

SWFA Coaching Guidelines

Preamble:

All coaches working under the auspices of the Southwest Football Association, henceforth referred to as the SWFA, will subscribe to and follow these guidelines in their working relationship with their athletes, their competitors and each other. Coaches who fail to comply with these guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a formal reprimand to suspension and possible expulsion from the coaching ranks of the SWFA, as determined by the executive of the SWFA.

The President, or a member of the executive appointed by the president, will chair any investigative meeting resulting from a complaint of coaching misconduct based on the following guidelines. The president will hand off this duty to another member chosen by the executive if he/she or one of his/her colleagues on the same team is involved in the complaint.

In case of an investigation of misconduct the complainant and the accused must be present at the investigative meeting. In a case where the aforementioned participants cannot be present he/she will have the responsibility of selecting another responsible individual, of like status to represent him/her. One member of the committee, and only one, may be or have been, a representative of the same coaching staff as the coach under investigation.

The coach under investigation must be informed at least 5 days prior to any investigative meeting, of the meeting and of all allegations made against him/her and has the right to invite to the meeting any witness/es that may be relevant to the case.

The individual/s lodging the complaint, have the same rights.

Any complaint involving professional misconduct, defined as the breaking of the SWFA's professional guidelines, must be made, in writing and presented to the president within 48 hours of the alleged infraction. Oral complaints will be deemed to be the result of the emotions of the moment and will not be investigated unless put into writing, signed by the accuser and given to a member of the SWFA executive.

Any complaint that involves a possible breach of the criminal code of Canada, particularly as it relates to the treatment of our athletes, has no statute of limitations not provided by said criminal code, but in the interest of fairness and for the protection of our athletes, should be made within 24 hours of the alleged incident.

Allegations involving the breaking of the Criminal Code of Canada, will be reported to the appropriate authorities for investigation by the individual making the accusations, with the full support of the SWFA.

All head coaches and returning coaches, will successfully undergo a criminal background check yearly, as per other professional organizations in Ontario. If said police check turns up information of criminal misconduct, then it will be the responsibility of the executive to determine whether the individual should be accepted as a member of the SWFA coaching fraternity. In such a case a hearing identical to that of a coach under investigation will be held. Coaches who go through this background check successfully as part of their jobs, ie teachers in good standing with their Board of Education, will not be required to duplicate it.

Any coach under investigation will be suspended from all coaching duties until the investigation has been held. It is the responsibility of the SWFA executive to hold the investigative meeting no later than five days after disclosure of the complaint.

The lodging of a complaint on another coach without concrete, provable information will itself be deemed as a breach of the Code of Conduct, leaving the complainant liable to similar disciplinary action.

Coaching Guidelines

1. Coaches will continue their personal and professional growth as coaches, remaining current on new developments in the field.
2. Coaches will know and abide by the rules of the game of Canadian Football as modified by the MFL.
3. Coaches should restrict their coaching practices to the levels to which they have been educated or trained. They should not misrepresent their qualification or professional competence to players or others with whom they work.
4. Coaches will always be truthful and put colleagues in a positive light.
5. Coaches will avoid discrimination in all of its forms.
6. Coaches will conduct all relationships from a perspective of dignity and sound educational and scientific foundations.
7. Coaches must not compromise their performers by advocating measures that could be deemed to constitute the seeking of unfair or unlawful advantage. Above all, coaches must never advocate the use of proscribed drugs or banned substances.
8. Coaches must not encourage performers to violate the rules of football and should actively seek to discourage such action. Furthermore, coaches should encourage performers to obey the spirit of the rules.
9. Coaches will use positive coaching methods to make the experience enjoyable, increase self-esteem and foster a love and appreciation for the sport while refraining from physical or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, and conduct that is demeaning to athletes or others. i.e, they will direct comments or criticism relative to the performance, not the athlete and ensure that all activities are suitable for the age, experience and ability of the athletes.
10. Coaches will encourage athletes to pursue victory with honor, to think and play as a team, to do their best and continually improve through personal effort and discipline. They will discourage selfishness and put less emphasis on the final outcome of the contest, than upon effort, improvement, teamwork, and winning with character.
11. Coaches will educate athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment, and ensure that all facilities and equipment meet safety standards and that they are age/ability appropriate.
12. Coaches will consider the athlete's future health and well being as foremost when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue competing or training, and seek professional medical opinions to serve as a basis for all decisions regarding the athlete.
13. Coaches will never encourage, condone, or require any behavior that threatens an athlete's education.
14. Coaches will strive to develop individual and team respect for the ability of opponents.

