

# Codes of Conduct for Coaches

## Purpose of the Code

A Code of Conduct for Coaches provides guidelines for the professional behavior of a coach. The main purposes of the code are to secure a certain standard of coaching and to protect the welfare of individuals, groups and animals with whom coaches work, as well as giving the coach reference points as how to react in difficult situations. The Code of Conduct also promotes fair and responsible behavior by the coach towards the athletes he/she is in charge of. The coach's function is that of a role model especially considering children and youths, therefore coaches are challenged to constantly behave and act in manners appropriate. The obligation of a coach is not only to promote, advance and support the athletic career of an individual but also to raise the individual to be good persons with stable notions of values and good behaviors and manners.

Illegal, unlawful and harmful behavior toward the athletes on the part of the coach should not be tolerated by the clubs, associations or federations and should be persecuted with the appropriate means.

## Comparison of the terminology

When comparing Codes of Conduct and Codes of Ethic for coaches to each other it soon becomes evident that the terms are used interchangeable. Codes of Ethics give as thorough guidelines as Codes of Conduct do. Not one is more aspirational than the other. Hence sports associations, federations, clubs and gyms around the world are free to choose whichever term they prefer.

## How to use this homepage

The purpose of this homepage is to help clubs, associations and federations in creating their own Code of Conduct for Coaches. The principles with their explanations are supposed to give ideas and guidelines as what should be included in a Code of Conduct.

In the table below the principles are listed with the respective focus to give a guideline in establishing a Code of Conduct. Because the table only provides the essence of the principles it is strongly recommended to read through the paragraphs below. The Codes that were used establishing this homepage are listed below with the respective links. Some of the Codes are also available in other language than English, which might help in phrasing a Code in a different language than English.

## Main Principles and Focus of the Codes

The main principles that are covered in the codes are: Competence, Trustworthiness, Respect, Fairness, Caring, Integrity, and Responsibility.

Table 1. The Principles of a Code of Conduct and the main focus of the principles are presented.

Principles/ Values	Focus
Competence	Coach education
Trustworthiness	Keep rules of confidentiality; Inspire trust in own athletes
Respect	Athletes, decisions, rules, promises, commitments, privacy
Fairness	Fair-play; same opportunities for each athlete; no use of illegal substances and methods
Caring	for athletes and animals; well-being of physical and emotional state of athletes
Integrity	stay true to own values and actions; act as a role model
Responsibility	for development of the athlete; for own development as a coach;

## Principles of the Code

The main principles that are covered in the codes are: Competence, Trustworthiness, Respect, Fairness, Caring, Integrity, and Responsibility.

**Competence:** Coaches only use methods and techniques that they are confident in teaching, where they possess the qualifications for. The coach avoids using methods that are a risk to health and safety of the athletes. A coach seeks continuous personal improvement. The coach keeps up with the latest developments in coaching and teaching. The coach only uses training methods that will benefit the athletes.

**Trustworthiness:** The coach has to inspire trustworthiness in athletes. The coach keeps to the rules of confidentiality and discusses with others matters concerning the athlete only if he/she has discussed with the athlete beforehand which information he/she is allowed to share with a third party. The coach involves athletes in decisions that concern them and their future.

**Respect:** A coach shows respect towards others, one self, the sport, the organization and property. Respect towards others means to show tolerance and to treat everyone equally regardless of their sex, age, race, language, socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, disability, or religion and to respect their rights and dignity. A coach respects the decisions made by others (officials and opponents). The coach treats each athlete as an individual with own rights and needs. The coach respects promises and commitments and keeps to them, both written and verbal. The coach respects the fact that the athlete is entitled to seek opinions and help from a third party. The coach respects the privacy of the athlete. The coach avoids any form of harassment (sex, gender, disability) towards the athlete.

**Fairness:** The coach is fair to the athletes. The coach provides each athlete with the same opportunities and training times. A coach shows no favoritism to one athlete over the other. A coach teaches athletes to be fair (fair-play) to their team-mates and opponents. The coach has to refrain from using any unfair and illegal training methods (including performance enhancing drugs). The coach has to forbear from allowing any bribery to his person or his athletes.

