



International Association of Athletics Federations

Code of Ethics for Coaches

International Association of Athletics Federations
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GENDER EQUITY STATEMENT

Throughout the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System “he”, “him” and “his” have been used inclusively, and are intended to apply to both men and women. It is important in athletics, as elsewhere, that women and men should have equal status and equal opportunities.



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Code of Ethics for Coaches

Introduction

The basic principle of the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches is that ethical considerations leading to fair play are integral, and not optional, elements of all sports activity. These ethical considerations apply to all levels of ability and commitment. They include recreational as well as competitive Athletics.

The Code provides a sound ethical framework to combat the pressures in modern day society. Many of these pressures appear to be undermining the traditional foundation of sport - foundations built on fair play and sportsmanship and, in many instances, on the voluntary movement.

Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. Fair play is a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. Fair play can be expressed as a philosophy of coaching and incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing in the right spirit. This philosophy also integrates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, doping, gamesmanship, physical and verbal violence, exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Sport is a cultural activity which, practised fairly, offers the individual the opportunity of personal development through self knowledge, self determination, self expression and self fulfilment. This individual development leads to personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, moral maturation, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport promotes an active involvement and responsibility of the individual within society.

It has been said that Athletics has a place above all other sports. Its component skills are fundamental to most other sports and modern training theory originated and developed in Athletics. It is the most international of all sports and is the central focus of the Olympic Games. Coaches in Athletics are in a privileged position in preparing several generations of athletes for their contribution to Athletics. With this privilege comes a certain responsibility. This responsibility is that through the work of the individual coach, and how it is carried out, an image of coaching is projected to athletes, to other coaches and to those not involved in coaching. Whether these coaches in Athletics are in paid employment or working as volunteers they enjoy a high profile as representatives of the sport.

The development of fair play or sportsmanlike behaviours and attitudes is not an automatic consequence of participating in Athletics. These fair play behaviours can be learned from the coach who provides a positive role model and applies consistent, clear reinforcement for what are desirable and undesirable actions. The role of the coach is, therefore, crucial as an ambassador, educator and guardian of the ethical values of fair play within Athletics.

The Code of Ethics

The coach's primary role is to facilitate the process of individual development through achievement of Athletic potential. This role accepts the athletes' long term interests as of greater importance than short term athletic considerations. The ethical considerations of the coach must apply to all levels of ability and commitment, and include recreational as well as competitive Athletics. To fulfil this role the coach must behave in an ethical manner reflecting the following points:

Respect of Human Rights

Coaches must respect the basic human rights, that is the equal rights, of each athlete with no discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, birth or other status. This respect must extend to maintaining the dignity and recognising the contribution of every individual within Athletics and society as a whole.

In addition, coaches must respect the basic human right of each athlete to participate in Athletics with freedom from physical or sexual harassment and freedom from inappropriate physical or sexual advances or behaviour.

Respect of Rules

Coaches must acknowledge and respect that Track and Field Athletics is governed by the rules of the International Association of Athletics Federations, their National Federation or other appropriately recognised governing body. This respect should extend to the spirit as well as to the letter of the rules, in both training and competition, to ensure fairness of competitive opportunity between all athletes. Respect for officials should be active, by accepting the role of the officials in providing judgement to ensure that competitions are conducted fairly and according to the established rules.

Coaches must accept that they have a responsibility to encourage the athletes they coach to have a similar respect for the spirit of the rules. This includes the spirit and manner of behaviour towards opponents, other coaches and officials. Coaches have a responsibility to influence the performance and conduct of the athletes they coach, while at the same time encouraging the independence and self determination of each athlete by their acceptance of responsibility for their own decisions, conduct and performance.

Coaches must assert a positive and active leadership role to prevent any use of prohibited drugs or other disallowed performance enhancing substances or practices. This leadership from coaches should include education of the athletes of the harmful effects, both ethically and medically, of prohibited substances and practices.

Respect of other Coaches

The coach must acknowledge that all coaches have an equal right to desire the success of the athletes they coach - competing within the rules. Coaches should strive to deal with other coaches in the way they would wish to be dealt with themselves, with courtesy due to a colleague and the respect due to a fellow man or woman. Observations, recommendations and criticism should be directed to the appropriate person or persons using professionally accepted procedures outside the view or hearing of the public domain.

Coaches should never solicit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are receiving coaching to join their squad. If, however, an athlete enters into discussion with a coach in connection with the current coaching relationship, while the athlete is already being coached by another coach, then the present coach must be informed by the coach and/or athlete as soon as is practical. The present coach who is advised of an athlete's desire to be coached by another individual must bear in mind that all coaches should place the athlete's interest first.

The coach must acknowledge and recognise that all athletes have a right to pursue their athletic potential, including when an athlete's development would benefit from a change of coaching

situation. The coach should ensure that, in these cases, any formation of a coaching partnership or transfer to another coach is actively explored with the athlete, whose decision is supported.

