

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL COACHES ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

(Revised March 2020)

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In selecting the coaching profession, coaches must be dedicated to rendering service to humanity. Financial gain and personal reward are secondary considerations. In selecting the coaching profession, the individual assumes an obligation to conduct himself in accordance with its ideals. These ideals should be set forth in a Code of Ethics. Any coach who is unwilling or unable to comply with the principles emphasized in the Code should have no place in the coaching profession. We must always keep in mind; the games belong to the players. A justification for including the athletic program in the total school curriculum is that athletics provides both physical and character values for those who participate in them. That these values are obtained rest largely with the coaching profession.

The reputation of the coaching profession is dependent upon the way the coaches of the state live up to both the letter and the spirit which a code represents.

As members of the profession, we should be ever mindful of the high trust and confidence placed in us. Every coach should study and apply the principles numerated in this Code to the result that the profession may become a more powerful and effective influence in our educational system.

OBJECTIVES

Among the stated objectives of the Texas High School Coaches Association are the following:

1. To help maintain the highest possible standards in athletics and the coaching profession and to work together for the improvements of conditions of Texas high school athletics.
2. To secure a better understanding of the problems of high school coaching, and to provide coaches sources of information.
3. To endeavor to improve athletics in all phases by aiding the coaches in securing a more thorough understanding of the various sports.
4. To have a representative group of coaches to which athletic problems of general interest may be referred in the hope of creating better relationships between schools.
5. To promote good fellowship and social contact among coaches.

PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics of the Texas High School Coaches Association is to protect and promote the best interest of the high school athletic program. In the coaching profession, the primary purpose of a Code of Ethics is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved professional practices from those which are detrimental and harmful.

Its' secondary purpose is to emphasize the cause and values of athletic programs in the state of Texas. Applied to the coaching profession, ethics will help develop a standard of character in which the public has trust and confidence. The success of these principles and standards

emphasized in the Code is dependent upon those for whom they have been prepared - the Texas high school coaches.

AUTHORIZATION

The committee for a Code of Ethics for the Texas High School Coaches Association formed the Code and presented it to the THSCA Board of Directors. It was then presented to the membership for a vote and was passed by the membership on August 5, 1960 in Dallas.

ARTICLE I OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In becoming a member of the Texas High School Coaches Association, a coach assumes certain obligations and responsibilities to the game one coaches, to the players, and to one's fellow coaches. It is essential that every member of the profession be constantly aware of these obligations and responsibilities with the purpose in mind that the coaching profession will always remain an honorable calling and that each member is to conduct oneself in such a manner to maintain the dignity and decency of the profession.

An active coach is involved in several areas of a relationship which entails certain obligations for which some definite standards of conduct may be described. These are: players, schools, with other coaches, teams, officials, sportswriters and others.

In the relationship with players under one's care, the coach should always be aware of the tremendous influence that is exerted for good or bad. Parents trust their dearest possession to the coach's charge and the coach, by his own example, must always be sure that the athletes who play under a coach are finer and more decent for having done so. The coach should never place the value of victory above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in the players. The safety and welfare of the players should always be most important in one's mind and must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory. In teaching the game of one's choice, the coach must realize there are certain rules designated to protect the players and provide common standards for determining a winner and loser.

Any attempts of deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct have no place in the coaching profession. Any coach guilty of such teaching should not have the right to be called a coach. The coach should set the example of winning without boasting and losing without bitterness. The coach who behaves according to these principles need have no fear of failure, for the success of the coach can be measured by the respect one has earned from the players and from the opponents.

In the relationship with the school for which one works, the coach should remember -- that he/she is on public display to represent that school. It is important, therefore, that one's conduct maintains the principles of integrity and dignity of the school. School policies regarding the athletic program should be adhered to, both to the letter and to the spirit. The coach should remember that other members of the faculty also have an interest in the school and in the students and one's conduct must be such that no criticism arises of efforts to develop common interest and purposes of the institution along with other faculty members.