**Caring:** A coach provides feedback to the athletes, and avoids too much negative feedback. A coach cares for the well-being of the athletes but avoids any kind of intimate contact with the athletes. The coach ensures that the training and competition requirements meet the abilities of the individual athlete in fitness and age. The coach instructs the athlete to a healthy life style and explains the lifelong benefits of sport. The coach leads the athlete towards becoming a mature individual who is able to take care of him-/herself, make decisions, and show responsibilities for their own behavior and performance in all life situations. The coach has to consider the wishes and opinions of the athletes. The coach has to carefully consider how to deal with the media and always keep in mind what is best for the athlete. The coach cares for the well-being of the athletes and animals he/she is in charge of.

**Integrity:** A coach should be a person of integrity, keeping to their personal values in word and action at all times. A coach does not take any bribes and discourages any notion of the athlete towards taking bribes or displaying non-sportsmanship like behavior. A coach has to keep a high moral standard and has to follow it at all times. The coach acts as a role-model.

**Responsibility:** The coach has to give the athletes the opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem. The coach ensures that the training-program is adjusted to the needs and capabilities of each athlete. The coach promotes the values of team spirit and fair-play and that winning is only one part of athleticism but that fun and enjoyment are more important. The coach has the responsibility to keep up with the latest developments in training and coaching techniques and makes sure that the training facilities are in good and appropriate conditions. The coach also has the responsibility to act as a role model and to promote a healthy life style for the athletes to follow. The coach acts as an example that the athletes can copy and follow. The coach also has to keep in regular contact with the parents or legal guardians about training schedules, possible trips, rules and regulations, as well as with doctors, physiotherapists and other people involved in the athletic development of the athlete. Coaches should not over train the athlete, but have the athletes well-being at all times as a priority, as well as keeping them interested in the sport. Each individual athlete should be trained in a way that they reach their full potential. Coaches promote sportsmanship on and off the field. The coach also has the responsibility to care for the well-being and appropriate treatment of animals involved in the sport. The coach should also show responsible behavior towards natural resources and the environment and should motivate the athletes to take the same care. Coaches refrain from the use of performance enhancing drugs, smoking and alcohol. Coaches do not start

sexual relationships with their athletes and also discourage attempts from the athletes to initiate sexual relationships with them.

### Additional information

Some codes require that the coach signs them and so the coach agrees consequently to adhere to the rules stated in the code.

Codes also exist for parents, athletes, officials, referees and other people who are in some way connected to sports. But for now this summary is concentrating on the Codes that have been established for coaches.

### Further Reading

The principles stated above were gathered together from numerous Codes of Conduct and Ethic from around the world (see list below).

- American Football Coaches Association, Code of Ethics  
<https://membership.afca.com/membership/registration/CodeofEthics.pdf>
- Australia: Coach's Code of Ethics by the Australian Sports Commission  
[http://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/ethics/strategies\\_and\\_initiatives/codes\\_of\\_behaviour](http://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/ethics/strategies_and_initiatives/codes_of_behaviour)
- Badminton World Federation: Code of Conduct for Coaches and Technical Officials  
<http://www.bwfbadminton.org/page.aspx?id=14923>
- California Interscholastic Federation: Code of Conduct for Coaches  
<http://www.cifccs.org/sportsmanship/Coaches%20Code%20of%20Conduct.htm>
- Canada: Coaches of Canada <http://www.coachesofcanada.com/professionals/conduct.asp>
- Denmark: God opførsel for trænere (Danish Olympic Committee)  
[http://www.dif.dk/PROJEKTER\\_OG\\_RAADGIVNING/raadgivning/etisk%20kodeks/god%20opfoersel%20for%20traenere.aspx](http://www.dif.dk/PROJEKTER_OG_RAADGIVNING/raadgivning/etisk%20kodeks/god%20opfoersel%20for%20traenere.aspx)
- FA Mini Soccer: Code of Conduct  
<http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/Players/MiniSoccer/MiniSoccerCodeOfConduct>
- FIFA: Code of Ethics  
<http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/organisation/footballgovernance/codeethics.html>
- Finland: Suomen liikunta ja urheilu (Fair Play Handbook) [https://slu-fi-bin.directo.fi/@Bin/7dc54e1d602ac2aeae00543dbc914192/1328254840/application/pdf/3639039/SLU-REPE\\_KIRJA\\_english\\_FINAL\\_low.pdf](https://slu-fi-bin.directo.fi/@Bin/7dc54e1d602ac2aeae00543dbc914192/1328254840/application/pdf/3639039/SLU-REPE_KIRJA_english_FINAL_low.pdf)
- France: Association Française pour un sport sans violence et pour le Fair Play  
<http://fairplay.franceolympique.com/accueil.php>
- Germany: Ehrenkodex fuer Trainerinnen und Trainer im Sport  
[http://www.rudern.de/uploads/media/Ehrenkodex\\_f\\_r\\_Trainer\\_01.pdf](http://www.rudern.de/uploads/media/Ehrenkodex_f_r_Trainer_01.pdf)
- Hong Kong China Rowing Association Coaching Codes of Ethics (HKCRA CCE)  
[http://www.rowing.org.hk/web/b5/HKCRA\\_Coaching\\_Code\\_English.pdf](http://www.rowing.org.hk/web/b5/HKCRA_Coaching_Code_English.pdf)

