

North Texas State Soccer Association, Inc.
2022/2023 Bylaws and Rules

CHAPTER 8

CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT

8.1 NTSSA CODE OF ETHICS FOR COACHES

This code of ethics has been developed to clarify and distinguish approved and accepted professional, ethical, and moral behavior from that which is detrimental to the development of the sport of soccer. (The term “Coach” shall include, but is not limited to Head Coach, Assistant Coach(s), Manager/Trainer and/or Team Representative.)

ARTICLE I - RESPONSIBILITIES TO PLAYERS

1. The coach must never place the value of winning over the safety and welfare of players. Winning should be the result of preparation and discipline with emphasis placed on the highest ideals and character traits.
2. Coaches shall instruct players to play within the written laws of the game and within the spirit of the game at all times.
3. Coaches shall not seek unfair advantage by teaching deliberate unsportsmanlike behavior to players.
4. Coaches should not tolerate inappropriate behavior from players regardless of the situation.
5. Demands on players’ time should never be so extensive as to interfere with academic goals and progress. Motivation for excellence should include academics as well as athletics.
6. Coaches must never encourage players to violate **NTSSA** recruitment, eligibility, or guest player rules and policies.
7. Under no circumstances should coaches authorize or encourage the use of medicinal or performance enhancing drugs, or supplements of any kind whether legal or illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter. Medication and supplementation of any kind should be the responsibility of the parents and/or legal guardian. Players should be directed to seek proper medical attention for injuries and to follow the physician’s instructions regarding treatment and recovery. At no time should a player be put at risk by returning from injury prematurely or by being forced to play while injured.
8. A coach's dealings with players and parents must be upfront, honest, and forthright. Coaches must always be honest and refrain from misrepresentations to players and parents.
9. Coaches shall not engage in or attempt to initiate a consensual relationship with an 18U or 19U player when the coach is in a “position of authority” with respect to the player. Should a consensual relationship develop or appear likely to develop, the coach should step down from his or her position with the player’s team. This will avoid any perception of pressure on the player to acquiesce to unwanted advances to maintain their position on the team or any perception of preferential treatment from the coach due to a consensual relationship with the player.

ARTICLE II - RESPONSIBILITY TO NTSSA AND MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

1. Adherence to all **NTSSA** and Member Association rules and policies, especially those regarding eligibility, team formation, recruiting, and guest players are mandatory and should never be violated. It is the responsibility of every coach to know and understand these rules.
2. Player development and the growth of the player through participation is essential to the growth of the sport. Additionally, the coach must behave in such a manner that the principles, integrity, and dignity of the sport are maintained.
3. Any problems that cannot be resolved between coaches should be referred to the appropriate **NTSSA** Commissioner, Member Association, or League Commissioner immediately.
4. A coach's dealings with **NTSSA** and Member Associations (including playing leagues) must be upfront, honest, and forthright. Coaches must always be honest and refrain from misrepresentations to **NTSSA** and Member Associations (including playing leagues).

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ARTICLE III - RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME

1. Coaches should be thoroughly acquainted with and demonstrate a working knowledge of the laws of the game of soccer. Coaches are also responsible to ensure that their players understand the intent as well as the application of the laws.
2. Coaches must adhere to the letter and spirit of the laws of the game. Those coaches who circumvent the rules to gain advantage have no place in soccer.
3. Coaches are responsible for their players' actions on the field and must not permit them to perform with the intent of causing injury to opposing players.
4. If coaches permit, encourage, or condone performance that is not in the letter or spirit of the laws, they are derelict in their responsibility to players, Member Associations, **NTSSA** and the sport worldwide. The coach must strive constantly to teach good sporting behavior.