In relationships with coaches, it should be assumed that all members of the coaching profession intend to follow the precepts set forth in a Code of Ethics. All evidence of unethical conduct should be brought openly to the Ethics Committee through the prescribed channels. Sportswriters and sportscasters should not be used as an outlet for relieving ill-feelings toward other coaches, players, officials or other schools. Sportswriters also have an interest in the athletic program and should be treated with the same respect and honesty expected of them. Officials are an essential part of the athletic program and of the game, and it should be recognized that they are to attempt to maintain the highest standards of integrity and honesty. Just as coaches can make mistakes, so can officials. It is important that their efforts to secure perfection in performance be highly respected by coaches.

Therefore, the essential elements in a Code of Ethics for the Texas High School Coaches Association are honesty and integrity. Coaches whose conduct reflect those two characteristics will bring credit to the coaching profession, to the games which they coach, their school and to themselves. It is only through such conduct that the profession can earn and maintain its rightful place in our educational program and make its' full contribution to the school and the community.

ARTICLE II THE COACH'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SCHOOL

1. The function of the coach is to educate students through participation in the games under his/her direction. The primary basic functions must never be disregarded.
2. Because of the unique place which the coach holds in the educational organization, it is highly important that he/she support the administration in all policies, rules and regulations, which may be from time to time enacted. Differences of opinion should be discussed behind closed doors and not aired through the public media.
3. Where the coach is not the Athletic Director, it is important that a harmonious relationship exist between the two. The coach should feel free to suggest and initiate any actions which have to do with the conduct or improvement of the athletic program. Controversial matters should be discussed on a friendly basis, but once final decisions are reached, they should be accepted and given complete support by the coach.
4. Participation in interschool athletics is based on the individual student's fulfillment of established rules and regulations. Every coach should be thoroughly acquainted with these rules and regulations. Coaches should assume responsibilities for their observances and enforcement in cooperation with the school officials charged with this responsibility. Matters of eligibility should be constantly referred to the school principal or superintendent for consultation, interpretation, and improvement.
5. One of the coach's fundamental responsibilities must be to inspire the players to achieve academic success. Not only to make good grades, but to secure a well-rounded high school education and graduate with honors.

ARTICLE III
THE COACH'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PLAYERS

1. Diagnosis and prescription of treatment of injuries is strictly a medical problem and should, under no circumstances, be considered a province of the coach. The coach's responsibility is to see that injured players are given prompt and confident medical attention and that the most detailed instructions of the doctor are carried out.
2. The coach must remember that he/she is a living example for all boys and girls in the school's community. Therefore, it is important to the coach and to the coaching profession that actions and behavior always bring credit to the profession and to the coach.
3. The coach's conduct during a game (suggested):
 - a. Before and after a game, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly greetings.
 - b. During the game, coaches should be as inconspicuous as possible.
 - c. Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate a friendly and kindly attitude toward their players on the bench.
 - d. The attitude of coaches toward officials during the progress of the game should be controlled.
 - e. After the game, visitors should not be permitted into a team's dressing room until coaches have had sufficient time to complete all post-game responsibilities, including a careful check of any injuries.

ARTICLE IV
RULES OF THE GAME

1. The coach should be thoroughly acquainted with the rules of the game. Official rule books should be studied and often reviewed. The coach is primarily responsible for teaching and interpreting the rules to the players.
2. The letter and the spirit of the rules must be respected and adhered to by the coach. Rules are made for the protection of the players and in the best interest of the game. It is the coach's responsibility to see that they are observed.
3. Beating the Rules - Disregarding the rules brands a coach or a player as a person unfit to be associated with the athletic program. It is especially important that coaches stress those rules which involve bodily contact. The rules permit the use of hands and arms. It is the coach's responsibility to see that they are used legally. It is not the purpose of any game to hurt or injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.
4. Good sportsmanship begins on the practice field, and if it becomes a habit, none of us will have to worry about it, as we will have no unsportsmanlike tactics in any of our games.
5. The football code, which appears in the official football rule book, shall be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed. (3/7/75)