15. Coaches will prioritize being present at all practices and competitions and, when unable to, assure knowledgeable and safe supervision.

16. Coaches will work with and strive to develop every member of the team.

17. Coaches will consider the acceptable norms of the community (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada) when developing or allowing team traditions. i.e. Spitting on your hand before the post game handshake, while perhaps acceptable to one group is not a socially acceptable tradition in the greater community and may in fact be seen as an insult. In light of this coaches will not accept such behavior.

18. Coaches will show sensitive regard for the moral, social, religious and sexual orientations of others and communities.

19. Coaches will recognize the trust placed in, and the unique power of, the coach/athlete relationship. They will not exploit the dependency of athletes and will avoid dual relationships (e.g., business or close personal relationships) which could impair their professional judgment, compromise the integrity of the process and/or take advantage of the relationship for their own gain.

20. Coaches will, while serving in a professional capacity or as a role model, avoid any drug, tobacco or alcohol use while in the presence of athletes. They will discourage by way of education any consumption of these substances and will remain at all times within the limits of the law with regard to legal substances. They will avoid illegal ones entirely.

21. Coaches will avoid any action verbal or otherwise that would provide a poor example for the young athletes they coach.

22. Coaches will not engage in physical, verbal or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or exploitative coercion of current or former athletes. They will report any suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate authorities immediately.

23. Coaches will recognize that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment with athletes are illegal and unethical, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Sexual abuse and harassment is defined as, but not limited to, repeated comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature. They will report all suspected cases of sexual assault or abuse to law enforcement as required by law.

24. Coaches will respect the integrity and protect the welfare of all persons with whom they are working and pledge to safeguard information about them that has been learned or obtained during the coaching relationship, including performance reviews, statistics and all personal confidences. Further, They will obtain permission from athletes before sharing videotape recordings or other data of them with anyone excepting the recognized coaching staff; when current or former athletes are referred to in a publication, while teaching or in a public presentation that is not laudatory, their identity will be thoroughly disguised. The only exception to this will be that they will not use these standards of confidentiality to avoid intervention when it is necessary (e.g., when there is evidence of physical or psychological abuse or legal issues).

25. Coaches will accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best ability of said officials.

26. Coaches will not criticize any opposing team, its players, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture. Coaches should treat opponents and officials with due respect both in victory and defeat and should encourage their players to act in a similar manner. Particularly, coaches and players should not overreact to or applaud their opponents' errors or engage in behavior designed to humiliate or intimidate opponents or officials. The pressures of competition should never be used by the coach as an excuse to encourage aggressive behavior in players or members of the coaching staff.

27. Coaches will not partake in, nor will they allow their players to engage in Taunting — including trash-talking, taunting, boastful celebrations, or other actions that demean individuals or the sport.

28. Coaches will strive to make every football activity serve as a training ground for life, and a basis for good mental and physical health.

29. Coaches will not engage in excessive sideline coaching and shall not leave the bench area to shout instructions from the sidelines.

30. Coaches together with team officials will be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any fan who becomes a nuisance and out of control will be asked to leave.

31. Coaches will not use abusive or profane language at any time.

32. Coaches will not "pile it on"; they will not encourage their team to get a commanding lead and raise the score as high as they can.

33. Coaches will not receive any payment, in cash or kind, for services as a coach except as approved by the MFL or the association to which the coach belongs.

34. Coaches will not permit or encourage "sweating down" tactics in order for a player to make the team weight.

35. Coaches will not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter, except as specifically prescribed by the participant's physician.

36. Coaches will not permit an ineligible player to participate in a game, including the pre-season scrimmage. No over age player or player that is more than 5 lbs over the prescribed weight limit may participate in this scrimmage and it is the duty of the head coach to be aware that this situation exists.

37. Coaches will not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.

38. Coaches will remove from a game or practice any participant when even slightly in doubt about his/her health, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.

39. Coaches will uphold all rules and regulations, regarding MFL Football.

Thanks to the Coaching Association of Canada , Pop Warner Football (USA), USA Volleyball, The English Volleyball Association, The AHCA Ethics Committee (Hockey) and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Sports and Dance from whose data these guidelines were developed.