

## USA TRACK & FIELD CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REGISTERED COACHES

USATF Coaches are committed to providing a safe sport that maintains only the highest ethical and honorable standards. The Code of Conduct (“Code”) presented in the pages that follow was developed by the Coaches Advisory Committee and is pending approval by the Board of Directors of USATF. The Coaching Code of Ethics is organized around four principles: Respect for Participants, Responsible Coaching, Integrity in Relationships and Honoring Sport.

Although coaching techniques vary widely, the professional and ethical standards to which coaches adhere should not. As the national governing body for track and field, long distance running and race walking, USATF must develop, enforce and keep current these standards for the benefit of athletes, their families, coaches themselves, and the greater good of the sport.

The Code of Conduct specifies professional and ethical standards for coaches who, like physicians, must “first, do no harm.”

Among other standards, the USATF Code of Conduct requires that USATF Registered Coaches must:

1. Be competent in their knowledge and professional in their conduct;
2. Not discriminate against anyone in the sport on the basis of gender, race, place of origin, color, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, marital states, age or any other illegal or inappropriate considerations;
3. Be committed to a sport free of prohibited drugs [and techniques]. Registered coaches must have zero tolerance of prohibited drug use, actively advocate for clean competition and report suspected use of prohibited drugs to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency;
4. Not have been found by the relevant authorities to have committed an anti-doping rule violation or to have enabled an athlete to commit an anti-doping rule violation;
5. Strictly avoid sexual intimacy with athletes of any age;
6. Not exploit any relationship established as a coach to further their own personal, political or business interests at the expense of athletes or other participants;
7. Not abuse any relationship with athletes, assistants, officials, administrators, board members or others and must avoid situations that present a conflict of interest or impair a coach from acting in the best interest of athletes.

USA Track & Field has established an application process for applications, complaints, enforcement and sanctions as part of the Registered Coach Program and reserves the right to deny entry into the program to any coach who USATF has reason to believe (a) has committed an anti-doping rule violation or materially contributed to the commission of an anti-doping rule violation; or (b) is under investigation by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (“USADA”) or other authorities with respect to a potential anti-doping rules violation. USATF also may deny a credential or other services to any individual whose actions are deemed by USATF to reflect a pattern of unethical behavior. Complaints against coaches shall be investigated and, where appropriate, sanctions applied.

*As the USATF Board continues to fine-tune the language of the Code, the full text in its current form follows.*

*\* The structure and content of this USATF Code of Conduct for Registered Coaches was drawn from several sources including but not exclusive to the Coaches of Canada Code of Ethics, The USOC Coaching Ethics Code, the USTFCCA Code of Ethics, and The ASCA Code of Conduct.*

# USA TRACK & FIELD

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REGISTERED COACHES

### MISSION

USATF is committed to providing a safe sporting environment characterized by the highest ethical standards. This Code of Conduct (“Code”), which articulates the ethical standards that will guide the actions of all members of the Registered Coach Program, is based on four principles:

1. Respect for Participants
2. Responsible Coaching
3. Integrity in Relationships
4. Honoring Sport

#### I. Respect for Participants

The principle of *respect for participants* requires coaches to act in a manner respectful of the dignity of all participants in sport. Fundamental to this principle is the assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect.

Acting with *respect for participants* means that coaches:

- i. Do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, place of origin, color, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, marital status, age or any other illegal or inappropriate consideration;
- ii. Interact with others in a manner that enables all participants in sport to maintain their dignity.

In being faithful to the principle of *respect for participants*, coaches must:

Key Words	Ethical Standards
<i>Respect</i>	1.1 Treat all participants in sport fairly and with respect at all times.
	1.2 Provide feedback to athletes and other participants in a caring manner.
	1.3 Respect the expertise, experience and insights of others in sport.
	1.4 Refrain from demeaning comments about others in sport.
<i>Rights</i>	1.5 Recognize athletes’ right to consult with other coaches and advisors.
	1.6 Respect athletes as autonomous individuals and refrain from inappropriate intervention in the athletes’ personal affairs.
<i>Equity</i>	1.7 Refuse to practice, condone, ignore, facilitate or collaborate with any form of unjust discrimination in sport.
	1.8 Act to prevent or correct practices that are unjustly discriminatory.

<i>Empowerment</i>	1.9	Encourage and facilitate participants’ ability to be responsible for their own behavior, performance and decisions.
	1.10	Respect the opinions and wishes of participants when making decisions that affect them, including with respect to training regimens and performance standards.
<i>Informed participation</i>	1.11	Communicate and cooperate with family members (with the athlete’s consent), involving them as appropriate in decisions pertaining to the athlete’s development.
	1.12	Clarify the nature of coaching services to participants, i.e., athletes, parents, family members or significant others.
<i>Confidentiality</i>	1.13	Keep confidential any information about athletes or others gained through coaching activities and believed to be confidential by those persons.
<i>Mutual support</i>	1.14	Encourage a climate of mutual support among all participants in sport.
<i>Extended responsibility</i>	1.15	Encourage participants to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth as individuals.
	1.16	Keep informed on current issues related to respect for participants, e.g. gender equity.

## **II. Responsible Coaching**

The principle of *responsible coaching* carries the basic ethical expectation that the activities of coaches will benefit society in general and participants in particular, and will do no harm. Fundamental to this principle is competence – responsible coaching (maximizing benefits and minimizing risks to participants) is performed by coaches who are “well prepared and current” in their discipline. Responsible coaching also requires that a coach advocate against any use of prohibited drugs.

In addition, *responsible coaching* means that coaches

- i. Act in the best interests of the athlete’s development as a whole person;
- ii. Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach;
- iii. Are aware of their personal values and how these affect their practice as coaches;
- iv. Acknowledge the limitations of their discipline; and
- v. Accept the responsibility to work with other coaches and professionals in sport.

In being faithful to the principle of *responsible coaching*, coaches must:

### **Key Words**

### **Ethical Standards**

<i>Professional training</i>	2.1	Be responsible for achieving a high level of professional competence through appropriate training, personal learning projects, discussions with colleagues, workshops, courses, conferences, etc., to ensure that coaching services benefit and do not harm others.
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<i>Zero Tolerance of Prohibited Drugs and Techniques</i>	2.2	Actively advocate for clean competition and support athletes' efforts to be drug-free.
	2.3	Report suspected use of prohibited drugs and techniques to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency.
	2.4	Never have been sanctioned for an anti-doping rule violation by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, World Anti-Doping Agency, International Olympic Committee, International Association of Athletics Federations or any other governing body.
<i>Self knowledge</i>	2.5	Evaluate how personal experiences, attitudes, beliefs, values, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, individual differences and stresses influence actions, and integrate this awareness into efforts to benefit and not harm others.
	2.6	Engage in self-care activities that help to avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with the ability to benefit and not harm others.
	2.7	Coach in a way that benefits athletes, removes harm and acts consistently for the good of the athlete, keeping in mind that some of the same training, skills and powers that coaches use to produce benefits for athletes are also capable of producing harm.
<i>Coaching limits</i>	2.8	Recognize the limits of knowledge and capacity in coaching practice; in particular, do not assume responsibilities if insufficiently prepared for them.
	2.9	Recognize and accept when it is appropriate to refer athletes to other coaches or sport specialists.
	2.10	Refrain from working in unsafe or inappropriate situations that compromise the quality of coaching services or the health and safety of athletes.
<i>Athlete's interest</i>	2.11	Ensure that activities are suitable for the age, experience, ability and physical and psychological conditions of athletes.
	2.12	Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments.
	2.13	Refrain from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes; monitor innovative approaches with care.
	2.14	Be aware of significant pressures in athletes' lives, e.g., school, family and financial pressures, and coach in a manner that fosters positive life experiences

- 2.15 Consider the athlete’s future health and well-being as foremost when making decisions about an injured athlete’s ability to participate.
- 2.16 Strive to be fully present, physically and mentally, in the performance of coaching duties.
- Safety* 2.17 Make athletes aware of their responsibilities for ensuring safety.
- Sexual relationships* 2.18 Be acutely aware of power in coaching relationships and, therefore, *strictly* avoid sexual intimacy with athletes, both during coaching and during that period following coaching when imbalance in power could jeopardize effective decision-making.
- 2.19 Abstain from and refuse to tolerate in others sexual harassment which includes either of the following:
- i. The use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in or tolerate sexual activity. Such uses include explicit or implicit threats of reprisals for noncompliance or promises of reward for compliance.
  - ii. Engaging in deliberate or repeated sexually oriented comments, gestures or touching.
- Colleagues* 2.20 Act toward other coaches in a manner characterized by courtesy, good faith and respect.
- 2.21 Collaborate with other coaches and colleagues from related disciplines.
- 2.22 Communicate and cooperate with health practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of athletes’ health-related needs.
- 2.23 Use discretion in resolving disputes with colleagues, e.g., deal with differences of opinion constructively on a personal basis and refer more serious disputes to appropriate bodies.
- Extended responsibility* 2.24 Encourage others to coach responsibly.
- 2.25 Recognize and address harmful personal practices of others in sport, e.g., drug and alcohol addiction, physical and mental abuse, misuse of power.
- 2.26 Assume responsibility for the actions of athletes and other supervised individuals with regard to the principle of *responsible coaching*.

### III. Integrity in Relationships

Integrity means that coaches are honest, sincere and honorable in their relationships with others. In being faithful to the principle of *integrity in relationships*, coaches must:

**Key Words****Ethical Standards**

<i>Honesty</i>	3.1	Explore mutual expectations with athletes in an honest and open manner, giving due consideration to the age and experience of the affected individuals.
	3.2	Accurately represent personal coaching qualifications, experience, competence and affiliations, being careful not to convey misleading descriptions or information.
	3.3	Notify other coaches when working with those coaches' athletes.
<i>Sincerity</i>	3.4	Honor all promises and commitments.
	3.5	Act with an enthusiastic and genuine appreciation for sport.
<i>Honor</i>	3.6	Know the sport and abide by the sport's rules, regulations and standards.
	3.7	Take credit only for the work and ideas actually done or generated, giving due credit for work done or ideas contributed by others.
<i>Conflict of interest</i>	3.8	Do not exploit any relationship established as a coach to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interests of athletes or other participants.
	3.9	Avoid abusing relationships with athletes and other participants and avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest or reduce the ability to be objective and unbiased in the determination of what might be in the best interests of athletes.
	3.10	Declare conflicts of interest when they arise and manage them in a manner that respects the best interests of all those involved.
<i>Extended responsibility</i>	3.11	Encourage athletes and other participants to develop and maintain integrity in their relationships with others.

**IV. Honoring Sport**

The principle of *honoring sport* challenges coaches to recognize, act on and promote the value of sport for individuals, teams and society in general. *Honoring sport* means that coaches:

- i. Act on and promote clearly articulated values related to coaching and sport;
- ii. Encourage and model honorable intentions and actions in their coaching practice; and
- iii. Show high regard for and promote the value of sport in American society and around the world.

In being faithful to the principle of *honoring sport*, coaches must:

**Key Words****Ethical Standards**

<i>Spirit of sport</i>	4.1	Advocate and model the fundamentally positive aspects of sport, e.g. sporting and human excellence, fair play, honest competition and effort, self-discipline, integrity, personal growth and development, respect for the body, challenge and achievement, the joy of movement, and other positive aspects identified by participants.
	4.2	Actively seek ways to reduce potentially negative aspects of sport, e.g., winning at all costs, playing to the letter of the rules at the expense of the spirit of the rules, exploiting unfairly competitors' weaknesses, focusing on sport to the harmful exclusion of other aspects of athletes' lives, initiating and supporting potentially harmful training regimens, and other negative aspects identified by participants.
<i>Respect for the rules</i>	4.3	Accept and encourage athletes and other participants to uphold both the letter and the spirit of the rules that define and govern sport.
<i>Respect for officials and other coaches</i>	4.4	Accept the role of officials in ensuring that competitions are conducted fairly and according to established rules.
	4.5	Refrain from abusive personal attacks on officials and other coaches, especially when talking with the media.
<i>Positive role model</i>	4.6	Maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and project a favorable image of the sport and of coaching to athletes, other coaches, officials, spectators, families, the media and the general public.
	4.7	Project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency in personal habits and appearance, e.g., refrain from smoking while coaching, refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages when working with athletes.
	4.8	Refrain from encouraging the use of alcohol and tobacco in conjunction with athletic events or victory celebrations at playing sites.

## **APPLICATION**

As a legal entity, USATF has the authority to establish policies to govern its own affairs and to prescribe, monitor and enforce the conduct of its members. USATF accepts that this Code's application depends primarily on the understanding and voluntary compliance of its members, plus the reinforcement by the public, including but not limited to athletes, parents, officials and other members of USATF.

USATF reserves the right to deny entry into the Registered Coach Program to any coach who USATF has reason to believe (a) has committed an anti-doping rule violation or materially contributed to the commission of an anti-doping rule violation; or (b) is involved in proceedings with the United States Anti-Doping Agency ("USADA") or other authorities after a threshold finding by the pertinent entity that sufficient evidence exists to support such a proceeding with respect to a potential anti-doping rules violation. Further, USATF may deny a credential to any individual whose actions are deemed by USATF to reflect a pattern of unethical behavior.

## **COMPLAINT**

A complaint for any violation of section 2.18 or section 2.19 of this Code can be made by any member of the general public, including but not limited to an athlete, a representative of a club or school, a coach, a parent, an official or any representative of USATF. USATF shall establish mechanisms to facilitate the investigation of anonymous complaints. A formal complaint, including a formal complaint initiated by USATF as a result of anonymous reporting, concerning a violation of section 2.18 or section 2.19 shall be made to the USATF General Counsel and must:

1. Be made in writing
2. Identify the Coach against whom the complaint is made
3. Set out with reasonable particularity the details of the complaint
4. Identify the name and address of the complainant
5. Be signed by the complainant

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Pursuant to guidelines established by the USATF Board of Directors, USATF shall investigate each complaint and, where appropriate, impose interim and other sanctions. The USATF Board of Directors shall appoint a Committee for Enforcement, which shall be comprised of three members nominated by the Coaches' Advisory Committee, one member nominated by the Athletes' Advisory Council, and a Chair nominated by the USATF President. The duties of the Committee for Enforcement will be to oversee the resolution of complaints.

Any coach against whom a formal complaint is filed shall be entitled to be heard before the Committee for Enforcement at its next scheduled meeting, provided that the next meeting is scheduled for a date not more than ninety (90) days from the date on which the complaint was filed. Otherwise, the Committee for Enforcement shall meet to consider the matter within ninety (90) days of the date on which the complaint was filed. The affected individuals shall be notified of the time and place of the hearing and of their right to appear personally and/or through an attorney. The hearing shall be informal, with all parties being given reasonable opportunity to examine the pertinent evidence and to exchange views. Following the close of the hearing, the Committee for Enforcement shall render its written decision, citing the principal grounds therefore, and a copy thereof shall be provided to the affected individual(s) and to the USATF CEO.

## **SANCTIONS**

After a formal complaint has been filed, the Committee for Enforcement may impose one or more sanctions from the following options:

1. A letter of reminder of ethical and honorable conduct;
2. A letter of reprimand directly to the offending coach;
3. A letter of reprimand posted on the USATF website;
4. Withdrawal of benefits offered by USATF, including with respect to the Registered Coach program;
5. Suspension from USATF and the Registered Coach Program;
6. A ban from all USATF sanctioned events and programs;
7. Public acknowledgement of the ban on the USATF website.

Further, the Committee for Enforcement may or render such other and further relief as the Committee shall deem appropriate.