- Hong Kong Rugby Football Union – Youth Rugby Code of Conduct  
[http://www.hkrugby.com/system/files/community\\_dept/Mini\\_Laws/2010-11%20HKMRFU%20Hand\\_Book%20-%20v3%202%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.hkrugby.com/system/files/community_dept/Mini_Laws/2010-11%20HKMRFU%20Hand_Book%20-%20v3%202%20FINAL.pdf)
- Hong Kong Wushu Coach Association Coaches' Code of Conduct  
<http://www.hkcoaching.org/eng.htm>
- Hong Kong: Coach's Code of Conduct Hong Kong Coaching Committee  
<http://www.hkcoaching.com/hk/coc.asp>
- Hong Kong: Junior Football League Codes of Conduct <http://hkjfl.com/codes-of-conduct>
- International Committee for Fair Play – Manifesto (CIFP)  
<http://www.fairplayinternational.org/cifp/fair-play-charter>  
<http://www.panathlon.net/public/attivita/PI%20and%20the%20promotion%20of%20fp2.pdf>
- International Tennis Federation Code of Ethics for Coaches  
<http://www.itftennis.com/coaching/practicalinfo/codeofethics.asp>
- IPC (International Paralympic Committee) Code of Conduct for Coaches  
[http://www.paralympic.org/export/sites/default/IPC/Reference\\_Documents/2008\\_2\\_Classification\\_Code6.pdf](http://www.paralympic.org/export/sites/default/IPC/Reference_Documents/2008_2_Classification_Code6.pdf)
- NASPE (National Association for Sport and Physical Education; USA): A Coach's Code of Conduct  
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/upload/A-Coach-s-Code-of-Conduct-2009.pdf>
- Netherlands: Seksuele intimidatie NOC\*NSF <http://nocnsf.nl/nocnsf.nl/olympische-droom/sport-en-maatschappij/seksuele-intimidatie/seksuele-intimidatie>
- New Zealand SPRC: Coaches' Code of Ethics <http://www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/Becoming-a-Coach/Coaches-Code-of-Ethics/>
- Slovenia: Football Association Coach's Code of Conduct  
<http://www2.nzs.si/2000/nzs/Kodeks%20obvez%20in%20vedenja%20nogometnih.pdf>
- Slovenia: Tennis Federation Coach's Code of Conduct  
[http://www.trenerska.org/TOTZS,,delovanje,trenerski\\_kodeks.htm](http://www.trenerska.org/TOTZS,,delovanje,trenerski_kodeks.htm)
- Switzerland: Ethik Charta [http://www.swissolympic.ch/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-4245//4333\\_read-25145/](http://www.swissolympic.ch/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-4245//4333_read-25145/)
- UEFA: Fair Play, Code of Conduct for Officials  
[http://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/competitions/WorldCup/67/17/65/671765\\_DOWNLOAD.pdf](http://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/competitions/WorldCup/67/17/65/671765_DOWNLOAD.pdf)
- UK – Code of Practice for Sports Coaches Rights/ Relationships/ Responsibilities  
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/code-of-practice-for-sports-coaches.pdf>
- United States Olympic Committee: Coaching Ethics Code  
[http://usaluge.org/tryluge/coaching\\_ethics.pdf](http://usaluge.org/tryluge/coaching_ethics.pdf)