6. It is unethical conduct to teach that the use of the helmet and/or face mask is a primary part of contact in blocking and tackling techniques. (3/12/76)

ARTICLE V OFFICIALS

1. Officials must have the respect and support of the coaches and players if they are to do their job efficiently. On and off the record, criticism of officials and players to the public shall be considered unethical.
2. A cooperative relationship should exist between coaches and official associations, with frequent interchange of ideas and suggestions. Coaches should, whenever possible, accept invitations to attend officials' rules meetings. Likewise, coaches should extend to officials' invitations to discuss rules interpretation with their squad and other coaches meeting as a group. It is unethical and dangerous for coaches of rival teams to accept assignments as officials on an exchange basis.
3. Officials should always be treated in a courteous manner. On the day of the game, they should be provided with a private room, if possible, in which to meet and dress for the game. Conferences between coaches and officials shall always be conducted according to procedures established by the University Interscholastic League.

Procedures set up by the constitution and rules book of the UIL shall govern all practices and treatment of officials. Coaches, principals and superintendents are charged with this responsibility.

4. It should be remembered that slow motion study of controversial decisions by officials is far different from on the spot decisions made during the game. To demonstrate critical plays to sportswriters, sportscasters, quarterback clubs and the public, which may lead to officials being labeled incompetent, must be considered unethical conduct.

ARTICLE VI PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. The responsibility of coaches to accredited writers and radio and television commentators is to provide them news about their team and players. The press should be treated with courtesy, honesty and respect. Coaches, always, while talking to the media, should refrain from making any derogatory, disparaging, or critical remarks, statements, or observations about a fellow coach. Misleading statements should be answered honestly or not at all. If good judgment indicates that an honest answer to a question would be detrimental to the best interests of the game, good ethics demands that it not be answered, and in such cases "no comment" is entirely justifiable. Coaches should stress the importance of ethical procedures in teaching their players how to conduct themselves on and off the field and on out-of-town trips.

2. It should be questionable practice for coaches to stress players injuries, disciplinary measures, academic difficulties or eligibility problems to the press, radio and television. Disciplinary problems should be a "family affair" solved between the coach and players involved. Eligibility is a matter for the principal. Injuries are essentially for the team physician or family doctor. No good purpose can be served by emphasizing these matters.
3. Booster Club Organizations. Such organizations can be of value to the school and the coach if they have the proper objectives. It shall be unethical for the coaches to use such groups to attempt to defeat or obstruct administrative or school athletic controls or to encourage violation of established rules and regulations in order to strengthen any part of the athletic program. It shall, likewise, be unethical for coaches to make demands, financial or otherwise, upon controls. Any other form of misuse of such strength and power is in violation of accepted rules and regulations.

ARTICLE VII DRUGS

It is a serious breach of the Code of Ethics of the Texas High School Coaches Association for any coach to condone, encourage or tolerate the use of illegal performance enhancing drugs by any student athlete. It is the responsibility, the moral obligation and the duty of all coaches to constantly warn, inform and educate students of the damaging effects of anabolic steroids.

ARTICLE VIII SCOUTING

1. It is unethical, under any circumstances, to scout any team, by any means, except in regularly scheduled games. Interschool scrimmages can be scouted by consent of both head coaches of teams involved. The head coach shall be held responsible for all scouting. This includes the use of any type of recording devices. (3/15)
2. It is unethical conduct to violate district rules on the exchange of video.

ARTICLE IX MANAGEMENT OF FELONY CRIME

It will be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics to willingly allow a student/athlete who is charged with and under indictment for a felony crime to participate in an athletic contest. This action should not be considered a presumption of guilt, but rather it affords the accused athlete the time and opportunity to clear his name. The student/athlete may be allowed to remain on his athletic team as a suspended member but should not be allowed to represent his school or community in an athletic contest while under this suspension.

ARTICLE X
FOOD SUPPLEMENTS, DRUGS & MEDICATIONS

(12/98) (12/06) The position of the THSCA in order to minimize health and safety risks to student athletes, maintain ethical standards and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes.