

# EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA RUGBY UNION

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Rev. 2 - February 2008

In an effort to raise the standards and quality of play and player behavior as well as improve the image of the sport of rugby, every high school and collegiate coach is expected to abide by this **Rugby Coaches Code of Conduct**. This Code is based on the premise that rugby should be an integral part of the education process of the student-athlete and that coaches are, above all, teachers with an ethical duty to enhance the physical, mental, social and moral development of student-athletes and teach them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.

### **I. The Coach/Athlete Relationship**

The coach/athlete relationship is a privileged one. Coaches play a critical role in the personal, as well as, athletic development of their student-athletes. They must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it. Coaches must also recognize that they are conduits through which the values and goals of a sport organization are channeled. Thus, how an athlete regards his/her sport is often dependent on the behavior of the coach. The following Code of Conduct has been developed to aid coaches in achieving a level of behavior which will allow them to assist their athletes in becoming well-rounded, self-confident, and productive human beings. The use of positive coaching methods will increase confidence and self-esteem in their student-athletes and foster a love and appreciation for the sport of rugby.

### **II. Coaching Responsibilities**

1. Treat everyone fairly within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, place of origin, color, sexual orientation, religion, political belief, or economic status.
2. Direct comments or criticism at the performance rather than the athlete.
3. Consistently display high personal standards and project a favorable image of the sport and of coaching:
  - a) Refrain from physical or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, and conduct that demean student-athletes or others.
  - b) Refrain from public criticism of fellow coaches or match officials.
  - c) Abstain from the use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages while in the presence of his/her student-athletes
  - d) Enforce compliance with the Alcoholic Beverage Policies of the governing Unions.
  - e) Refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language or behavior in the conduct of his/her duties and enforce compliance with Code of Conduct Policies of the governing Unions.
  - f) Understand that club officers and their coaching staff are responsible for the activities of their members as they relate to the image of the game. Clubs are expected to address behavior that brings the game into disrepute. This includes verbal abuse or intimidation of opponents and match officials by its players and club supporters made in public, including the use of bulletin boards, etc. on club websites.
4. Plan and implement activities that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the athletes, and educate athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment.
5. Regularly seek ways of increasing professional development and awareness. Complete and maintain USA Rugby Coaching Development Program (CDP) Certification and continue your rugby education at higher level coaching from USA Rugby and elsewhere. Attend refereeing certification courses provide by the local Referee Society.
6. Become familiar with and comply with all related policies and procedures of the school and governing Unions addressing player eligibility, safety, injury reporting, discipline, etc. Ensure appropriate team transportation to and from matches has been arranged. If a team bus or van(s) is used, a member of the coaching staff is expected to travel in the vehicle.
7. Be aware of the academic pressures placed on student-athletes and conduct practices and games in a manner so as to allow academic success. Be reasonable in your demands on the players' time, energy and enthusiasm. Remember that they have other interests and responsibilities.
8. Encourage compliance by the club and school officials with the EPRU safety policies and recommendations (<http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php>), such as the "**Safer Rugby Program**". The EPRU strongly recommends having a medical kit and medically-trained personnel (such as a Certified Athletic Trainer) at all practices, scrimmages and matches.
9. Recognize when to refer athletes to their doctor or sport specialists. Communicate and cooperate with registered medical practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of their athletes' medical and psychological problems. Follow the advice of medical professionals in determining when an injured player is ready to train and play again.

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**II. Coaching Responsibilities** (cont'd)

10. Treat opponents and officials with due respect, both in victory and defeat, and encourage athletes to act accordingly. Actively encourage athletes to uphold the rules of their sport and the spirit of such rules. Do not allow the intensity of competition beget poor sportsmanship.
11. Maintain a thorough knowledge of the current game and assure that your players know and understand the Laws of the Game as well as the USA Rugby Guidelines on the Applications of Law. These Guidelines are intended to encourage a uniform and consistent approach to the application of the Laws of the Game and additionally addresses team support, players' clothing, responsibilities of touch judges, requirements for the preparation of the playing field, and the USA Rugby Code of Conduct.
12. Teach your players that it is commonplace in rugby to offer their opponents congratulations after a match as a sign of mutual respect between coaches, players and officials, as well as, sending a positive message to spectators.
13. Encourage your players to pursue victory with passion, to do their best and continually improve through personal effort and discipline.
14. Teach your players to think and play as members of a team and encourage them to put team success above personal statistics and recognition.
15. Be a worthy role-model. Always be mindful of the high visibility and great influence you have as a teacher-coach and consistently conduct yourself in private and coaching situations in a manner that exemplifies all you want your student-athletes to be.
16. Assure that your players understand that participation in sports, such as rugby, is a privilege, not a right, and that they are expected to represent their school, team and teammates with honor, on and off the field. Require student-athletes to consistently exhibit good character and conduct themselves as positive role models.

**III. Coaching Expectations**

Coaches must:

1. Offer a program that includes all reasonable safeguards to lower the chance of injury in this vigorous contact sport.
2. At no time become intimately and/or sexually involved with their athletes.
3. Respect athletes' dignity and understand that verbal or physical behaviors that constitute harassment, hazing or abuse are unacceptable.
4. Never advocate or condone the use of drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.

**Failure by a coach to fulfill the expectations of this Coaches Code of Conduct can be grounds for disciplinary action by the governing Union(s).**

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to conduct myself in a manner that demonstrates the standards established in this **Rugby Coaches Code of Conduct**.

Club: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by the following officer or captain of the club or school official "in charge" of rugby:

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**This form is to be signed and mailed to the EPRU Secretary at: EPRU, P.O. Box 393, Exton, PA 19341**