Respect of Proficiency

Although there is no substitute for practical coaching experience, coaches should hold recognised coaching qualifications. Coaches should respect that the gaining of coaching qualifications is an ongoing commitment, achieved through the upgrading of their knowledge by attendance of accredited courses and through practical coaching experience.

Coaches must ensure that the practical environments they create and the physical and psychological challenges they set for each athlete are appropriate. This appropriateness must take into consideration the age, maturity and skill level of the athlete and provide for all necessary safety aspects. This is particularly important in the case of younger or less developed athletes.

Respect of the Coaches Image

Coaches must respect the image and role of the coach. There is a responsibility that through the work of the individual coach, and how it is carried out, an image of coaching is projected to athletes, to other coaches and to those not involved in coaching. The coach should also recognise that their role includes an athlete's education for life through Athletics, and not simply an athlete's education of Athletics.

To transmit a positive image, the coach must continuously maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, reflected in both the manner of appearance and behaviour. This conduct must conform to the standards of their National Federation and the IAAF. In particular, coaches should never smoke while coaching, nor consume alcoholic beverages so soon before coaching that it affects their competence or that the smell of alcohol is on their breath.

Respect for the Esprit de Corps

Coaches should enter into full cooperation with all individuals and agencies that could play a role in the development of the athletes they coach. Coaches should strive to deal with these individuals in the way they would wish to be dealt with themselves, with courtesy due to a colleague and the respect due to a fellow man or woman. Observations, recommendations and criticism should be directed to the appropriate person or persons using professionally accepted procedures outside the view or hearing of the public domain.

Coaches should also share the knowledge and practical experience they gain and be available as a resource, contributing to the promotion and development of Athletics. This includes working openly with other coaches, using the expertise of sports scientists and sports physicians, through to displaying an active support of their National Federation and the IAAF.



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Summary

The basic principle of the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches is that ethical considerations leading to fair play are integral, and not optional, elements of all sports activity. These ethical considerations apply to all levels of ability and commitment. They include recreational as well as competitive Athletics.

The development of fair play or sportsmanlike behaviours and attitudes is not an automatic consequence of participating in Athletics. These fair play behaviours can be learned from the coach who provides a positive role model and applies consistent, clear reinforcement for what are desirable and undesirable actions. The role of the coach is, therefore, crucial as an ambassador, educator and guardian of the ethical values of fair play within Athletics.

The coach's primary role is to facilitate the process of individual development through achievement of Athletic potential. This role accepts the athletes' long term interests as of greater importance than short term athletic considerations. To fulfil this role the coach must behave in an ethical manner, respecting the following points:

- Coaches must respect the basic human rights, that is the equal rights, of each athlete with no discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, birth or other status.
- Coaches must respect the dignity and recognise the contribution of each individual. This includes respecting the right for freedom from physical or sexual harassment and advances.
- Coaches must ensure that practical environments are safe and appropriate. This appropriateness must take into consideration the age, maturity and skill level of the athlete. This is particularly important in the case of younger or less developed athletes.
- Coaches must acknowledge and respect the Rules of Competition. This respect should extend to the spirit as well as to the letter of the rules, in both training and competition, to ensure fairness of competitive opportunity between all athletes.
- Coaches must exhibit an active respect for officials, by accepting the role of the officials in providing judgement to ensure that competitions are conducted fairly and according to the established rules.
- Coaches have a responsibility to influence the performance and conduct of the athletes they coach, while at the same time encouraging the independence and self determination of each athlete by their acceptance of responsibility for their own decisions, conduct and performance.
- Coaches must assert a positive and active leadership role to prevent any use of prohibited drugs or other disallowed performance enhancing substances or practices. This leadership by coaches includes education of the athletes of the harmful effects of prohibited substances and practices.
- The coach must acknowledge that all coaches have an equal right to desire the success of the athletes they coach - competing within the rules. Observations, recommendations and criticism should be directed to the appropriate person outside the view or hearing of the public domain.
- Coaches must never solicit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are receiving coaching to join their squad or change their coaching situation without first involving, and then continuing to involve, the current personal coach or coaches.
- The coach must acknowledge and recognise that all athletes have a right to pursue their athletic potential including when an athlete's development would benefit from a change of coaching situation. The coach should ensure that, in these cases, any formation of a coaching partnership or transfer to another coach is actively explored with the athlete, whose decision is supported.
- Coaches should hold recognised coaching qualifications. Coaches should respect that the gaining of coaching qualifications is an ongoing commitment, achieved through the upgrading of their knowledge by attendance of accredited courses and through practical coaching experience. Coaches also have a responsibility to share the knowledge and practical experience they gain.
- Coaches must respect the image of the coach and continuously maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, reflected in both the manner of appearance and behaviour. Coaches must never smoke while coaching or in the presence of athletes, nor consume alcoholic beverages so soon before coaching that it affects their competence or that the smell of alcohol is on their breath.
- Coaches must enter into full cooperation with all individuals and agencies that could play a role in the development of the athletes they coach. This includes working openly with other coaches, using the expertise of sports scientists and sports physicians and displaying an active support of their National Federation and the IAAF.