ARTICLE IV - RESPONSIBILITY TO OFFICIALS

1. Officials must have the support of coaches, players and spectators. Criticism of officials undermines their purpose in the game. Coaches must always refrain from criticizing officials in the presence of players.
2. Coaches should strive to develop a line of communication with officials, giving each an opportunity to better understand the problems relating to their specific area. This section shall not be taken as an encouragement to debate referee decisions during the match.
3. On game day, officials should be treated with respect before, during, and after the game. Officials should be addressed as "Referee" or "Mr. /Ms. Referee" and not by name. Professional respect should be mutual and there should be no demeaning dialogue or gesture between official, coach, or player. Coaches must not incite players or spectators or attempt to disrupt the flow of play.
4. Comments regarding an official should be made in writing to the appropriate organization assigning the official.

ARTICLE V - RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SCOUTING AND RECRUITING

1. It is unethical to scout any team, by any means whatsoever, except in regularly scheduled games.
2. The use of videotape or motion picture equipment to scout an opponent's regularly scheduled games for the purpose of recruiting is unethical.
3. All **NTSSA** rules pertaining to recruiting shall be strictly observed by the coach, manager, or any team representative.
4. It is unethical to recruit player(s) actively playing for another team.
5. It is unethical for a player to be recruited or enticed from the Olympic Development Program (ODP) setting, either by his ODP coach or any other coach, manager, parent or team representative.
6. When discussing the advantages of his organization, the coach has an ethical obligation to be forthright and refrain from making derogatory remarks regarding other coaches, teams, and organizations.
7. It is unethical for any coach to make a statement to a prospective athlete, which cannot be fulfilled; illegal to promise any kind of compensation or inducement for play; and immoral to deliver same.
8. Allegations of illegal or unethical recruiting are very serious and should be based on concrete facts rather than hearsay and innuendo. While documentation of recruiting violations is essential, the use of videotape and other electronic equipment is discouraged.

ARTICLE VI - RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Coaches have a responsibility to promote the game of soccer to the public. Comments and critiques of governing bodies, teams, coaches, players, parents, or the media should be positive and constructive, never prejudicial or inflammatory.
2. When asked to give a recommendation concerning team, camp, coach or organization, it is in the best interest of all concerned if no less than three referrals are given in order to provide a professional unbiased source of information.

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3. Coaches have the responsibility to assist their players in conducting themselves properly when in public while representing their team, Member Association, and **NTSSA**.
4. Publicly predicting a win is folly and serves no useful place in a coach's public image.
5. Comments stressing injuries, team, personnel conflicts, or disciplinary problems as an excuse for a loss or unsuccessful endeavor are detrimental and should be avoided.
6. It is unethical for a coach to solicit alumni, parents, booster club or managers to pressure organizations, Member Associations or **NTSSA** to alter established rules. The coach must not attempt to influence these organizations in political or financial dealings outside the framework of their own rules and bylaws.
7. The media should be allowed access to the players for comment. Players should be instructed in how to conduct themselves during an interview.

ARTICLE VII - GAME DAY AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. A coach's behavior must be such as to bring credit to himself, his organization, and the sport of soccer. This is never more evident than on the day of the contest.
2. Rival coaches should meet prior to the game and exchange friendly or professional greetings. While the concept of rivalry is wholly embraced, it cannot take precedence over exemplary professional conduct.
3. During play, coaches have a responsibility to be as inconspicuous as possible. Coaches shall exhibit a respectful attitude towards players. The coach must confine him/herself to the coaching area. The attitude of the coach towards officials, spectators, opposing players and coaches should be controlled and undemonstrative.
4. It shall be unethical for a coach to have any verbal altercation with an opposing coach or bench during the game. Hostile physical contact with a player is considered highly unethical.
5. The coach's foremost post-game responsibility is his/her team.
6. Coaches should use their influence on unfriendly spectators that demonstrate intimidating behavior towards officials and opposing teams.
7. Coaches must act in a professional manner at all times when in the presence of players, whether at games, practices, or in any other setting. A coach demonstrating behavior that could be considered by a reasonable person to be irrational, inappropriate, or unbecoming an adult will not be tolerated. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Lewd gestures or remarks
 - Overly critical remarks
 - Ranting and raving
 - Snide or demeaning remarks
 - Threatening behavior or remarks
 - Physical confrontations
 - Temper outbursts

8.1.1

All Member Associations are directed to form their own ethics committee and to hold hearings--WITH THE PARTIES HAVING THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT--on alleged violations of the Code of Ethics when properly submitted.

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8.2 NTSSA PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Children have more need for example than for criticism. Attempt to relieve the pressure of the competition, not increase it. A child is easily affected by outside influences.
2. Be kind to your child's coach and officials. The coach is a volunteer, giving of personal time and money to provide a recreational activity for your child.
3. The opponents are necessary friends; without them, your child could not participate.
4. Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team.
5. Do not openly question an official's judgment and honesty. Officials are symbols of fair play, integrity, and sportsmanship.
6. Accept the results of each game. Encourage your child to be gracious in victory, and to turn defeat into victory by working towards improvement.
7. Remember your child is involved in organized sports for their enjoyment, **NOT YOURS!**
8. Encourage your child to always play by the rules.
9. Teach your child that honest effort is as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
10. Remember that your child learns by example. Children mimic what their parents say. Criticism of the coach, officials, teammates, and/or opponents fosters bad attitudes and can only lead to a negative experience for your child.
11. Parents should remember that a coach has an entire team of players to consider when making decisions regarding position, playing time, substitutions, and strategy. The team does not revolve around one player.
12. A parent must never misrepresent to their team their child's eligibility to play on that team, and must be honest in dealings with **NTSSA** and Member Associations (including playing leagues).
13. A parent must never be verbally or physically violent or threatening with any coach, parent, player, or representative of their Member Association or **NTSSA**.

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8.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR USSF/NTSSA REGISTERED REFEREES AND ASSIGNORS

1. I pledge that I will faithfully enforce the Laws of the Game and any special Rule of the Competition of the League(s) I am officiating for without prejudice or favoritism to any player, team or coach.
2. I recognize that it is my professional duty to constantly keep abreast of any changes in the Laws or Rules of Play and to keep myself physically fit and have my training refreshed.
3. I will constantly strive to improve my own refereeing techniques and always accept sincere, constructive criticism from fellow referees or official assessors without malice.
4. I pledge that I will make myself available, whenever possible, for game assignments for which I am qualified.
5. If I am a State or National **USSF** referee, I acknowledge that my first responsibility is to State or **USSF**-assigned games and that I will make myself available for these assignments regardless of conflicts with local playing associations or with leagues that I may be active in as a player or as a coach.
6. I do hereby acknowledge my fellow referees' total authority over any matches over which they are duly assigned to officiate, and I pledge that I will never interfere with the carrying out of their prescribed duties, before, during or after a match.
7. I understand that any criticism of fellow referees should be limited to constructive criticism in quiet, private referee-to-referee discussions, and then never within hearing distance of players, coaches or spectators.
8. As a registered **USSF/NTSSA** referee, I will always strive to conduct myself in the highest professional manner possible, including refraining from indulging in arguments or name-calling with coaches and/or spectators.
9. I also acknowledge that if I am also a coach, player or spectator, that my conduct towards, and my respect for, my fellow referee doing my game is more closely noticed by all concerned. I will, therefore, strive to set a very high standard of personal conduct under these circumstances to serve as an example to all.
10. I understand that I should wear only the approved **USSF** referee uniform with the current badge of the highest grade I am qualified for, and that my uniform be clean, neat and in a good state of repair. I also understand that if I am a coach, I am not to wear my uniform while coaching my team.
11. I further understand that I should not partake of any type of alcoholic beverage before any game assignment, and that I should never smoke, eat or drink while actually officiating.
12. I hereby pledge that I will always faithfully carry out my duties and obligations as a **USSF** referee registered with **NTSSA**; and that I do hereby acknowledge and accept the jurisdiction of the local **NTSSA**-affiliated playing association I may be refereeing for, the **NTSSA** and **USSF**, and their respective Referee Committees, where applicable, over my actions, conduct and performance as a registered **USSF** referee.
13. I furthermore understand that I may be disciplined, to include being placed on probation, suspended, or refused referee registration for significant or repetitive breaches of this Code of Conduct or any of its articles or provisions.

8.3.1 USSF CODE OF ETHICS FOR REFEREES (as established per USSF Policy 531-11)

1. Consider it a privilege to be part of the Federation Referee Program and use actions that will reflect credit upon that organization and its affiliates.
2. Maintain the dignity of the position.
3. Conduct themselves ethically and honorably.
4. Treat themselves and others respectfully and honestly.
5. Perform duties knowledgeably and in accordance with the Laws of the Game.
6. Adhere to all policies and requirements of the Federation Referee Program.
7. Safeguard confidential registration and performance information.

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8. Give priority to all Federation affiliated assignments and programs.
9. Honor all Federation affiliated assignments and obligations.
10. Not discriminate against or take advantage of any individual or group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Failure to follow this Code may result in disciplinary sanctions or decertification.

8.3.2 USSF CODE OF ETHICS FOR ASSIGNORS (as established per USSF Policy 531-11)

1. I will maintain the utmost respect for referees and other officials of the game, and I will conduct myself honorably at all times.
2. I will make the assignments based on what is good for the game and what is good for the referee.
3. As a member of the **USSF**, my actions will reflect credit upon the organization.
4. I will contribute to the continuous development of referees in the National Referee Development Program.
5. I will conduct myself ethically and professionally in the assignment process.
6. I will respect the rights and dignity of all the referees, and I will not criticize them unless it is in private, constructive and for their benefit.
7. I will offer equal opportunity to all qualify referees, and I will not discriminate against or take undue advantage of any individual or group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
8. I will cooperate fully in the timely resolution of any grievance hearing or complaint.
9. I consider it a privilege to be a part of the **USSF** and my actions will reflect credit upon that organization or its affiliates.

8.4 NTSSA CODE OF ETHICS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS, STATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND MEMBER ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATORS

None of us arrives at any administrative level, volunteer or not, without spending some “grass roots” time somewhere. We are appointed or elected to our positions because enough people had confidence in us, appreciation for what we had done in the past and assurance that we could lead them in a positive, productive future. This responsibility of accepting such a challenge, especially in a volunteer capacity, must have some guidelines.

It is important to remember that as board members we are very high profile. It is equally important that we remember that we are primarily a service organization and that we treat fellow volunteers as partners with a common goal--the organization, development and promotion of soccer. We should maintain high standards and serve by example.

1. Have respect for the game, players, officials, parents, coaches, member association volunteers and fellow board members and deal with them in a patient, courteous and consistent manner.
2. Criticism channeled through the proper quarter should be educational, constructive, balanced and positive. Under no circumstances should it be demeaning or detrimental to the self-respect of the individuals involved.
3. Administrators should be informed and available. As facilitators they should know the right questions, have the ability to elicit the right answers and foster creativity with accountability within their committee or area.
4. Regarding committee and other volunteers: they should be praised for time spent and jobs well done; their suggestions welcomed, evaluated and conclusions communicated to them. Abilities should be recognized and encouraged.
5. Above all: courtesy, self-control and loyalty. We are role models for the youngest players to the newest association. Our responsibility is to serve them well as we work toward our common goal.
6. Administrators shall not engage in or attempt to initiate a consensual relationship with an 18U or 19U player when the administrator is in a “position of authority” with respect to the player. Should a consensual relationship develop or appear likely to develop, the administrator should step down from his or her position with the player’s association. This will avoid any perception of pressure on the player to acquiesce to unwanted advances to maintain their position or any perception of preferential treatment from the administrator due to a consensual relationship with the player.

8.5 NTSSA CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

This code of ethics has been developed to clarify and distinguish approved and accepted professional, ethical, and moral behavior from that which is detrimental to the development of the sport of soccer. (The term “Member Association” shall include, but is not limited to Officers, Commissioners, Volunteers and/or Employees.)

ARTICLE I - RESPONSIBILITIES TO TEAMS AND/OR PLAYERS

1. The Member Association must never place money or operation over the safety and welfare of its teams and/or players. Services should be the result of preparation and discipline with emphasis placed on the highest ideals and character traits.
2. The Member Association shall instruct teams and/or players to play within the written laws of the game and within the spirit of the game at all times.
3. The Member Association shall not seek unfair advantage for certain teams through scheduling or administrative operations.
4. The Member Association should not tolerate inappropriate behavior from teams and/or players regardless of the situation.
5. The Member Association must never encourage players to violate NTSSA recruitment, eligibility, or guest player rules and policies.

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6. The Member Association should under no circumstances authorize or encourage the use of medicinal or performance enhancing drugs, or supplements of any kind whether legal or illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter.
7. The Member Association's dealings with teams, players and parents must be upfront, honest, and forthright. The Member Association must always be honest and refrain from misrepresentations to teams, players and parents.

ARTICLE II - RESPONSIBILITY TO NTSSA AND OTHER MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

1. Adherence to all **NTSSA** rules and policies, especially those regarding eligibility, team formation, recruiting, and guest players are mandatory and should never be violated. It is the responsibility of every Member Association to know and understand these rules as it applies to their area of play (youth, adult, recreational, competitive, etc.).
2. The Member Association must behave in such a manner that the principles, integrity, and dignity of the sport are maintained.
3. Any problems that cannot be resolved between Member Associations should be referred to the **NTSSA** Vice-President - Development immediately.
4. Member Association's dealings with **NTSSA** and other Member Associations (including playing leagues) must be upfront, honest, and forthright.
5. The Member Association must always be honest and refrain from misrepresentations to **NTSSA** and other Member Associations (including playing leagues).
6. The Member Association will refrain from accepting, soliciting, copying or using information on operations, financial data, teams and/or players from other Member Associations for any purpose unless approved in writing by the other Member Association's Board of Directors for a specific use. Information offered by someone of another Member Association or other organization for solicitation, recruitment or other purposes should be rejected and the person(s) reported to the **NTSSA** Vice-President – Development.

ARTICLE III - RESPONSIBILITY TO ITS OFFICERS, COMMISSIONERS, VOLUNTEERS AND/OR EMPLOYEES ("ADMINISTRATORS")

1. Administrators must have the support of the Member Association. Criticism of Administrators undermines their purpose in the Association.
2. Member Association's Administrators must always refrain from criticizing other Administrators in the presence of others.
3. The Member Association should strive to develop a line of communication with its Administrators, giving each an opportunity to better understand the problems relating to their specific area.
4. Professional respect should be mutual and there should be no demeaning dialogue or gesture between Administrators. The Member Association must not incite its Administrators or attempt to disrupt their specific duties.
5. Comments regarding an Administrator should be made in writing to the appropriate official within the Member Association.

ARTICLE IV - RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RECRUITING

1. It is unethical for a Member Association to recruit teams to leave another Member Association.
2. When discussing the advantages of their Association, the Member Association has an ethical obligation to be forthright and refrain from making derogatory remarks regarding other Member Associations; their Administrators, teams, facilities and/or organizational makeup.
3. It is unethical for any Member Association to make a statement to a prospective team and/or player, which cannot be fulfilled; illegal to promise any kind of compensation or inducement for play; and immoral to deliver same.
4. Allegations of illegal or unethical recruiting are very serious and should be based on concrete facts rather than hearsay and innuendo. While documentation of recruiting violations is essential, the use of videotape and other electronic equipment is discouraged.

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ARTICLE V - RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. The Member Association has a responsibility to promote the game of soccer to the public. Comments and critiques of governing bodies, teams, other Member Associations, players, parents, or the media should be positive and constructive, never prejudicial or inflammatory.
2. The Member Association has a responsibility to assist their Administrators, teams and/or players in conducting themselves properly when in public while representing their Member Association and **NTSSA**.
3. It is unethical for a Member Association to solicit alumni or members to pressure organizations, other Member Associations or **NTSSA** to operate outside established rules. The Member Association must not attempt to influence these organizations in political or financial dealings outside the framework of their own rules and bylaws.
4. The media should be allowed access to the Member Association for comment. The Member Association does have the right to appoint and limit who will represent them to the media. Administrators should be instructed in how to conduct themselves during an interview.