C. Coaches, and other professionals, who become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend or terminate their work-related duties

1.11—AVOIDING HARM

Coaches, and other professionals, take reasonable steps to avoid harming their athletes or other participants and minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable

1.12—MISUSE OF PROFESSIONALS' INFLUENCE

Because professional judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, coaches and other professionals must be alert to guard against personal, financial, social, organizational or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence

1.13—MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

- A. In many communities and situations, it may not be feasible or reasonable for professionals to avoid social or other nonprofessional contacts with athletes and other participants
1. Coaches, and other professionals, must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal
 2. A professional refrains from entering into or promising another personal, professional, financial or other relationship if it appears likely that such a relationship reasonably might impair the professional's objectivity or otherwise interfere with them effectively performing their functions as a coach or other professional, or might harm or exploit the other party
- B. Likewise, whenever feasible, an industry professional refrains from taking on professional obligations when preexisting relationships would create a risk of such harm
- C. If a coach, or other professional, finds (*due to unforeseen factors*) a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, they must attempt to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the NCC Code

1.14—EXPLOITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, do not exploit athletes or other participants over whom they have supervisory, evaluative or other authority

- B. Coaches, and other professionals, do not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with athletes or other participants over whom they have evaluative, direct or indirect authority, because such relationships are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative

1.15—CONSULTATIONS AND REFERRALS

When indicated and professionally appropriate, coaches, and other industry leaders, cooperate with other professionals to serve their athletes or other participants effectively and appropriately

1.16—DELEGATION TO AND SUPERVISION OF SUBORDINATES

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, delegate to their employees, supervisors and assistants only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently, on the basis of their education, training or experience, either independently or with the level of supervision being provided
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, provide proper training and supervision to their employees or supervisors and take reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services responsibly, competently and ethically

1.17—FEES AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- A. As early as is feasible in a professional relationship, coach and/or industry leader and athlete (*or other participants*) reach an agreement specifying compensation and billing arrangements
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, do not exploit recipients of services or athletes with respect to fees
- C. Coaches, and other professionals, do not misrepresent their fees
- D. If limitations to services can be anticipated because of limitations in financing, this is discussed with the athlete or other participant as appropriate

2.0—ADVERTISING AND OTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS—Coaches, and other industry leaders, comply with the NCC Code in public statements relating to their professional services, products or publications

2.1—STATEMENTS BY OTHERS

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, who engage others to create or place public statements promoting their professional practice, products or activities retain professional responsibility for such statements
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, make reasonable efforts to prevent others whom they do not control (such as employers, publishers, sponsors,

organizational clients and representatives of print or broadcast media) from making deceptive statements concerning their professional activities

- C. Coaches, and other professionals, learning of deceptive statements about their work made by others will make reasonable efforts to correct such statements
- D. Coaches, and other professionals, do not compensate members of press, radio, television or other communication media in return for publicity in a news item
- E. A paid advertisement relating to the professional's activities must be identified as such, unless it is already apparent from the context

2.2—AVOIDANCE OF FALSE OR DECEPTIVE STATEMENTS

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent, either because of what they state, convey or suggest, of what they omit, concerning their work activities or those of persons or organizations with which they are affiliated
- B. As examples (*and not limited*) of this standard, professionals do not make false or deceptive statements concerning:
 - 1. Training, experiences or competence
 - 2. Academic degrees
 - 3. Credentials
 - 4. Institutional or association affiliations
 - 5. Services
 - 6. Basis for, or results or degree of success of their services
 - 7. Extra fees

2.3—MEDIA PRESENTATIONS

When coaches and industry leaders provide advice or comment by means of public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television programs, prerecorded tapes, printed articles, mailed material or other media, they take reasonable precautions to ensure the statements are consistent with the NCC Code

2.4—TESTIMONIALS

Coaches, and other professionals, do not solicit testimonials from current athletes or other participants who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence

2.5—RECRUITING

Coaches, and other professionals, do not engage, directly or through agents, in uninvited in-person solicitation of business from actual or potential athletes or other participants who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence

3.0—TRAINING ATHLETES

3.1—STRUCTURING THE RELATIONSHIP

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, discuss with athletes as early as is feasible appropriate issues, such as the nature and anticipated course of training, extra fees and confidentiality
- B. When the professional's work with athletes will be supervised, the above discussion includes that fact and the name of the supervisor
- C. Coaches, and other professionals, make reasonable efforts to answer athletes' questions and to avoid apparent misunderstandings about training. Whenever possible, they provide oral and/or written information, using language reasonably understandable to the athlete

3.2—FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- A. When a professional agrees to provide services to several persons who have a relationship (*parents and children*), they attempt to clarify at the outset.
 - 1. Which of the individuals are athletes; and
 - 2. The relationship the professional will have with each person—clarification includes their role and the probable uses of the services provided
- B. As soon as it becomes apparent the professional may be called on to perform potentially conflicting roles (*i.e., intermediary between parents and children or sibling teammates*), they attempt to clarify and adjust, or withdraw from, roles appropriately

3.3—PROVIDING SERVICES TO THOSE SERVED BY OTHERS

In deciding whether to offer or provide services to those already receiving services elsewhere, professionals carefully consider the potential athlete's welfare—professional discusses these issues with the athlete or another legally authorized person on behalf of the athlete to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict

3.4—SEXUAL INTIMACIES WITH CURRENT ATHLETES

Coaches, and other professionals do not engage in sexual intimacies with current athletes

3.5—COACHING FORMER SEXUAL PARTNERS

Coaches, and other professionals, do not coach athletes with whom they have engaged in sexual intimacies

3.6—SEXUAL INTIMACIES WITH FORMER ATHLETES

- A. Coaches, and other professionals should not engage in sexual intimacies with a former athlete for at least two years after cessation or termination of professional services

- B. Because sexual intimacies with a former athlete are so frequently harmful to the athlete, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the coaching profession and the industry and thereby deter the public's use of needed services, coaches, and other professionals, do not engage in sexual intimacies with former athletes even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances
- C. The professional who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the professional-athlete relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including:
 - 1. Amount of time that has passed since the relationship terminated;
 - 2. Circumstances of termination;
 - 3. Athlete's personal history;
 - 4. Athlete's current mental status;
 - 5. Likelihood of adverse impact on the athlete and others; and
 - 6. Only statements or actions made by the professional during the course of the relationship suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the athlete or professional

3.7—DRUG-FREE SPORT

Coaches, and other professionals, do not tolerate the use of performance enhancing drugs and support athletes' efforts to be drug-free

3.8—ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, discourage the use of alcohol and tobacco in conjunction with athletic events or victory celebrations at playing sites and forbid use of alcohol by minors
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, refrain from tobacco and alcohol use while they are coaching or administering professional services and make every effort to avoid their use while in the presence of their athletes
- C. Use or provide to a third party any illegal (*scheduled*) drug pursuant to applicable federal, state or municipal law
- D. Assist or condone any competing athlete's use of a drug banned by any applicable governing body, or, in the case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by any governing body

3.9—INTERRUPTION OF SERVICES

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, make reasonable efforts to plan for training in the event that professional services are interrupted by factors such as illness, death, unavailability or relocation

- B. When entering into employment or contractual relationships, professionals provide for orderly and appropriate resolution of responsibility for athlete training in the event that the employment or contractual relationship ends, with paramount consideration given to the welfare of the athlete

3.10—TERMINATING THE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, terminate a professional relationship when it becomes reasonably clear the athlete no longer needs the service, is not benefiting or is being harmed by continued service
- B. Prior to termination, for whatever reason, except where precluded by the athlete's conduct, the professional discusses the athlete's views and needs, provides appropriate pre-termination counseling, suggests alternative service providers as appropriate and takes other reasonable steps to facilitate transfer of responsibility to another provider if the athlete needs one immediately

4.0—TRAINING SUPERVISION

4.1—DESIGN OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

Coaches, and other professionals, who are responsible for training programs for other coaches seek to ensure the programs are competently designed, provide the proper experiences and meet the requirements for certification or other goals for which claims are made by the program

4.2—DESCRIPTIONS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, responsible for training programs for other coaches seek to ensure that there is a current and accurate description of the program content, training goals and objectives, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory completion of the program—information must be readily available to all interested parties
- B. Coaches, and other professionals, seek to ensure statements concerning their training programs are accurate and not misleading

4.3—ACCURACY AND OBJECTIVITY IN COACHING

- A. When engaged in coaching, coaches present information accurately and with a reasonable degree of objectivity
- B. When engaged in coaching, coaches recognize the power they hold over athletes and therefore make reasonable efforts to avoid engaging in conduct that is personally demeaning to athletes and other participants

4.4—ASSESSING ATHLETE PERFORMANCE

- A. In coach-athlete relationships, coaches establish an appropriate process for providing feedback to athletes.
- B. Coaches evaluate athletes on the basis of their actual performance on relevant and established program requirements

4.5—HONORING COMMITMENTS

Coaches, and other professionals, take reasonable measures to honor all commitments they've made to athletes

5.0—TEAM SELECTION

5.1—EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- A. Coaches, and other professionals, perform evaluations or team selection only within the context of a defined professional relationship
- B. Professionals' assessments, recommendations, reports, and evaluative statements used to select team members are based on information and techniques sufficient to provide appropriate substantiation for their finding.

6.0—RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES

6.1—FAMILIARITY WITH NCC CODE

Coaches, and other professionals, have an obligation to be familiar with the NCC Code, other applicable ethics codes, and their application to their work—lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct

6.2—CONFRONTING ETHICAL ISSUES

When a professional is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate the NCC Code, they ordinarily consults with other professionals knowledgeable about ethical issues, with NGB or USOPC ethics committees, or with other appropriate authorities in order to choose a proper response

6.3—CONFLICTS BETWEEN ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS

If the demands of an organization with which coaches and other professionals are affiliated conflict with this NCC Code, they clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to the NCC Code, and to the extent feasible, seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to the NCC Code

6.4—INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

When coaches, and other professionals, believe there may have been an ethical violation by another, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the individual's attention if an informal resolution appears appropriate and when intervention does not violate any athlete rights that may be involved

6.5—REPORTING ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

If an apparent ethical violation is not appropriate for informal resolution or is not resolved properly, professionals take further action appropriate to the situation, unless such action conflicts with athlete rights in ways that cannot be resolved—such action might include referral to NGB or USOPC committees on professional ethics

6.6—COOPERATING WITH ETHICS COMMITTEES

Coaches, and other professionals cooperate in ethics investigations, proceedings and resulting requirements of the USOPC and the NGB—failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation

6.7—IMPROPER COMPLAINTS

Coaches, and other professionals, do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to protect the public

7.0—PROCESS RELATING TO VIOLATION OF CODE

7.1—Coach or professional acknowledges NCC is administered under the authority of the NGA and a violation of this Code subjects them to the processes of the NGA—NGA acknowledges that all violations of the NCC Code will be reviewed for possible membership removal

7.2—In the event a violation of a NCC Code occurs during an authorized NGB activity, NGB may, as sanctioner of the event, take action separate and independent from that of the NGA to protect its interests and those of athletes, coaches, professionals and others at the location

7.3—Any action taken by NGA which affects the opportunity of a professional to participate in "protected" competition as defined in the USOPC Constitution shall be entitled to processes assured under the USOPC Constitution and the Amateur Sports Act of 1978—includes process within NGA, the USOPC and the American Arbitration Association

7.4—If the violation of NCC occurs while a member of the NGB, USOPC team or event, the professional and NGB acknowledge that the USOPC may institute its own proceeding regarding the violation, which action shall not restrict the ability or obligation of the NGB to take its own separate and independent action

7.5—If a professional is found to have violated NCC, such action is separate and apart from any other legal consequences which may occur as a result of the act

PLEDGE

NGA has partnered with the US Elite Coaches Association (USECA) to adopt a **NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER (NCC)** and it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with this document and conduct myself according to its tenets. Failure to understand any of the principles of these documents does not constitute a defense for violation of its rules. The principles outlined are intended to be clarifications or expansions on the USOPC document, among others, and are an emphasis on the values of NGA. This document should not be considered to be the full scope of regulations and ethics codes required of professionals. Further, where this document supersedes, contradicts or exceeds the scope of the USOPC Coaching Ethics Code, I will adhere to the principles and intent of the NGA NCC Code. I recognize NCC goes beyond the scope of the law, and should be treated with the same, or greater, respect and gravity with which I treat the laws and standards of my community.

