

# Coaches Code of Ethics, Standards and Conduct



This information is intended to provide both the general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by coaches and instructors. It has, as its primary goal, the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom coaches work.

It is the individual responsibility of each coach to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Above all, coaches of young people can have great influence on developing athletes who are reliant on them for the basic instruction and guidance necessary to reach the top levels. Coaches can have tremendous power over these athletes in their quest to the top. This power must not be abused. Therefore, we have set forth these codes of ethics and conduct to guide our coaches and protect our athletes for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

## General Principles:

- **Competence:** Coaches must strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They should recognize the boundaries of their competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They should provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training and/or experience. In those areas where recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches must exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They shall maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the services they render, and they must recognize the need for ongoing education. Coaches should make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical and administrative resources.
- **Integrity:** Coaches should seek to promote integrity in their coaching profession. Coaches should always be honest, fair and respectful of others. They must not make false, misleading or deceptive representations about their qualifications, services, products or fees. Coaches should strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the most feasible extent, they should attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Coaches must avoid conflicts of interest.
- **Professional Responsibility:** Coaches must 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. Coaches should consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their athletes or other recipients of their services. Coaches should be concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' conduct. When appropriate, they should consult with their colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.
- **Respect for Participants and Dignity:** Coaches shall respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants. Coaches must be aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socioeconomic status. Coaches must eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.
- **Concern for Others Welfare:** In their actions, coaches must consider the welfare and rights of their athletes and other participants. When conflicts occur among coaches' obligations or concerns, they should attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Coaches shall be sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others and should not exploit nor mislead other people during or after their relationship.
- **Responsible Coaching:** Coaches must be aware of their ethical responsibility to the community and the society in which they work and live. Coaches must comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport or activity. The coach shall strive to serve as a leader and model in the development of appropriate conduct for the athlete both within and beyond the U.S. Figure Skating setting. The coach shall strive to use strategies in practice and competition that are designed to encourage play within the letter and spirit of the rules. The coach shall strive to keep the concepts of winning and losing in proper perspective. The coach shall strive to enforce policies and rules with fairness, consistency and an appreciation for individual differences.

## Ethical Standards:

- **Compliance with Rule Requirements:** All coaches must complete all annual coaching member requirements set forth by U.S. Figure Skating Rules and the PSA that apply to them by the appropriate deadlines.

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- **Competence:** Coaches should not undertake these duties until they have first obtained the proper training, study and advice so that they are competent to do so.
- **Maintaining Expertise:** Coaches should maintain a level of expertise through continued education and experience and shall strive to acquire additional education and experience through sources available to them.
- **Respecting Others:** Coaches shall respect the rights of other's values, opinions and beliefs even if they differ from their own.
- **Nondiscrimination:** Coaches must not engage in discrimination based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status or any other basis as protected by applicable law.
- **Misconduct:** Coaches must not, under any circumstances, engage in any form of misconduct and will respond to complaints of such a nature to respondents with dignity and respect.
- **Personal Problems or Conflicts:** Coaches should have a responsibility to be aware if there are personal problems or conflicts which may affect their ability to work with athletes. They should also be able to identify problems affecting their athletes, which could potentially create situations that place their athletes in harm or danger of injury and take the appropriate steps to remove the athlete from this environment.

Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3B, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

## **Coaches Code of Conduct:**

- Must obey and abide by all U.S. Figure Skating published rules, regulations and procedures.
- Shall maintain exemplary standards of personal conduct.
- Must obey all state, national and international laws.
- May not be under the effects of alcohol, illegal drugs or any substance that can affect athlete safety and coaching judgment.
- Must refrain from using any profane or abusive language.
- Must not engage in any type of misconduct with any athlete.
- Must teach and support the athletes fairly and equitably.
- Must never discriminate against any athlete.

I understand that as a U.S. Figure Skating member coach, I have assumed certain responsibilities to prepare, develop and be an advocate and role model. I have read and agree to the "Coaches Code of Conduct" and understand what is expected of me.

\*Also refer to the PSA Code of Ethics and Tenets of Professionalism for more information.