PLEDGE I—PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

I pledge to maintain practices that protect the public and advance my profession; I will:

- A. Maintain responsible association with the NGB, its national programs and member organizations;
- B. Continue personal and professional growth, remaining current on new developments in the field through continuing education;
- C. Use my knowledge and professional association(s) for the benefit of the people I serve;
- D. Always strive to be truthful and put colleagues or other professionals in a positive light;
- E. Avoid discrimination in all of its forms.

PLEDGE II—COACH/ATHLETE RELATIONSHIPS

I pledge to maintain relationships with athletes on a professional basis; I will:

- A. Conduct all my relationships from a perspective of dignity and sound educational and scientific foundation to:
 1. Direct comments or criticism relative to the performance, not the athlete;
 2. Ensure all activities are suitable for the age, experience and ability of the athletes;
 3. Educate athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment, and to do my best to ensure all facilities and equipment meet safety standards and are age/ability appropriate;
 4. Consider the athlete's future health and well being as foremost when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue competing or

- training, and seek professional medical opinions to serve as a basis for my decisions;
5. Be aware of academic responsibilities; conduct practices and match schedules in a manner so as not to unduly interfere with academic success. Never encourage, condone, or require any behavior that threatens an athlete's high school, collegiate eligibility or amateur status;
 6. Comply with regulations and ethical guidelines for recruiting practices as defined by governing sport organizations;
 7. Strive to develop individual and team respect for the ability of opponents;
 8. Prioritize being present at all practices and competitions and when unable to, will procure knowledgeable and safe supervision;
- B. Work with and strive to develop every individual.
- C. Show sensitive regard for the moral, social, religious and sexual orientations of others and communities and will not impose my beliefs on others.
- D. Recognize the trust placed in and the unique power of the coach and athlete relationship and will not exploit the dependency of athletes.
- E. Avoid dual relationships (*business or close personal relationships*) which could impair my professional judgment, compromise the integrity of the process and/or take advantage of the relationship for my own gain.
- F. While serving in a professional capacity or as a role model, avoid any drug, tobacco or alcohol use while in the presence of athletes, will discourage by way of education any consumption of these substances by minors and will remain at all times within the limits of the law with regard to legal substances—I will avoid illegal ones entirely.
- G. Not engage in physical, verbal or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or exploitative coercion of current or former athletes and will report any suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate authorities immediately.
- H. Recognize all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment with athletes are illegal and unethical, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement and will report all suspected cases of sexual assault or abuse to law enforcement as required by law.

PLEDGE III—CONFIDENTIALITY

I pledge to respect the integrity and protect the welfare of all persons with whom I am working; I will:

- A. Safeguard information about them that has been learned or obtained during the coaching relationship, including performance reviews, statistics and all personal confidences;

- B. Obtain permission from athletes before sharing videotape recordings or other data of them with anyone except the recognized coaching staff;
- C. Disguise current or former athletes when referred to in a publication, while teaching or in a public presentation that is not laudatory;
- D. Not use these standards of confidentiality to avoid intervention when it is necessary (*evidence of physical or psychological abuse of minors, or legal issues*).

PLEDGE IV—STAFF / EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

I pledge to maintain all relationships with employees and staff on a professional and confidential basis and avoid exploiting their trust and dependency.

I have read and understand the NGA/USECA **NATIONAL COACHING CHARTER** (NCC). I agree to abide by the Standards, and I understand that violation may result in forfeiture of my membership privileges.